



Building a New Future (part two)

As anyone who has visited the Broad River Road complex in the last year can tell you, DJJ is undergoing a huge transformation. A much needed construction boom is underway at BRRC to replace our old dormitories, add new facilities, and even relocate the DJJ entrance to provide for more safety and convenience. So The Link is taking a look at some of this new construction in a two-part series. The first part focused on our new DJJ dormitories; the second part will focus on our Community Connections Center and new entrance.

A secure and friendly community center for DJJ

On September 6th, DJJ officially opened the doors to the new Bill Rogers Community Connections Center (CCC). The Center, situated beside a new Broad River Road Complex (BRRC) entrance, is a 10,000 square foot facility featuring visitation rooms for juveniles and their families, a library, conference rooms with videoconferencing capabilities, offices, and a large assembly area with multimedia capabilities.

But much more impressive than the building itself is the story behind it and how it came to be a new part of DJJ. The Center was part of a project that was years in the making, and began with the 2004 creation of the Friends of Juvenile Justice (FJJ) foundation, a non-profit designed to help the agency and its children.

“When we founded FJJ, one of the things we asked the Judge [Judge Byars] was what the agency really needed,” recalled FJJ chairperson Louise Slater. “He said that one of the things he needed was a place where kids could visit with their families that didn’t have bars on the doors and was both more friendly and more secure than the place we

were using, an old converted lock-up facility.”

Over the course of the next few years, by forming community partnerships and raising private donations, FJJ was able to raise the several million dollars needed to construct this new facility, named in honor of FJJ supporter and philanthropist Bill Rogers. It became one the first buildings in a correctional institution in South Carolina that was donated by a private foundation to the state.

In designing the Center, planners and philanthropists also decided early on to couple it with a new DJJ entrance. The idea was to allow



DJJ to have visiting parents and others to park outside the fence before coming into the agency, improving security and allowing visitors to be more safely managed than before. And with a large, bright environment, visitors wouldn’t feel as intimidated as they had when they came directly into high security areas with little privacy.

“When you come into the Center, you’ll see it has a nice floorplan, big windows, just a really open and welcoming feel,” noted Director Byars. “It’s not a place that looks like a prison. It’s a warm and friendly place for families and visitors.”

The Bill Rogers Center has been utilized extensively on a daily basis from the moment DJJ opened its doors. Weekend visitation for boys is now conducted exclusively at the Center. And DJJ divisions and offices have used the center to host conferences, meetings, presentations, and events. Even outside agencies such as the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS), the South Carolina Department of Education, and other

THE LINK

A NEWSLETTER FOR DJJ EMPLOYEES

FALL 2008

FROM THE DJJ OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Louise Slater, Bill Rogers, Judge Byars



2008 Bill Rogers Community Connections Center Grand Opening



FJJ Donors Reception



Sunday Cookout



Sunday Family Service



Judge Byars looks to the future



Bill Rogers presents DJJ's Jenny Mangum with the key to the Center



Saturday Gospel Fest



Judge Byars joins the Center's Hall of Directors

youth-serving groups have utilized the center. "Even as large as DSS is, we don't have anything like this center" said DSS director and former DJJ Chief of Staff Kathleen Hayes.

DJJ Special Projects Manager Ray Cavanagh has been charged with overseeing the Center's operation. "The response has been incredible," he reports. "The focus has been on the juveniles and their families first, but we're also letting other youth-focused groups use it for events as well. It's gotten so much use, we're already booking events well into 2009."

While the Bill Rogers Center is the highlight of the FJJ building effort, the foundation also plans to move forward with additional improvements in the future. The most notable project in the works is "A Garden for All Seasons," a plan to landscape the area around the Center and create a garden area for juveniles and their families. Continuing in the FJJ spirit of collaboration, the initial landscaping plan for the garden was developed by Clemson University's Public Service and Agriculture departments, with plans for contributions from juveniles in DJJ's horticulture, masonry, and carpentry classes—as well as from private donors.

The grand opening of the Center was held as

part of a four-day event involving FJJ members, DJJ employees, the community, juveniles and their families, and many more volunteers—all coming together to celebrate the new center. Pictures of the event highlights are included above.

Fall "Hoop Jams" tournament held

The "Fall Hoop Jams" basketball tournament was held at the Birchwood Gym on Saturday September 20, 2008. Participating teams included Camp Bennettsville, Carolina Children's Home and Beaufort Marine Institute. The BRRC Cougars have won their second tournament of the year. Carolina Children's Home was second place and Camp Bennettsville placed third. The highlight of the tournament was the performance of the BRRC Gymnastic Arts and Creative Dance Halftime show. The Gymnastic Arts and Creative Dance team is spearheaded by Captain L. White. "This was one of most outstanding tournaments held at BRRC thus far, we are sorry that economic issues prevented Charleston and York Counties from participating. However, we are looking ahead for what is to come next," says Coach Tyrone Brown.



Mark Cox appointed Sumter Director

Mark Cox has been selected as the new Director of the Sumter County DJJ Office. Mark has been employed with the agency for the past 20 years, beginning his career as a Juvenile Corrections Officer at the "Old" Reception and Evaluation Center located on Shivers Road. For the past 5 years he has served as the Director of the Lee County DJJ Office. Congratulations on the achievement, Mark!

