

DJJ Juveniles have Seat at the Table with Public Safety Professionals

Juveniles from the Department of Juvenile Justice recently met with 25 public safety professionals from across South Carolina to develop an action plan to solve the growing youth-at-risk problem. The activity was part of the Executive Leadership course curriculum of the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy. The professionals are future leaders in law enforcement with a range of departments and agencies from around the state. They met with DJJ officials and juveniles for an entire day and into the evening as they worked toward gaining a better understanding of the role public safety plays and can play in helping youth stay out of trouble and receive needed services in their communities.

The day's activities ranged from DJJ officials outlining the agency's philosophy of providing rehabilitative services to incarcerated juveniles to working with community and law enforcement agencies. Additionally, groups of juveniles talked candidly with the public safety professionals about issues regarding juvenile delinquency, followed by an exercise in how to recognize and alleviate the problems that put youth at risk.

New Construction at the Department of Juvenile Justice

Construction has begun on two new dormitories for boys at the Department of Juvenile Justice. Site preparation is underway for the facilities that will replace aging and dilapidated living quarters on the John G. Richards campus of the Broad River Road Complex. Earth movers are working daily to clear the land for the new construction. No new construction has taken place on the campus since 1961. Construction is expected to be completed by next spring on the buildings, which will include new security measures, an abundance of natural light, and space for indoor activities.

DJJ Interact (Rotary) Club

The Department of Juvenile Justice has become the first secured correctional facility worldwide to organize a Rotary-sponsored Interact Club for young people. The DJJ Interact Club, sponsored by the Lake Murray-Irmo Rotary Club, is for members age 14-18. The current members include Communities In School (CIS) students, a program at DJJ for the academically talented. Interact offers participants an opportunity to participate in fun, meaningful service projects, develop leadership skills; and educational initiatives which compliment CIS programs. DJJ Interact Club members are among more than 200,000 young people in more than 110 countries who hold membership in the prestigious service organization.

DJJ Juveniles Compete in Annual "North/South" Basketball Tourney

On Saturday, April 14th, DJJ juveniles competed in the annual "North/South" all-star basketball game at the Stonewall Jackson Youth Development Center in Concord, North Carolina. The game, played between all-star juvenile teams from the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and DJJ, is a long-standing tradition in both agencies. However, this year marks the first time since 1989 that DJJ juveniles have been allowed to travel to North Carolina to play in the basketball game. This ability to travel is an example of the "face of change" for the juvenile justice system in South Carolina.

While North Carolina's juveniles won the day this year, the DJJ team never gave up and continued to play hard until the final buzzer--displaying grace, sportsmanship, and solid teamwork. The juveniles' basketball shoes this year were donated by former track & field Olympian, NCAA All-American, and USC alumnus Lashinda Demus, a DJJ supporter.