

# SCSL Digital Collections

## The Link: April 2008

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### DJJ helps lead the way with new anti-gang efforts

Even as juvenile crime rates have dropped in most categories in recent decades, there are increasing fears that gang violence may reverse these statistics and place a new burden on the public, the police, the courts, and, of course, on DJJ. And, while some of these fears may be overstated, it is clear that gangs continue to be a real problem and a real threat to juveniles. According to a recent DJJ survey, at least 15% of juveniles entering the DJJ system are, or have once been, affiliated with a gang.

“Keeping our children out of gangs and helping those who are already in gangs to get out is one of the key parts

of an intensive supervision program for at-risk juveniles leaving DJJ facilities. We also sponsor new speaking and tour programs for youth in local communities, such as the “Messengers”--a new speaking group similar to our long-standing program “The Insiders,” but featuring children who have left DJJ facilities and are leading productive lives.

And, behind the fence, DJJ has appointed a full-time “Captain of Security Threat Groups,” Angie Hugie, to help identify children who are in gangs and assist with gang intervention behind the fence. She is also helping gang members with gang tattoo removal, so that they can return home with a fresh start.

There are other anti-gang initiatives “in the works” at DJJ. And we are always looking for new ideas from our employees, whether you work behind the fence or out in the community. So if you have an idea, you might consider passing it along to your supervisor or a senior staff member. Your ideas count!

### Lunch with the 100

What began as a pilot designed to provide some DJJ male youth the opportunity to discuss various topics over lunch with prominent businessmen has developed into a successful mentoring/leadership partnership between DJJ and the 100 Black Men of Greater Columbia. The organization members serve as mentors and positive role models for our youth by encouraging their success through activities that empower them academically, culturally and socially.

“Our ultimate goal is to build relationships with these young men behind the fence and to cultivate those relationships further, upon their release back into the community,” explains Tony Brown, executive director, of the 100 Black Men of Greater Columbia.

Mirroring the mission of the national body, this chapter’s primary emphasis is on mentoring and education. The goal of this mentoring program is to increase the interaction between youth and positive role-models in order to empower young men who are at risk of an unproductive and challenging future. “We can and we must address the critical issues that prevent our youth from reaching their full potential,” said Brown. “We want our male youth to experience nurturing relationships that activates them to model appropriate social, professional and self-esteem enhancing behaviors.”

# THE LINK

A NEWSLETTER FOR DJJ EMPLOYEES



Brett Macgargle and Angie Hugie look at gang paraphernalia seized from DJJ juveniles

of our prevention efforts right now,” says Judge Byars.

To address growing concerns, DJJ has increased our efforts to help combat gang activity as part of our community prevention efforts. Judge Byars and staff are crossing the state, participating in community gang awareness programs and focusing more attention on our “front-end” prevention efforts. The agency has established a cross-divisional gang committee, managed by Brett Macgargle. And DJJ’s Division of Community Services has recently added a new “Gang-Out” component, under Dr. A.V. Strong, aimed at helping young gang members leave gangs and trying to keep at-risk youth from entering them in the first place.

DJJ also currently co-sponsors 31 Teen After-School Centers (TASCs) throughout the state and has begun

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FROM THE DJJ OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## DJJ Cougars beat NC all-star team



Judge Byars congratulates DJJ coach Jamal Frazier

On Saturday, March 29 the BRR "Cougars" defeated the North Carolina DJJ all-star team with a 67-47 victory in the 29<sup>th</sup> annual SC/NC all-star basketball game, at the Birchwood Gym in Columbia. The game marked the first victory against NC for the Cougars since 2005, and also marked the first time that DJJ has fielded a true "all-star" team, with children from the community also playing. The Cougars were coached by Tyrone Brown and Jamal Frazier. They played very well as a team this year, leading North Carolina for the entire game.

The game was followed by a banquet for both groups of juveniles.

## DJJ Supports SC's 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Victims' Rights Week Conference



DJJ employees attending the conference

This year's conference was held March 26-28, 2008 at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center, North Charleston. Twenty-seven DJJ CARE peer supporters and advisory board members attended.

DJJ contributed to the conference by coordinating and conducting two workshops, the first one titled "Juvenile Justice: A Closer Look at the System" with panel members Scott Wagner, Victim/Survivor, Charleston county Law Enforcement, Asst. Solicitor Virgil Deas, DJJ Asst. Legal Council Elizabeth Hill, Surleaner L. Smith, DJJ Victim Services, Curtis Counts, Juvenile Parole Board, Dexter Lee, DJJ Releasing Authority, and Bethany Hicklin, ISO. The second workshop was titled "Victim Offender Dialogue: Facing the Violence" which was conducted by Ginny Barr. Additionally, we had three of our programs (Teen After-School Centers, Intensive Supervision, and Gang-Out) highlighted at the conference Resource Roundtable. Two framed original art pieces and two Adirondack chairs from

DJJ youth were also auctioned at the conference.

DJJ will be holding our own Victim's Rights Week observance again this year at the Victim's Memorial Garden at BRR on April 15<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon. A crime victim will share his story of survival.

## DJJ Has Spring Fling for Wellness

DJJ will hold its annual "Spring Fling for Wellness" on Thursday April 10<sup>th</sup> at the DJJ Wellness and Training Center on Shivers Road. The event will feature health screenings, a vendor health fair, a seminar featuring Marcie Calvert, a 5-mile fun walk, and a volleyball tournament. Health screenings will begin at 7:30 a.m. with additional events throughout the day:

- 7:30 -11 a.m. -- Health Screenings
- 11 a.m. -3 p.m. -- Health Fair with Vendors
- 12:15 – 1:15 p.m. – "Healthy Eating: It Really Works" seminar
- 1:30-3 p.m. -- "Yes, I Can" 5-Mile Walk
- 3:30-5 p.m. -- Volleyball Tournament

Please call Priscilla Pee at 803-896-9200 with questions about the volleyball teams, Sandra Davidson at 803-896-6921 concerning health screenings, or Loretta Neal at 803-896-9518 for additional information about the Spring Fling wellness events.

## Judith Crocker-Billingsley Named DJJ Social Worker of the Year



On March 31, 2008, DJJ named Judith D. Crocker Billingsley (third from left), Social Worker of the Year 2008 for her work with juveniles, families and communities.

Judith completed her undergraduate degree at Spelman College as a non-traditional student and a Master of Social Work degree from Clark Atlanta University School of Social Work. She has worked at DJJ since 1998. She currently works with juveniles with various conduct disorders and other anti-social behaviors, using a team approach and the TRUTHOUGHTS model.



South Carolina  
DEPARTMENT OF  
JUVENILE JUSTICE