

# **Lorain County Court of Common Pleas**



**Domestic Relations Division and  
Juvenile Branch**

## **2006 Annual Report**

## **The Court**

**Lorain County Justice Center  
225 Court Street  
2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Floors  
Elyria, Ohio 44035**

## **Off Site Locations**

**Community Intervention Program  
320 No. Gateway Blvd.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Elyria, Ohio 44035**

**Juvenile Complex: Pathways, 1076 Infirmary Road  
Stepping Stone, 1064 Infirmary Road  
Turning Point, 1080 Infirmary Road  
Multi-Purpose/Administration, 1070 Infirmary Road  
Elyria, Ohio 44035**

**Boys Detention Home, 9967 S. Murray Ridge Road  
Girls Detention Home, 9911 S. Murray Ridge Road  
Elyria, Ohio 44035**



Paulette J. Lilly  
Administrative Judge



Debra L. Boros  
Judge



David A. Basinski  
Judge



David J. Berta  
Judge Elect

## The Citizens of Lorain County:

The Court is very pleased to present our *2006 Annual Report* for your information and use. This report documents the Court's continuing efforts to enhance the services and programming provided to Lorain County citizens. Significant areas of activities are documented throughout this report through narrative, operating statistics and data.

The Court has a long-standing approach of maintaining a high level of services for the citizens of Lorain County. The Judges and staff pledge to seek innovative and efficient means of providing these services. We extend our gratitude to our many friends in the community for their continual support, collaboration and encouragement.

We hope you find this report enlightening, informative and welcome any questions or comments.

Respectfully Submitted,

David J. Berta  
Judge

Debra L. Boros  
Judge

David A. Basinski  
Judge

## MISSION STATEMENT

Lorain County Domestic Relations Court will serve the Citizens of Lorain County in a professional, dignified and timely fashion. The Court will protect the public interest, make cost-effective use of public funds, engage appropriate community resources in providing services, and endeavor to provide for the safety of the public. The Court will strive to ensure that parties receive a just determination in every Court proceeding and enforcement of their constitutional and legal rights. Foremost, the Court will provide for the care, protection, and well being of the children and families who come before it.

# FORWARD

The Domestic Relations Division of the Lorain County Court of Common Pleas has exclusive jurisdiction over all domestic matters as well as jurisdiction over all juvenile cases. However, case resolution in the courtrooms is only a part of the total Court process. The Court has a well-established history of providing services and programming to the community. Further, there is continued evaluation, oversight, and innovation to assure that programming and services remain relevant, necessary, and operated in the most efficient and cost effective manner.

During 2006, the Court enjoyed another year of service to the community in the Justice Center. The staff takes great pride in their jobs and strives to set the standard of being the best example of public service.

2006 brought the end of the tenure of Judge Paulette Lilly. The staff and citizens of Lorain County are grateful to her for her twelve years of service as Judge of the Domestic Relations Court. We wish her well in all her future endeavors.

Judge David Berta was selected in 2006 to begin his career as a Judge of the Domestic Relations Court January 3, 2007.

The following pages will provide a working knowledge about the makeup and responsibilities of the Court.

Doug Messer  
Court Administrator

# JUDGES

The three Domestic Relations and Juvenile Court Judges are very active in their courtrooms, hearing a variety and multitude of cases. The Judges refer a wide range of cases to the Magistrates. The type of cases and matters heard by the judiciary include, but are not inclusive of, the following:

**Marriage dissolutions**

**Divorces - contested and uncontested**

**Civil protection order petitions - domestic violence**

**Pre and Post-Decree domestic relations contempt motions**

**Juvenile hearings involving the following:**

- **Motions to bind the juvenile over to the general division**
- **Commitments to the Department of Youth Services (DYS)**
- **Out-of-home placements**
- **Serious youthful offender matters**
- **Cases involving Sexual offender registration and notification**

**Objections to Magistrates orders and decisions**

**Motions to vacate Magistrates' orders**

**Motions to vacate final judgments**

**Permanent surrenders for adoptions**

**Judicial bypass hearings**

**Judicial releases from DYS**

**Marriage consents**

**Criminal Nonsupport Cases**

<b>Court Filings in 2006</b>		
	<b>New Filings</b>	<b>Terminations</b>
<b>Divorce with Children</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>415</b>
<b>Divorce w/o Children</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>Dissolution with Children</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Dissolution w/o Children</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>Change of Custody</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Visitation</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Support</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>310</b>
<b>Uresa</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>All others</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1922</b>	<b>2342</b>

# MAGISTRATES

Due to the volume of cases and hearings before the Court, Magistrates are essential to the work being accomplished in an expedient and efficient manner.

## PERSONAL COURT MAGISTRATES

Each Judge has on their personal staff three Magistrates, having general responsibility for covering domestic cases, juvenile cases and functioning as a law clerk/magistrate. Types of cases, issues and hearings heard by the Magistrates are determined at the discretion of their Judge.

## GENERAL COURT MAGISTRATES

Several areas in the Court require Magistrate involvement. The following comprise this group (the departments are described later in this Report):

Intake Magistrates – Two Attorney Intake Magistrates, with offices located in the Boys Detention Home, have a multitude of duties. Along with an Intake Officer and an Intake Supervisor, Intake staff review all requests for detention and admission to the shelter care facility. The Magistrates conduct a variety of Hearings, including arraignments on children brought to the Detention Home and Hearings on unruly matters.

CSEA - Two full time magistrates, in a dedicated unit, conduct child support hearings .

Mediation - A magistrate hears and journalizes all agreements reached in the pro-se mediation process. In addition, this Magistrate serves as the Supervisor of the Mediation staff, a program of Family Court Services.

# ADMINISTRATION

Doug Messer, Court Administrator

Administration has responsibility for the management and direction of all Court operations, with the exception of the Judges and their personal staffs. The team is made up of the Court Administrator, Deputy Court Administrator and the Administrative Assistant. The Deputy Court Administrator supervises the Department Directors, the Investigation and Referral (I&R) Team, and the Assignment Commissioners.

The Court is made up of five departments with over 200 employees. Court operations include: service provider contracting; fiscal management; human resources; program planning, implementing, developing and evaluation; handling disciplinary issues and conducting disciplinary

hearings; public relations/media contact; and the operation and maintenance of the Court's physical facilities.

The Deputy Court Administrator has responsibility for the following: recruiting, interviewing, performing background checks, selection of qualified applicants; developing and planning staff training; development and ongoing oversight of the IV-E reimbursement program; developing and managing special projects; and representative to the Integrated Services Partnership (ISP), as well as collecting statistical information related to ISP placements. This position will also act in the place of the Court Administrator when the Court Administrator is unavailable.

### **INVESTIGATION AND REFERRAL TEAM**

The Investigation and Referral Team, through information gathering, investigation, and case assessment, makes a recommendation to the Court as to the appropriate level and type of Court intervention for juveniles needing probation services.

Case planners review cases prior to disposition and develop case plans when needed. The process includes a screening (using the MAYSI and OHIO SCALES), completion of the DIR and YoLSI, and reviewing the findings. If warranted, a mental health screening, psychological assessment, psychiatric evaluation or an alcohol/drug assessment may be arranged. Upon referrals to Court programs, the program staff will provide input into the case plan development. Recommendations will be developed based upon the information that is gathered.

