
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) High School Graduation

The South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice held Commencement Exercises for its 161 high school graduates (GED recipients) on July 16 at Birchwood High School on the Broad River Road Complex. Some of the students, along with their parents, returned specifically for this special occasion

Dr. Tremain Cooper, a pharmacist and motivational speaker, was the keynote speaker. Dr. Cooper, a Columbia native, shared his experience of growing up in foster care after being abandoned by his biological parents. He empowered the graduates to, "Believe in yourself." He added: "You have the opportunity to change your life by creating a plan to do just that." DJJ's Birchwood Middle and High schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and for the third consecutive year were named a Palmetto Gold School District by the State Department of Education.

DJJ's Community Connections Center

The construction of the long-awaited Bill Rogers Community Connections Center (CCC) on DJJ's Broad River Road Complex is complete and a series of events are planned in September to celebrate its opening. The 10,000 square foot building was built by the non-profit foundation Friends of Juvenile Justice (FJJ.) Columbia businesswoman, Louise Slater, chairs the foundation which collaborates with individuals and agencies within the public, private and independent sectors to provide resources and attention to at-risk youth. The CCC will be given to the state of South Carolina in a ceremony on Saturday, September 6, at 3 p.m. Named for DJJ supporter, Columbia businessman and philanthropist Bill Rogers, the Center will have a variety of uses ranging from meetings, family visitation, staff/student consultations to meetings for staff, volunteer tutors and mentors.

Already the Center is showing promise as a much-needed meeting facility. DJJ held its first meeting there on July 11, followed with a second meeting a few days later when sister agencies, the Department of Social Services, Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, and the Department of Mental Health, met there to discuss a collaborative program with DJJ.

DJJ's Juveniles Experiencing Excellence Program opens in Kershaw County

On Tuesday, July 8, DJJ announced the opening of its 19th Juveniles Experiencing Excellence Program (JEEP) site, which is housed at the Camden Middle School. JEEP is an employability and life skills program for youth ages 14-18 that are on probation, parole, or at risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Other counties with JEEP sites are Orangeburg, Allendale, Marlboro, York, Florence, Anderson, Spartanburg, Greenville, Union, Lexington, Richland, Aiken, Charleston, Dorchester, Berkeley, Chesterfield, Horry, and Georgetown.

Through JEEP, juveniles are provided 10 weeks of classroom work in life, social, team building, and job preparation skills before they are placed in an 80-hour on-the-job paid internship position within their community.

Schedule

- July 25 Friends of Juvenile Justice Board
Goldsmith Training Room
- August 1 Combating Gangs Forum
Spartanburg County Library
- August 12 Speak to DJJ Educational Services Division
Professional Development Day, Birchwood Chapel
- August 14 Friends of Juvenile Justice Advisory Council
Willow Lane Chapel