Sharon King receives leadership award

Sharon King, a DJJ probation supervisor in Spartanburg County, has received the Carolyn M. Dawkins Award, for her involvement in the Focus on Leadership Program sponsored by the Herald-Journal newspaper. King was one of 15 professionals who completed the leadership program, with focuses on the development of leadership skills and promotes involvement in community service.

Dawne Gannon recognized for service

Dawne Gannon, DJJ's interstate compact coordinator, is the 2008 recipient of the Association of Juvenile Compact Administrators' Lifetime Membership Award. Dawne received the award in recognition and appreciation of her "loyal and dedicated service to the Association of Juvenile Compact Administrators." Dawne first came to DJJ in 1983, and has worked for 20 years in the area of interstate compact. She holds a Bachelor's of Arts degree from USC.

New Directions School is "Champion of the Environment"

New Directions School has been selected as a Champion of the Environment for its environmental project, "Working Together for a Better Tomorrow." The school will receive a \$500 cash grant and publicity for its project. Publicity includes a posting on the Champions Web site and a television commercial about the project that will air on Columbia's WIS-TV, and Charleston's WCSC-TV.

Last year, students at New Direction School established the garden project and will use the Champions of the Environment grant to sustain the container-based flower and vegetable gardens and to enlarge the row-based vegetable garden. Additionally, the students will build the Carolina

Fence garden outlined in the shape of South Carolina. There they will plant native plants and trees.

"This not only will be a learning experience for the students, but a wonderful conversation piece when families come for visitation, said Debbie Blackmon, New Directions Science/Math Teacher. "It also will give the students ownership of something, teach them responsibility, and skills that will last a lifetime. Our project is all about becoming good citizens, taking care of our environment and giving back."

The three became one "Big Oak Tree"



A cool fall breeze, threatening clouds and a steady drizzle did not deter many of us from gathering and looking in awe at the fallen Big Oak Tree that had stood tall and strong in the rear of the Goldsmith Building for more than 60 years.

DJJ employees came to take pictures, grab a piece of history, and engage in conversation about the landmark and its sudden demise. Meanwhile, maintenance workers were beginning the disposal and cleanup process.

For years the Big Oak Tree had been structurally sound, but 60-mile-an-hour winds were more than it could stand. In the end, what appeared to have been one big oak tree were actually three trees that had grown into one.

"That maybe part of the reason it fell," said Mark Cotter, DJJ physical plant manager. "As best we could tell, it rotted at the base and fell, helped along by the winds of the storm from the night before."

The largest oak on the Broad River Road Complex, the Big Oak Tree stood approximately 50 feet tall



with a circumference of 15 feet. Bill Evans, Support Services administrator, counted 60 years of growth based upon the tree's rings. After a week, much of the tree was still lying across the grounds as workers removed it by cutting off one branch at a time so that employees could take some home as mementos or to use as firewood for the upcoming winter season.

Baker's Delight



Vontresa Samuel, left, and Cheryl Brisbane, right, are all smiles as first place winners in the South Carolina State Fair baking competition. Vontresa, DJJ's Release Authority coordinator took first place for her Chocolate Cyn Cake and Plain Pound Cake. Her Red Velvet Cake and Hawaiian Pound Cake received second place ribbons. Cheryl, a Rehabilitative Services psychologist, won two first place awards for her 7-Up Pound Cake and Pecan Pitty Pat Cookies. Congratulations ladies!

DJJ Annual All-Star Banquet

On October 16, more than 230 juveniles, parents, and staff assembled in the new Bill Rogers Community Connections Center for the Rehabilitative Support Services annual All-Star Awards Banquet. The evening resembled the true meaning of its theme: Celebrating Milestones on the Road to Success. Former juvenile Candice Murphy of the Inner Courts Global Outreach of Irmo was the keynote speaker. Mistress of ceremony was Juvenile Shaquinda of Willow Lane.

The event was held to recognize 60 youth for their leadership roles in specific program areas offered by the Division of Rehabilitative Services. The areas are Leadership, Job Apprenticeship and Training, Youth Leadership, Spiritual Development, Academic Enrichment and Sports & Fitness.

Additionally, the Honorable Joseph F. Anderson Leadership Award, sponsored by the Lake Murray-Irmo Rotary Club, was given to juvenile Delsean D. The award is given in honor of Judge Anderson and the leadership he has provided to DJJ and

his continued support of South Carolina's youth. Delsean received a congratulatory letter from the Secretary of State Jim Hammond and a letter from Governor Sanford appointing him to the Governor's Juvenile Advisory Council.

The Lady Cougars win season opening

On August 9, 2008, the women of the WNBA began their gold medal quest in Beijing during the Summer Olympics, while the Lady Cougars at Willow Lane were beginning their quest for a winning season in the new female basketball league.

With excitement and enthusiasm in the air after their first win, the Lady Cougars are off to an incredible start in what some would view as a male dominated sport. Up against a formidable opponent in the Carolina Children's Home, the Lady Cougars took an early and commanding lead in the first half and cruised to a 40-20 victory. The Willow Lane basketball team did what they set out to do.

"The young ladies displayed a tremendous level of teamwork and sportsmanship in their first-ever win," according to Coach Tonisha Reese. "They exhibited a type of self awareness, discipline and leadership that I can be proud of." Congratulations Lady Cougars.

New Directions girls adopt highway



Girls at DJJ's New Directions School adopted part of Shivers Road recently as part of the Adopt a Highway program. The girls have already done one trash clean-up on the highway and are planning on following up with monthly clean-ups.