At disposition, these recommendations will be presented for the Court's consideration, reflecting a specific case plan for the youth, including community control expectations for all parties and therapeutic interventions.

This year was the sixth for I&R, with 382 cases processed. Progress was made in the goals of maintaining consistent numbers in the residential facilities, Court programs, and improving the planning for all youth under supervision.

A forensic psychologist is contracted to provide evaluations for youth when mental health or developmental concerns are present. The psychologist also provides fire setter, competency, and parental evaluations when needed. The psychologist is available for consultation as well. This year, 166 evaluations were completed. The psychologist has provided staff consultation and training as well.



The department includes an Education and Prevention Specialist who coordinates the psycho-educational programming offered by the Court. The Education and Prevention Specialist also provides direct services to youth who are sentenced to the Detention Home. When needed, community based services may be provided to families who otherwise might not have access to them.

The I&R Program Manager also acts as the liaison for the Bellefaire Juvenile Offender Project, a collaborative effort between the local Mental Health Board, Lorain County Juvenile Court, and Bellefaire Jewish Children's Bureau.

The project provides for an extensive psychological evaluation of violent juvenile offenders, residential placement for continued evaluation, and ongoing in-home services.

The comprehensive evaluation involves personality testing, review of collateral contacts, academic testing, assessment of family functioning and review of Court records. From this evaluation, recommendations are formulated to address the identified needs.

During 2006, 30 youth were provided with a psychological evaluation through the Juvenile Offender Project, currently funded by the Lorain County Board of Mental Health. The recommendations provided through the evaluation process were instrumental in determining an appropriate level of supervision and direction for Court intervention and referral.

## **DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY COURT SERVICES**

John Ollerton, Director

### ***INTRODUCTION***

Family Court Services is involved in both domestic and juvenile matters. The domestic side involves Family Divorce Services and Domestic Support while the Court-to-School Liaison program addresses juvenile truancy.

### **FAMILY DIVORCE SERVICES**

This department can be utilized by either Court order or party request when an agreement as to issues of custody and visitation cannot be reached or when assistance in compliance with orders of the divorce decree is needed.

Family Divorce Services covers six major areas:

1. Mediation
2. Pro-Se Mediation/MAND Mediation
3. Visitation Assessment
4. Home Study
5. Seminar for Separating Parents
6. Seminar for Unmarried Parents with visitation hearings

*Mediation* is a process whereby the parents and a third-party mediator work together to gather information, isolate issues of disagreement, generate options to settle those issues, negotiate among those options, and reach a mutually satisfactory agreement to accommodate the needs of both parents and their children. This past year, 52 cases were submitted for mediation with 33 agreements approved by the Court.

The *Pro-Se Mediation* program enables citizens who divorced, established parentage in this county, or obtained an administrative order of paternity through the Lorain County Child Support Enforcement Agency to avail themselves of mediation. Issues for mediation include property that has not been returned or transferred, exchange of medical insurance information, unpaid medical bills, noncompliance with visitation schedules, and establishing visitation. In 2006, the Court received 436 referrals with 136 cases mediated. There were 20 clients with prior mediation returning for a second time, reaching 15 agreements, for a success rate of 75%. Hearings were held for all mediated agreements.

In 2003, Family Divorce Services instituted the Mediation of Abuse, Neglect and Dependent ((MAND) program, for cases referred by Lorain County Children Services. This *MAND* process enables parents and interested parties to participate in working out a viable case plan with the goal of reunifying families. In 2006, Children Services referred 7 cases with 5 of the seven reaching agreement for a 71.4% agreement rate.

The *Visitation Assessment* unit assists the Court and parties in the implementation of visitation orders. This assistance may include an investigative report with recommendations to the Court regarding companionship, as well as implementing, monitoring, or supervising visitation schedules. A visitation assessment may be requested by either a client or his/her attorney but requires an accompanying Court order to access the service. In 2006, there were 64 cases referred for assessments with 61 reports completed and submitted to the Court. A total of 120 supervised visits took place in the department this past year, serving 295 clients.

The *Home Study* unit prepares an investigative report to the Court. Information is gathered through interviews with parties and outside resources. The study assists the Court in determining the most appropriate placement for children and must be accessed by Court Order.

Home Studies Received for Investigation

Divorce.....	16
Allocation of Parental Rights.....	28
Out of County.....	5
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>49</b>

The *Seminar for Separating Parents* is an effort to better inform parents about the impact of divorce on their children. The two-hour presentation provides pertinent information and resources early in the divorce process and strives to enhance the likelihood of parental cooperation. Attendance is mandatory for parents with minor children; resulting from the Court philosophy that a child’s future welfare is impacted by parents’ ability to minimize the conflict exposed to their children. This past year 968 parents completed the seminar.

Judge David A. Basinski and staff present the seminar. A court-produced video specifically addresses the needs of separating parents and is shown at times when the Judge is not available. The Court’s publication, From Crisis to Cooperation, is a guide to assist families in coping with the divorce process and is given to all participants. The seminar is provided at no cost to the participants.

The *Seminar for Unmarried Parents* was developed to help unmarried parents understand both the legal and emotional issues involved with visitation. Family Divorce Services staff facilitates the seminar and a Court magistrate is present to answer legal questions. The Court-produced video illustrates the importance of positive parental communication, the need for positive parent/child contact, and answers common legal questions. The seminar is provided at no cost to the participants. The seminar is followed by individual visitation hearings designed to journalize a companionship schedule for the non-residential parent. This past year 144 parents completed the seminar with the following outcomes:

Hearings Held	81
Standard Order of Visitation Reached	27
Cases referred to Family Divorce Services- Visitation Unit	16
Cases Dismissed	35
Special Circumstances Hearings	3
Received Certificates Only	33

**DOMESTIC SUPPORT UNIT**

The Lorain County Domestic Support Unit provides judicial services to the Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA), operated by the State of Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Ohio’s child support program is a federal, state and county partnership charged with creating and implementing programs that meet federal and state laws and regulations. The Lorain County Domestic Relations Court contracted for both judicial services and juvenile clerking services for 2006. The juvenile clerking contract totaled \$228,706 and the magistrate services contract totaled \$456,102. The contracts provide funding for the operation of the Domestic Support Unit and include full and partial reimbursement of salary and benefits for 20 court employees, including two magistrates.

The purpose of the Domestic Support Unit is to provide hearings to address all issues involving the support of children, including establishment, modification and contempt. The juvenile clerking unit provides staff to prepare and file all journal entries pertaining to child support in the Juvenile Clerk’s Office.

During the 2006 calendar year, the Domestic Support Unit conducted 5,367 hearings involving issues of child support, providing 3,544 hours of magistrate hearing time to conduct IV-D child support activities. The staff in the Juvenile Clerk’s Office registered 16,798 journal entries for filing during the twelve-month period of 2006.

