

## **Greene County Juvenile Detention Center JDAI Site Self-Assessment An Essay by the Superintendent**

On June 22, 2006, according to the meeting minutes, the Greene County Conditions of Confinement Sub-Committee of the JDAI Cabinet assigned two-person teams to each of eight (8) areas of detention operation, thus beginning the site self-assessment process. The standards for each of the eight assigned areas of detention operation and the self-inspection methodology were developed by the Youth Law Center and the Center for Children's Law and Policy.

The eight areas of operation and the two-person assessment teams completing each area are as follows:

- Classification system and intake – completed by Jim Barber with the Greene County Sheriff's Department and Steve Hamilton with the Springfield Police Department
- Health Care (which includes mental health care) – completed by Greene County Commissioner Roseann Bentley and Jim Arnott with the Greene County Sheriff's Department
- Access Issues (mail, phone, visits, and access to legal representation) – completed by Attorney Linda Thomas and Morey Mechlin an active community member.
- Programming – completed by Roseann Bentley and Morey Mechlin
- Training and Supervision of Employees – completed by Chris Squibb, Parent Representative and Steve Hamilton
- Environmental Issues – completed by Roseann Bentley and Jim Arnott
- Restraints, Isolation, Due Process – completed by Dr. Seth Allen with the Burrell Community Mental Health Center and Ed Dorris, Facility Manager for the Missouri Division of Youth Services
- Safety – completed by Attorney Adam Woody and Jim Barber

Were it not for the efforts of these community representatives the site self-assessment process would not have been possible. The work of these individuals was facilitated by: Dan Johnson, Facility Manager for the Greene County Youth Academy and former Detention Superintendent; DeShane Reed, Assistant Detention Superintendent during the site self-assessment process; and Marie Swope, Detention Superintendent and Director of Residential Services. These three facilitators assisted each team as needed by providing unrestricted access to records, staff, youth, and the facility.

The assessment was completed late in the summer of 2008. Once the assessment was complete, and the findings noted, the reporting process began. The conditions of confinement sub-committee began meeting bi-monthly to generate a final report. The members of the sub-committee who compiled the final report are:

- Roseann Bentley, County Commission
- Ed Dorris, Missouri Division of Youth Services
- Sharon Felton, Detention Youth Leader
- Kathleen Hanan, St. John's Corporate Health
- David House, Detention Deputy Juvenile Officer
- Dan Johnson, Greene County Youth Academy
- David Kuykendall, Detention Deputy Juvenile Officer
- Karen McIlravy, Greene County Youth Academy
- Michael Scofield, Detention Deputy Juvenile Officer
- Christine Squibb, Parent Representative
- Linda Thomas, Attorney at Law
- Wanda White, Springfield Public School Teacher Aide
- Adam Wood, Attorney at Law

There are 337 possible findings in the chosen site self-assessment process. A decision was made by the sub-committee to categorize the findings into four categories. This unique approach was not known to have ever been utilized with other site self-assessment reporting processes and proved to be very effective and efficient.

Category one is comprised of those findings that were in compliance with the standards. The great majority of the findings were in this category.

Category two is comprised of those standards that can be brought into compliance by writing policy and procedures to capture actual practices that conform to standard and/or clarifying details in the existing policies and procedures that better reflect the standards.

Category three are those standards that require an action plan to bring into compliance.

Category four are those standards that the facility by its physical design or program design can not accommodate.

The benefits of the site self-assessment include: a strategy for improvement in conditions of confinement; bringing transparency to the juvenile detention operation; generation of additional resources; and having an updated and relevant policy and procedure manual. The most important benefit of the site self-assessment process is making Juvenile Detention better for the youth who must be detained. It is this benefit for which the conditions of confinement committee are commended and their work continued.

More information about the site self-assessment process, the findings, or the conditions of confinement sub-committee is available by contacting the Greene County Juvenile Detention Superintendent at (417) 829-6105 or by email at [Marie.Swope@courts.mo.gov](mailto:Marie.Swope@courts.mo.gov)