<i>Hearings Conducted in 2006</i>	
Paternity.....	336
Contempt.....	2177
CNS.....	155
Arrears.....	352
Termination.....	1307
Modification.....	750
All Others.....	290
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>5367</b>

**COURT-SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAM**

The Lorain County Juvenile Court’s court-school liaison program addresses the attendance issues of students deemed to be truant from school. To address truancy, the program utilizes a formal process, which

involves the collaborative efforts of Lorain County Education Service Center, the participating school districts, the Lorain County Juvenile Court, and the Lorain County Prosecutor's Office.

The process for addressing truancy follows a continuum of approaches from prevention to intervention to prosecution. As a *preventative* measure, the school principal initiates the "process" with a letter to the parents of each student showing an early pattern of excessive absences. The letter explains the compulsory education laws, explains the district's school attendance policy, and advises of a referral to the court-school liaison program, if the problem continues.

When a student has accumulated five unexcused absences, he/she may be formally referred to the attendance officer by the school principal or assistant principal. Upon receiving a referral, it is the responsibility of the attendance officer serving the school to address the issue of truancy with the parent(s) and the child utilizing a number of *interventions*. Student attendance is monitored on a *weekly* basis to determine the interventions needed to address the attendance problem.

During the 2005 - 2006 school year, 88% of the 854 cases referred to the attendance officers responded to *interventions*. Of the 12% of cases which did not respond to interventions:

- 80 juveniles (9% of referrals) were referred to the Lorain County Prosecutor for Truancy charges.
- 27 adults (3% of cases) were referred to the Lorain County Prosecutor for charges of Failure to Send a Child to School and Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor.

Attendance Officers participate in the prosecution process through:

- Preparation of a narrative report, case materials, and investigative reports to support the prosecution of a case.
- Participation in all adult/ juvenile legal proceedings, in which the Attendance Officer initiated formal charges.
- Monitoring of the compliance of court orders.
- Filing a sworn affidavit with the Prosecutor's Office for the violation of court orders, which enables the Prosecutor's Office to file a motion for the violator to show good cause for failure to comply with a court order.

During the 2005-2006 school year, five Attendance Officers addressed 854 referrals from the following school districts (and alternative schools).

- Avon 52 referrals
- Avon Lake 26 referrals

- Clearview 123 referrals
- Columbia 15 referrals
- Elyria 229 referrals
- Firelands 22 referrals
- Keystone 22 referrals
- Midview 131 referrals
- Oberlin 51 referrals
- Sheffield/Sheffield Lake 69 referrals
- Wellington 14 referrals
- Lorain County Academy 18 referrals
- Lorain County JVS 49 referrals

A program social worker was contracted to address at-risk family issues, which interfere with the child’s attendance to school. During the 2005- 2006 school year, attendance officers referred seventy-three (73) “high risk” families to the program’s social worker. Following twelve weeks of case management by the social worker, seventy-four percent (74%) of the students referred to the social worker increased attendance to school.

**FAMILY EDUCATION COURT**

Functioning as an alternative to the traditional approach of addressing truancy within the court setting, the Family Education Court Program conducts proceedings within the school environment. A magistrate adds a formal dimension to the process of addressing truancy outside of the traditional courtroom.

In addition to a magistrate, the Family Education Court Program is managed by a small, cohesive Family Education Court team, which consists of a:

- School principal who initiates the process and supports/promotes the program within the school and the community.
- School counselor who functions as the family educator and the academic connection between the participating families and the school staff.
- Case manager (social worker) who serves as the family advocate and identifies/addresses “at risk” family issues, which interfere with attendance to school.
- Home counselor who assists the case manager, monitors participants’ attendance, and manages the aftercare program.

Formal charges are not filed against the parents/students participating in the program; therefore, hearings are conducted on an unofficial basis. Parents and students appear for hearings before the magistrate on a weekly basis. The case manager and the school counselor participate in

the weekly proceedings as family advocates. The teachers of the participating students participate in the hearings as advocates for their students, emphasizing student successes and positive behaviors, despite shortcomings.

Although shortcomings are addressed, the chief tenets of the Family Education Court process are incentives and positive reinforcement of the efforts made by the students, as well as the parents participating in the program.

The Family Education Court program is modeled after the Louisville (Kentucky) Truancy Court Program. Like the Louisville program, the Family Education Court program:

- Attempts to address psycho-socio family issues, which interfere with school attendance.
- Focuses on family strengths.
- Promotes positive reinforcement to change poor school attendance behavior.

Six students (and their parents) from the Roosevelt Elementary School in the Elyria City School District participated in the Family Education Court Program during the 2005-2006 school year. During the school year, the average number of unexcused absences per student decreased by eighty-one percent (81%) and the average number of tardies per student decreased by eighty-eight percent (88%).

## **DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION AND YOUTH SERVICES**

**Bill County, Director**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

The Department of Probation and Youth Services provides direct and indirect services for youth that have been referred to the Court for delinquent (misdemeanor and felony level) and status (ungovernable, curfew, etc) offenses. The department operates and/or facilitates nine direct service programs and three diversion programs. The department includes the Intake function that controls admissions to the Detention Home and conducts initial detention hearings. Department personnel make recommendations to the Magistrates and Judges on all cases.

The number of youth and families served in CY 2006 remained fairly constant from CY 2005. The department, however, has improved its targeted interventions with increased training and skill building of its staff, and contracting for specific services to address identified needs. The

Court has identified an increase in the number of cognitively challenged youth. The Court is identifying community partners, providing staff training, and exploring interventions to address this population.

The Department of Probation and Youth Services has been charged with identifying and incorporating “evidence based” practices and programs. Cognitive based therapy, Anger Reduction Therapy, and Anger Control Therapy are examples of evidence-based programs that have been used in 2006. Many of the Probation staff have been trained to facilitate these programs and utilize these skills in their one on one supervision of youth on probation. The Probation staff administers the Youth Level of Service Indicators (Y-LoSI) at regular intervals during the youth’s probation period. Scores on these measures assist the Court in effectively targeting services and interventions that result in a higher rate of successful completion of probation by reducing risk factors. This type of strength based approaches continue to be the foundation of our programs.

The Probation staff provides different levels of supervision to court-involved juveniles that remain in the community. The diverse strengths and needs of the juveniles and their families require unique interventions and levels of supervision. The programs and services follow:

### **COMMUNITY CONTROL**

Juveniles placed on General Community Control have been assessed as not needing significant and intensive Court services. However, they are required to complete a Court ordered case plan.

Juveniles placed on General Community Control are assigned a community control officer (CCO). The officer monitors the juvenile’s compliance of court orders and case plan through contact with the juvenile, school officials, parents and other people significant in the juvenile’s life.

The juvenile and family will be responsible for completing case plan components and following all rules of community control. The Officer is responsible for making reports to the Court regarding the youth’s progress. Rewards and sanctions are administered through continual oversight of the juvenile’s conduct.

Three teams are assigned to monitor specific geographical areas in Lorain County. The Lorain team supervised 207 juveniles in 2006. The Elyria team was responsible for 88 juveniles, with the remaining areas covered by Team 3, servicing 169 youth. 90% of the youth released from General Probation showed a decrease in risk factors as measured by the Level of Service Indicators (Y-LoSI).



The responsibilities of the CCO include notifying all parties of hearings, providing security services for the Court, participating in meetings with outside agencies, and assisting families in working with those agencies.

There are five General CCOs for Lorain County. In addition to supervising the youth placed on probation, they assist families in accessing community services, provide security for Court operations, and assist in collecting information for the Investigation and Referral Team. General Community Control Officers also provide supervision for those adults placed on supervision for Contributing to the Unruliness or Delinquency of a Minor.

The Court can place an adjudicated youth on Monitored Time. While on Monitored Time, the youth will not get direct services from a CCO, but will be required to report to the Community Control department on a predetermined basis. 53 youth were placed on this type of Community Control in 2006. Two Inside CCOs are responsible for this caseload. They make phone contact with the youth, parents, and others and report to the Court the progress of the youth. These CCOs also track continued cases and do initial interviews of youth and families referred for additional Court services.

### **IN-HOME DETENTION**

The In-Home Detention Program provides a service that offers an alternative to detaining a youth in the Detention Home. Youth designated for placement in the program are, generally, less serious offenders that do not appear to represent a danger to themselves or to the community.

The release of some youth will require the use of electronic monitoring equipment, which is supervised by program staff. Use of this equipment permits 24 hour monitoring of a youth's adherence to "home detention".

To ensure compliance, all youth accepted into the program are required to sign a contract. Parents, or guardians, are also required to pledge to ensure compliance and report any non-compliance.

Court personnel monitor the adjustment of the youth while they are in the program. Random home visits and phone calls are conducted. Staff will also visit schools and work sites to ensure compliance with the rules of the program and the signed contract. Violation of the rules could result in the child being remanded to detention in the secure facility until a final Court hearing.

In calendar year 2006, 172 youth were provided In-Home Detention services. 84% of the program enrollees successfully completed the

program requirements. 29 youth, 16%, were readmitted to the detention home.

## **COMMUNITY INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

The Community Intervention Program (CIP) provides intensive supervision and services to delinquent youth throughout Lorain County. A Judge or Magistrate as a disposition when adjudicated delinquent for a criminal offense places juveniles into the program. The target population is adjudicated youth ranging in age from 12 to 18 years.

The program is based on a traditional intensive supervision model, characterized by low caseloads, averaging 10-15 youth per probation officer. Each caseload is comprised of a team that includes a community control officer and an evening/weekend monitor. The juveniles placed in the program have a prescribed case plan based on identified risks and needs. The program operates on a four phase "level system". As the youth progresses through the levels, by demonstrating appropriate behavior and meeting case plan goals, the supervision is reduced.

The program participant may participate in various groups such as anger management, character development, employment skills, and art therapy. In 2006, all programs were restructured in an effort to incorporate a more cognitive behavioral approach. Cost Benefit Analysis and Functional Analysis are two cognitive behavioral approaches utilized within the art therapy services, as well as other program provided services. Parenting skills programs are also available and are sometimes mandated. Program participants in need of mental health and substance abuse services receive assistance through partnerships with various community agencies and service providers. Youth ordered into CIP are required to participate in community service and recreational activities to assist in building appropriate social skills.

In 2006, the program served 118 adjudicated youth.

### **Calendar Year 2006**

76% placed with felony level charges.

24% placed with misdemeanor charges.

71 youth were released from the program.

42 were released successfully (completed all court requirements and were satisfactorily released from court supervision).

## **SPECIALIZED SERVICES SEX OFFENDER PROGRAM**

Juveniles adjudicated delinquent for a sexual offense are referred for a sex offender risk assessment. The assessment determines appropriate recommendations, with options including community treatment, out-of-home placement, or commitment to the Ohio Department of Youth Services. For juveniles who remain in the community, the Community Control Officer (CCO) will design safety plans to provide adequate supervision of the offender and protection for the victim and the community. The CCOs supervise juveniles by monitoring their participation in sex offender specific treatment, and monitor the juveniles' behavior and actions at home, school and in the community, and supervise compliance with dispositional orders of the Court. The CCOs receive specific training to assist in identifying behaviors that can lead to further offending.

Offenders participate in individual and/or group therapy with local agency treatment providers. The CCO maintains frequent contact with the treatment providers to share information, observations, and interventions. Programming lasts between 18 and 24 months. Failure to complete all requirements of the program will result in further Court action probably requiring out of home placement.

Based on age and type of offense the Court may classify an offender as a Sexually Oriented Offender Registrant (JSORN). In 2006, ten juveniles were classified.

### **Calendar Year 2006**

44	Juveniles supervised and participated in treatment
13	Completed all Court orders and were released from Community Control
9	Juveniles committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services
1	Recidivist brought back to Court

### **MENTALLY ILL - MR/DD CASELOAD**

Juveniles who are lower functioning and/or have a significant mental health diagnosis are placed on this specialized caseload. These juveniles usually already have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), psychiatric and psychological treatment services, and/or in-home counseling in place prior to Court involvement. They will often need additional assessments, hospitalizations, and other intensive services due to their presenting needs.

The Community Control Officer (CCO) provides close supervision and facilitates communication between community service providers, the family, and the Court. This facilitation is vital in identifying and overcoming barriers, recognizing progress, and resolving problems of the child and family. Social Workers in the community, providing case management services, work closely with the CCO that is providing intensive supervision.

#### **Calendar Year 2006**

- 29 Juveniles placed in program
- 14 Successfully released from Community Control
- 2 Juveniles committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services

#### **BELLEFAIRE / JOP**

The Juvenile Offender Project (JOP) is a collaborative effort between the Court, Integrated Services Partnership of Lorain County, the Board of Mental Health, and Bellefaire Jewish Children's Bureau. This partnership provides an extensive assessment and psychological evaluation for juveniles currently involved with the Court, primarily for offenses of violence that have exhibited significant mental health issues. Bellefaire's evaluation is comprised of multiple testing tools, an assessment of the family, and charts and reports from previous service providers and school systems. Community Resources are recommended and services put in place to assist the juvenile and family. Bellefaire also provides a JOP / residential bed when the need for inpatient treatment is indicated.

A Court employee is designated to monitor and assist in the components of the case plans. The Court staff monitors and documents all contacts with the juvenile and family, attends staff meetings, makes home visits, participates in JOP / 4-C Cluster reviews, and provides transportation services. The MI / MRDD Community Control Officer works closely with the JOP participants.

#### **Calendar Year 2006**

- 6 Juveniles served
- 2 Juveniles released from Community Control
- 0 Committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services

#### **SUCCESS FOR YOUTH**

Success for Youth provides skill development for lower functioning, delinquent youth. Programming offers an opportunity to learn social skills, computer skills, and job skills to assist juveniles in obtaining employment and eventual independence. Success for Youth focuses on

males and females from Elyria and Lorain, aged 15 – 17, who are experiencing difficulties due to their low level of intellectual functioning.

Catholic Charities collaborates with the Court to provide case management, social skills development, assistance with career development, preparation of resumes, computer skills and realistic job skills training that is designed to meet educational and employment needs, as well as personal development.

**Calendar Year 2006**

- 28 Juveniles served
- 12 Successfully released from Community Control
- 1 Juvenile committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services

**JUVENILE DRUG COURT**

The Lorain County Juvenile Drug Court program provides a therapeutic and strengths-based approach in assisting juveniles who have been adjudicated delinquent and have a significant drug and alcohol and/or substance abuse history linked to their offenses. The program is funded, in part, by a grant through the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services.

The Honorable Judge Paulette J. Lilly presided over the team of the Juvenile Drug Court in 2006. The team consists of the Program Manager, Community Control Officer/Case Manager, a Community Resource Manager, and the Addiction Services Counselor from the Nord Center. Weekly hearings are held with each participant to review both positive and negative behavior. The Juvenile Drug Court utilizes contingency-based rewards to recognize positive behavior. Judge Debra L. Boros will preside over the Juvenile Drug Court and its team in 2007.

Participants must abstain from drugs and alcohol, demonstrate positive behavior in the community and school, obtain employment, and cooperate with treatment components to advance through the four levels of the program. Parents and/or guardians are also participants in this process. They must attend Court hearings with their child and Family Night sessions with the treatment providers. The Court makes every effort to assist families in overcoming barriers that may inhibit success. Upon successful completion of all components, the presenting charges are dismissed. Failure to comply with components results in termination from the program and the case being set for disposition.

**Calendar Year 2006**

	<b>MALES</b>	<b>FEMALES</b>
Participants	17	4
Terminations	7	3
Graduations	4	0

**FAMILY DRUG COURT**

Family Drug Court is funded through a grant from the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS). Family Drug Court assists clients of Lorain County Children Services (LCCS) who are drug/alcohol dependent and their children have either been adjudicated abused, neglected or dependent, or the clients are involved with LCCS on unofficial / In-Home cases. Participation in Family Drug Court is voluntary, but upon agreeing to participate, a Court order or agreement through a Contract of Participation, requires compliance. Compliance is expected with all program components. The ultimate goals are for participants to retain or regain custody of their children, working towards completion of the case plan components, and maintaining sobriety. Failure of compliance can result in LCCS seeking permanent family / relative placement, temporary custody, permanent custody, foster care or adoption.

The Family Drug Court team is comprised of the Honorable Judge Debra L. Boros and Magistrate James Gemelas (who preside over the Family Drug Court), Program Coordinator, Treatment Counselor, a representative from Voices for Children (guardian ad litem), Genesis House, Elyria YWCA, Faith House, the Nord Center, and Lorain County Children Services. Collaboration between agencies provides In-Kind services addressing drug/alcohol dependency, parenting skills, domestic violence awareness, life skills preparation, employment assistance and assistance in obtaining housing. Participants are also referred to mental health agencies for individual counseling, parenting skills and domestic violence sessions.

**Calendar Year 2006**

- 30 Women served
- 18 Children returned to mother's custody
- 17 Children placed with a parent or relative
- 7 Children placed in foster care
- 5 Family Drug Court Graduates

**JUVENILE INTAKE DEPARTMENT**

The Juvenile Intake Department, located at the Boys' Detention Home, performs several functions for the Court. This unit handles the following:

- Unofficial complaints
- First offense shoplifting cases
- Tobacco violations
- Arraignments on official status and domestic violence charges
- Unofficial hearings for intervention and diversion purposes

The Intake magistrates are available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to respond to law enforcement's requests for admissions to the boys and girls' detention homes. The following was heard in 2006:

- 2,072 referrals were reviewed and processed
- 304 unofficial hearings conducted
- 502 hearings on official charges on non-detained juveniles
- 714 preliminary detention/arraignment hearings and release hearings for juveniles admitted to the detention homes

The Adolescent Domestic Violence/Anger Management Program is a collaboration between Catholic Charities and the Court to provide an alternative to post-adjudication detention. When children involved in domestic violence are admitted to the DH or Turning Point, a social worker will screen, assess, and then provide group sessions to juveniles and families. There were 198 referrals to this program in 2006.

The Lorain County Juvenile Intake Department's responsibilities include oversight of *Diversion Services* programming and supervision of juveniles placed on community control for status offenses, an act that would not be illegal if committed by an adult. There were 401 referrals for diversion services in 2006. Eighty-five families availed themselves of these services and another 30 families participated in the program after an unofficial hearing. Community control officers contacted the families, identified issues, and made referrals to appropriate community services. Follow-up communications were made to ensure that services were accessed and were appropriate. 107 youth were placed on status offender probation. These youth were provided supervision and an opportunity for additional Court services.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMS**

### ***Yes Program***

The Youth Education Shoplifting Program (YES Program) is an educational, rehabilitative program offered to juveniles referred to the Court for first time petty theft/shoplifting offenses. Participants are ordered into the program from both official and unofficial cases heard by the intake magistrates.

In 2006, 100 juveniles completed the program with a consistent recidivism rate between 1-3%.

### *Eduvention/Substance Abuse Education Program*

The Court's Eduvention Program is designed to provide drug and alcohol education and information to juveniles, and parents, referred to the Court for misdemeanor alcohol or drug offenses. Juveniles and their parent/guardian can attend the four sessions of the program in lieu of a delinquency charge being filed. Eligible participants are typically, but not exclusively, first time offenders. Some participants are ordered to attend the sessions. A record of their attendance is docketed into the record.

The Lorain County Alcohol and Drug Abuse (LCADA) Services provide, at no cost to the participants, Eduvention, off-site from Court operations. Pre and Post program testing, as well as a screening instrument, is administered to participants to determine the need for further assistance or treatment.

Plans in 2007 include providing an individual session to families who, through the Eduvention process, are determined to need additional intervention.

### **Calendar Year 2006**

345 referrals to the program

251 completed

21 completed substituted programs

90 were officially charged and arraigned

### **Internal Interventions**

Assessment and counseling were provided In-House in one of three ways.

A psychologist, as noted in the Investigation and Referral Team section, assessed juveniles, upon the request of the Probation Department or the Investigation and Referral Team. This report aided in the dispositional recommendations made by staff and often proved to be an invaluable resource.

Alcohol and other Drug Issues were often ferreted out by a licensed alcohol and drug counselor, who serves our Court as a Screener for our Juvenile Drug Court, as a grant writer, and as a counselor on substance abuse or dependency cases. During 2006, there were 198 referrals to our staff person.



The third professional staff person is the Education and Program Specialist. Overseeing the psycho-educational groups, providing clinical supervision to staff (as needed), providing mental health interventions (including screening and ongoing counseling) to a select group of children, and facilitating groups are just a few of the many tasks of this position.

## JUVENILE STATISTICS

<b>Age and Gender of Youth</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Age 9	0	0	0
Age 10	0	5	5
Age 11	7	14	21
Age 12	31	48	79
Age 13	54	108	162
Age 14	112	232	344
Age 15	160	367	527
Age 16	199	439	638
Age 17	150	450	600
Age 18	20	68	88
Age 19	0	1	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>1732</b>	<b>2465</b>

<b>Where Youth Reside</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Amherst	24	57	81
Avon	17	40	57
Avon Lake	21	52	73
Columbia Station	5	19	24
Elyria	213	495	708
Grafton	16	47	63
Lagrange	7	21	28
Lorain	313	615	928
North Ridgeville	14	80	94
Oberlin	20	40	60
Sheffield Lake/Sheffield Village	12	69	81
South Amherst	0	3	3
Vermilion	26	64	90
Wellington	6	33	39
Other	39	97	136
<b>Totals</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>1732</b>	<b>2465</b>

<b>Reason for Referral</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Aggravated Murder	0	1	1
Attempted Murder	0	4	4
Assault	102	188	290
Arson	0	10	10
Domestic Violence	69	121	190
Theft	70	124	194
Ungovernable	77	114	191
Alcohol Consumption	52	126	178
Drug Offenses	20	124	144
Criminal Damaging	12	63	75
Disorderly Conduct	159	205	364
Receiving Stolen Property	7	59	66
Menacing	15	59	74
Trespassing	6	73	79
Burglary	9	91	100
Breaking & Entering	1	33	34
U.U.M.V.	14	15	29
Truancy	51	58	109
Obstructing Official Business	10	40	50
Criminal Mischief	5	21	26
Robbery	2	51	53
Sex Offenses	1	21	22
Runaway	3	4	7
Rape	0	16	16
Weapons Offenses	5	30	35
Vandalism	3	19	22
Resisting Arrest	1	9	10
Falsification	12	15	27
Telephone Harassment	6	4	10
Riot	20	16	36
Escape	0	5	5
Kidnapping	0	0	0
Vehicular Homicide	0	2	2
Other	1	11	12
<b>Totals</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>1732</b>	<b>2465</b>

<b>Dispositions</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fines & Costs and/or Restitution	259	735	994
Fines & Costs and/or Restitution – Suspended	182	411	593
Placed on Community Control – Status	21	25	46
Placed on General Community Control / Felony	24	68	92
Placed on General Community Control / Misdemeanor	27	52	79
Placed on Community Control – Other / Felony	1	16	17
Placed on Community Control – Other / Misdemeanor	3	9	12
Placed on Community Control – CIP / Felony	4	31	35
Placed on Community Control – CIP / Misdemeanor	5	10	15
Placed on Community Control – Sex Offender / Felony	0	12	12
Placed on Community Control – Sex Offender / Misdem.	0	1	1
Residential Facility Placement / Felony	6	19	25
Residential Facility Placement / Misdemeanor	7	8	15
Placed on Monitored Time / Felony	11	26	37
Placed on Monitored Time / Misdemeanor	10	28	38
Continued on Probation	48	108	156
Dismissed	75	143	218
Suspended Commitment / Sentence	2	21	23
Transferred to Another Court	25	61	86
Transferred to Adult Court	0	17	17
Judicial Review	0	3	3
Parole Revocation	1	4	5
Unavailability	76	233	309
Serious Youth Offender	0	2	2
Committed To ODYS	3	58	61
Committed to Adult Correctional Facility	1	13	14
Sentenced to Detention Home / Felony	5	8	13
Sentenced to Detention Home / Misdemeanor	6	9	15
Other	1	5	6
Courtesy Supervision	1	9	10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>2145</b>	<b>2949</b>

<b>Traffic Dispositions</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fine & Costs	443	618	1061
Fine & Costs – Suspended	8	22	30
License Suspended	43	104	147
Transfer to Another Court	91	118	209
Dismissed	28	60	88
License Restricted	111	189	300
Unavailability	32	63	95
Other	3	1	4
Seatbelt Mail-in Waiver	24	47	71
<b>Totals</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>1222</b>	<b>2005</b>

<b>Traffic Violations</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Speeding	334	491	825
Traffic Control Device	84	101	185
Failure To Yield	39	34	73
No Divers License	38	74	112
Failure To Control	32	52	84
Assured Clear Distance	99	93	192
Seat Belt	34	70	104
Improper Lane Usage	12	36	48
Driving Under Suspension	19	37	56
Reckless Operation	5	32	37
License Plates	7	19	26
Lights Violation	5	7	12
Alcohol Offenses	8	26	34
Improper Backing	7	8	15
Leaving the Scene	4	15	19
Improper Turn	7	13	20
Squealing Tires	0	6	6
Unsafe Vehicle	5	10	15
No Muffler	0	0	0
Noise Violation	1	10	11
Tinted Windows	0	2	2
Other	3	23	26
Jaywalking	3	6	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>1165</b>	<b>1911</b>

# **RESIDENTIAL SERVICES**

**Dale Kaminski, Director**

## ***INTRODUCTION***

The Juvenile Facilities Complex provides locked and unlocked residential placement and shelter care for male and female juveniles. The complex consists of two detention centers and four juvenile program facilities in a campus-style setting.

## **LORAIN COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION HOME**

**Boy's Detention Home 9967 S. Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria 44035**

**Girl's Detention Home 9911 S. Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria 44035**

The purpose of the detention homes is to provide secure confinement of appropriate juveniles under age 18. Judges and Magistrates determine if detention is appropriate as indicated by statute or the Ohio Supreme Court Rules. Unruly or ungovernable youth may not be placed in detention beyond twenty-four hours. Delinquent youth may be confined to detention by an order of the Court up to a period of 90 days. Since 2004, juveniles were able, by statute, to be sentenced to the Lorain County Detention Home for up to 90 days. In 2006, 27 youthful offenders were sentenced to the Detention Home.

The Lorain County Detention Homes are licensed and monitored by the Ohio Department of Youth Services. The facilities are designed to house 44 males and 12 females. The staff ratio during daylight hours is 12:1, with a ratio increasing to 25:1 during the 10 - 6 am shift.

During the admission process, each youth is administered the Maysi II, a screening instrument for mental health issues. Applewood Centers, a public mental health agency, will conduct an assessment if issues are highlighted. The medical staff is available, at any time, for consultation and have regularly scheduled hours. Within seven days of admission, the detention home nurse or doctor physically examines every juvenile and administers a tuberculosis screening.

While in detention, education continues year-round through the Educational Service Center of Lorain County. Upgrades now provide for twenty-five individual computer stations with emphasis placed on the state proficiency exams.

Security and safety in both the boys' and girls' detention home remains a priority with the Court, with review and improvement of the facility and procedures an ongoing process.

## **2006 Admissions**

766 males

264 females

1030 juvenile admissions

Average length of stay: 20 days

Average daily population: 57

## **PATHWAYS GROUP HOME / STEPPING STONE RESIDENTIAL CENTER**

1076 Infirmary Rd., Elyria 44035

1064 Infirmary Rd., Elyria 44035

Pathways Group home and Stepping Stone Residential Center are non-secure court-operated programs for male and female offenders, ages 13-17. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services licenses and monitors the facilities, which are limited to 10 female and 20 males.

Pathways and Stepping Stone prepare residents for successful reintegration into the community. The program assists juveniles in learning how to better manage personal problems and family issues, as well as develop an increased ability to access community resources, identify career opportunities, and develop pre-vocational job skills.

Referrals to Pathways and Stepping Stone are made through the internal processes of the Court. The Department of Probation, Investigation and Referral Team, Magistrates, Lorain County Children Services, school counselors, and mental health workers provide input. The Judge makes the final determination and places appropriate children into the programs.

The formats at Pathways and Stepping Stone parallel each other. Each are one-year programs divided into three phases, with Phase I and II lasting 90 days and Phase III the remaining six months. In Phase I, the juvenile resides on-site with some limited home visits. Phase II is a transition period with the juvenile residing in the home during the week and at the facility during the weekend. In Aftercare, Phase III, the juvenile resides in his home and is supervised by the CCO, referred to, in the facilities, as an Outreach Worker.

The Educational Service Center of Lorain County provides the educational services for residents in the facilities. There are two certified teachers and one part-time tutor.

Case plans are developed for each juvenile. Areas addressed through service providers include anger management, parenting, health, living skills, individual and family counseling, and drug and alcohol issues. Boy and Girl Scout troops provide opportunities through training, projects, and camping trips.

<b>2006</b>	<b>Pathways</b>	<b>Stepping Stone</b>
Participants	28	56
New Admission	15	30
'05 Carry Over	13	26
Successful Completion	9	11
Committed to ODYS	2	10
Released to Drug Court	0	0
Job Corps	0	0
Detention Home	3	5
Bind Over	0	0
Lorain County Jail	0	1
Currently in Program	15	26
Transferred to CIP	0	1
Transferred to Com Control	0	1
Moved out of County	0	1
Released as A.W.O.L.	0	0

### TURNING POINT

Turning Point is a non-secure residential facility providing short-term care (maximum 14 days) for 5 males and 5 females ages 12-17. The juveniles are involved in domestic dispute situations or selected status offenses. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services licenses Turning Point. Turning Point provides 24-hour supervision and guidance by trained child-care staff. In addition, a full time social worker provides services to the juveniles and their families with appropriate community service referrals.

Admissions to the shelter are approved by the Intake Department and judicial orders. Turning Point does not function as a sentencing or dispositional alternative. The Shelter provides a program for youth in crisis or emergency situations.

The goal of Turning Point is to return the youth to their home after a brief respite without further intervention by the court. During 2006, Turning Point served a total of 196 youth - 104 males and 92 females.

## **DEPARTMENT OF SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Marilyn Parker-Jeffries, Director**

### *INTRODUCTION*

This department provides services and support to the community and court staff. The department is comprised of the following: The Pay-Back Program, Merit Program, Voices for Children, and Juvenile Clerks.

## **THE PAY-BACK PROGRAM**

Restitution is an essential component in the rehabilitation process. It is also the means whereby victims find recourse through the justice system. Through this program, the offenders are held accountable for their financial obligations to victims.

The Pay-Back Program has four objectives:

- Ensure the offender's compliance with Court orders
- Provide a work experience that allows the offender to make restitution
- Provide victims with access to the Court for reasonable redress
- Facilitate communication between the Court and all involved parties: i.e. victims, prosecutors, insurance companies, etc.

The process is initiated by a Court order for restitution. The program contacts the victims and they are required to supply the Court documentation for their loss. Once the restitution amount is determined, the juvenile is given two payment options:

1. Execution of a monitored, monthly payment schedule
2. Placement in a court developed jobsite

At the job site, juveniles are credited with minimum wage compensation and payment to the victim is made through the Lorain County Treasurer's Office. The program partners with numerous jobsites throughout the county. The job sites provide a work experience for the offenders and on site supervisors evaluate the offender's work performance.

### **Statistics for 2006**

- 864 cases referred for investigation of restitution
- 204 served
- 110 carried over from 2005
- 94 admissions
- 106 terminated
- 85% successfully terminated- restitution paid in full
- \$24,984.99 collected through payment schedules and dispersed to victims
- 1,241 hours of community service was performed, earning \$6,515.44
- \$31,500.43 in victim payments

## **MERIT**

The Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant, through the Ohio Department of Youth Services, which had been funding the MERIT



Program, has been continually reduced. The coordinator, now funded through the general fund, has responsibility and oversight of the following three components:

*Anger Management*

In 2006, the Court's Education and Program Coordinator oversaw two anger management programs. The programs provide basic and intermediate psycho-educational groups to aid juveniles (and their parents) in addressing anger issues. Anger Control Training, facilitated by Psychiatric and Psychological Services is a basic nine-week program, while Anger Replacement Training, facilitated by Court staff, is a more intensive twenty session, ten week, program.

Anger Control Training	81 juveniles ordered 30 completed that were ordered in 2006 12 completed that were ordered prior to 2006
Anger Replacement Training	62 juveniles ordered in 2006 18 completed that were ordered in 2006 5 completed that were ordered prior to 2006

*Community Service*

In 2006, 1,087 juveniles were ordered to complete community service hours. Of the 1,087 juveniles ordered, 559 completed the hours ordered. An additional 285 juveniles completed the hours that were ordered prior to 2006. There were a total of 13,859.5 hours completed in community service during the year.

The MERIT Coordinator is creative in finding and creating sites for juveniles to fulfill their community service obligation. This is the second year the program collected donations, providing these donations to the Community Impact Center, First Congregational Unity Church of Christ in Elyria, and Blessing House. There was a total of \$5,969.50 in non-perishable goods, clothing, diapers, and household goods donated, which accounted for 2,984.75 hours of community service completed. In lieu of working at a "traditional" community service site, juveniles were asked to donate goods. For every \$10.00 in items donated, five hours of community service was subtracted from their hours.

*Psycho-Educational Groups*

Psycho-educational groups are interventions intended to reduce the risk factors associated with criminal behavior. During 2006, the Court utilized evidence based programming to address criminogenic factors. Evidence

based programs are those whose outcomes have been researched and found to be effective. Training was provided to staff to assist in the facilitation and presentation of these groups.

### **Strengthening Families 10-14 and 14-17.**

The Strengthening Families Program is a joint effort between Catholic Charities and the Lorain County Domestic Relations Court. The program's goals are to prepare youth for their teen years, avoid problems with drugs and alcohol, and strengthen family communication. Parents discuss what youth in the age range of their group are like, making rules and enforcing consequences, how to solve problems with youth, and ways to show love and support. The youth learn how to handle frustration, resist peer pressure, appreciate parent/caregivers, and how to get along with others.

### **Thinking for a Change**

Thinking for a Change is a cognitive behavioral program that addresses problem solving, social skills, and cognitive self-change. The program utilizes role-plays, as well as other appropriate interventions. The goal is to change behavior as a result of changing thoughts.

### **Girls Circle**

The Pathways to the Future curriculum is a skill building support circle for use with at-risk or court-involved girls. It examines thoughts, beliefs, and actions about friendship, trust, authority figures, mother/daughter relationships, sexuality, dating violence, HIV, drug abuse, stress, and goal setting. It encourages girls to explore their choices and decision making through lively, prepared discussions and activities.

## **VOICES FOR CHILDREN**

### **Lorain County CASA/GAL Program**

Voices for Children (VFC) is affiliated with the nationally recognized Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). Voices for Children's purpose is to provide guardian ad litem (GALs) to the Court to advocate on behalf of the abused, neglected, and dependent children coming before it. The GAL volunteer undertakes an investigation into the circumstances and family life of the child. They review records, interview parents, relatives and foster parents, talk to teachers, neighbors and most importantly, the child. Upon completion of the investigation, the GAL appears in court, provides the information and makes a recommendation to the Court as to what course of action is in the best interest of the child.

GAL volunteers complete 30 hours of pre-service training, which includes four classroom sessions (28 hrs) and courtroom observations (2hrs). All GALs are screened, interviewed and a criminal background check through the Web-Check System is completed. The Judges administer an

oath and the volunteers are then recognized as Officers of the Court. In addition, there is a continuing 12 hours of education required annually.

The success of the Voices for Children Program is due to the commitment of the volunteers recruited from the community, program and support staff, private citizens, community organizations, the business community and the Voices for Children Board. The Board assists the program in fund raising, marketing and public awareness of the Voices for Children Program.

### **2006 Funding**

Court:	\$ 20,636
State:	\$ 0
County:	\$ 113,000
VOCA (Grant):	\$ 32,023
Fundraising:	\$ 4,400
Foundation SVAA	\$ 6,535
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$176,594</b>

### **Volunteers**

The volunteers represented a wide diversity, similar to the population of Lorain County.

- 174 active volunteers
- Ages - 21 to 60+
- 132 females and 42 males
- Education spans high school graduate to post college graduate
- Diverse racial mix – Caucasian (148), African American (17), Hispanic (6), Asian (1), Native American (1)
- Employment status - not employed (31), part time (36), full time (76), retired (30), Student (1)
- Volunteer average - 1 Volunteer / 2.69 children

### **Children**

- Total number served in 2006: 569 (281 Female, 288 Male)\*
- Racial makeup: African American (115), Caucasian (335), Hispanic (44), Bi-Racial (72), Native American (2), Asian (1)

**Total Children whose cases were closed in 2006: 230.**

\*Note: Count of Petitions/Allegations may exceed number of children if multiple allegations per child.

### **Reasons for # of closed cases**

Adoption:	11
Case Transferred:	0
Child aged out of system:	1
Death of child:	0

Placed with Legal Guardians:	94
Returned to Family:	6
Protective Supervision Terminated:	84
Case Dismissed:	27
Protective Custody Terminated:	0
Requested Lawyer/GAL:	5
GAL Withdrew:	2

### **Types of Petitions**

Abuse	1
Abuse/Dependency	2
Abuse/Neglect/Dependency	26
Abuse/Neglect	1
Delinquency	0
Neglect	8
Dependency/Neglect	513
Divorce/Custody	7
Dependency	27

### **Allegations**

Custody Dispute	0
Dependency	19
Dependency/Neglect	480
Educational Neglect	0
Emotional Abuse	0
Medical Neglect	5
Neglect	11
Physical Abuse	12
Sexual Abuse	4
Abandonment	3

## **DEPARTMENT OF FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

Deborah Tansey, Director

### ***INTRODUCTION***

The Fiscal Department is comprised of three departments, the Financial Accounting Department (Fiscal), the Grants Department (Grants) and the Information Systems Department (Systems).

### **Fiscal Department**

The Fiscal Department has responsibility for financial processing and reporting, including accounting, processing payroll, benefits, and Court appointed counsel payments.

The Fiscal Department prepares and monitors the Court's annual budget, recording revenue and processing payments of more than \$11 million annually.

On a bi-weekly basis, over 200 time sheets were checked for accuracy and documented use of sick and vacation leave. Once completed, a payroll of approximately \$279,000 was generated and disbursed each pay cycle. In addition to processing payroll payments in excess of \$7 million in 2006, benefits of approximately \$1.8 million dollars in health premiums and life insurance were processed and monitored.

In the calendar year 2006, the Fiscal Department processed 37 new hires through their initial payroll and benefit packages, explaining court policy regarding vacation and sick leave, as well as various life and health insurance benefits. The Fiscal Department tracks accrued sick and vacation leave for the Court and uses the information to prepare the Court's Compensated Absences Report for the County's Certified Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

In 2006 the Fiscal Department processed more than \$389,000 of payments to Court appointed counsel.

Fiscal also maintains the asset inventory records, including preparing the Court's Annual Fixed Asset Inventory for the County's Certified Annual Financial Report.

#### Grant Writing and Management

The Grants Department is responsible for researching grant opportunities available through state, federal and local agencies, writing grant proposals and monitoring grant and entitlement programs received. The Grants Department is also responsible for recording and monitoring Special Revenue funds throughout the Court. In CY 2006, Grants obtained and monitored \$3.5 million dollars of revenue and expenditures.

#### Systems Management

The Systems Management Unit is responsible for the Court's computer hardware, software and related systems. The Court's key computer system is the Courtview system that maintains Juvenile Court's docketing, case, judicial, and management systems.

In 2006, the Systems Department designed, populated, and implemented a Court website to better serve the citizens of Lorain County. The Systems Department, also, began the development of an intranet system to improve communication throughout the Court. Both projects will continue to be enhanced and expanded in 2007.

**For the calendar year 2006, the Domestic Relations Court's General Fund expenses were as follows:**

Judicial/Administrative/Divorce Services	\$2,578,983
Juvenile Probation	2,319,183
Juvenile Detention Home	1,818,506
Domestic Support	668,858
Pathways Group Home	274,457
Turning Point Shelter	343,121
Multi-Purpose Building	<u>13,941</u>
<b>Total County General Fund</b>	<b><u>\$8,017,049</u></b>

**Various State and Federal Pass-through grant and reimbursement programs:**

Ohio Department of Youth Services		
Youth Services Grant		\$2,025,189
School-Liaison Mediation (Title II Fed pass thru)		50,785
Ohio Department of Job & Family Services		
Program supported: (Title IV-D) Domestic Support		456,840
Program supported: (Title IV-E) Various		329,302
Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Services		
Program supported: Drug Court		132,608
Ohio Department of Mental Health		
Program supported: Juvenile (Violent) Offender		46,594
Ohio Department of Criminal Justice Services		
Program supported: MERIT Project		38,519
Program supported: AIM PROGRAM (Byrne Grant)		50,785
Ohio Department of Education		
Program supported: Detention Home – Food Service		97,429
Ohio Attorney General’s Office		
Program supported: Voices for Children		38,558
Local School Districts (Fees for Service)		
Educational Service Center		67,200
Elyria City School District		67,200
Lorain County Joint Vocational School		<u>33,600</u>
Program supported: Truancy Intervention		<u>\$168,000</u>
Miscellaneous Non-General Fund Receipts		
Stepping Stone Reimbursements		\$91,683
Total local, state and federal resources (non-county)		<u>\$3,526,292</u>
<b>Total 2006 General Fund and Grants Programs</b>		<b><u>\$11,543,341</u></b>

**The Domestic Relations Division of the Lorain County Court of Common Pleas is sincerely grateful to the many agencies, community leaders and providers that all work toward the common goal of providing effective and efficient services to the citizens of Lorain County.**

**This goal, coupled with the creative vision, energy, and passion of those involved, allows this Court to continue being a positive force in addressing the needs of the community.**

**We sincerely thank all those who contributed their time, energy, resources, and effort into making Lorain County a leader among Courts in the state of Ohio.**

Lorain County Court of Common Pleas  
Domestic Relations Division and Juvenile Branch  
Lorain County Justice Center  
225 Court Street  
Elyria, Ohio 44035



Doug Messer  
*Court Administrator*

*225 copies @ \$3.70 each*