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# JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

## From the Director - Torri Lynn "Retirement"

After nearly 26 years with the Juvenile Department Bill Jordan is retiring. Bill began his employment with the department in 1984 as a Juvenile Counselor with a caseload of nearly 200 youth. At that time the Juvenile Department was supervised by the Court and each Counselor carried both delinquency and dependency cases. Linn County did not have a detention facility and contracted 2 beds with Marion County. Bill often had to drive all over the state after talking another facility into allowing us to detain a youth. Getting kids into detention as a sanction was extremely difficult and it was not unusual for a youth to have court ordered days but never be able to implement them. Bill consistently attended the Youth Services Team (YST) meetings finding value in the agencies working together to help youth. The YST process is going strong today with each area of our county and the Juvenile Department is represented at each meeting. Bill was also one of the first Counselors to have a "High Risk" caseload, defined as youth who were near to being removed from the home. Bill has been a supervisor in the department since 1994 and has been involved in some degree with the hiring of every clerical staff, probation officer and manager currently employed by the department. Bill has been recognized by each of the four Director's he has served under as someone who is dedicated to improving his knowledge and skills. He has high personal standards and ethics and serves as a model for others. Mr. Jordan has been an asset to the Linn County Juvenile Department and the community he serves. We cannot replace the knowledge, experience and the history Bill brings to the department. We will strive to maintain the course that he and others before him have set upon to make our department well respected within our community and our State.



## Linn County Juvenile Department "Adolescent Brains?"

The Linn County Juvenile Department in partnership with the Safe School Healthy Students Grant and Linn Benton Community College sponsored a training bringing Karen Williams, MSSW, from Texas, to provide two days of training on the latest research of the adolescent brain. Karen presented an enormous amount of information about the adolescent brain and the stages of development. She discussed the effects of trauma on kids and how it relates to their reactions to the different environments and some signs and behaviors you might expect to see from these youth suffering from living in chaotic lifestyles. Trust was another topic of discussion and emphasized that until kids have their basic needs met they will have difficulty learning and trusting adults. In both days of the workshops time was spent discussing essential brain chemicals, Serotonin (Sara)– related to thinking, learning, judgment and Norepinephrine (Nora) – Fight or Flight, attention, anxiety and aggression. In order for learning to take place students need to have their brains controlled by "Sara". Many youth have "Nora" take over when interacting with adults because of their life experiences and their basic need to protect themselves physically and emotionally. One key point was the fact that adolescence is a time of great opportunity ("The Door is Open"), and many great changes can occur. It is also the time when the brain is most susceptible to damage from stress, trauma and alcohol or other drugs. Even youth who have had very damaging lives are able, with great help and effort, to repair the damage and learn pro-social ways of dealing with their emotions. Many comments from the training evaluations focused on implementation, "Now that we know, how do we implement?" Invitations were sent out to all people who had attended the workshops to gather on November 17<sup>th</sup> and develop a plan on how to implement what we learned. Some great ideas were discussed and a plan is being developed. Our next meeting is scheduled for January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010 3:30pm at the ESD. Please join us to help implement this important work.



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**Vision:** To provide public safety by helping youth and families achieve positive change.

**Mission:** To increase public safety by coaching youth and families to make positive choices through education, skill building and community partnerships.



## Community Partnerships “Prevention Efforts”

The Juvenile Department received a new probation officer position through the Safe Schools Healthy Students Grant distributed by the U.S. Department of Education. The four year grant provides \$1.5 million dollars per year to the Linn Benton Lincoln ESD in partnership with a number of agencies to expand on existing services in Linn County and fill the gaps in the continuum from early childhood through adolescence to adulthood. The selection process was unique because the purpose of this position is for the probation officer to teach social skills techniques to youth. As part of the selection process the candidates had to demonstrate for the interview panel teaching a skill set to a boy and girl currently in the fourth grade. The candidates were evaluated on the introduction of the topic to the youth, their preparation, their interactions with the youth, and how well they used learning aids. Shanna Turner, a Linn Benton Juvenile Detention Center worker, was selected and began her new assignment in September at Calapooia Middle School and the Albany Options School. The school was able to identify a group of students viewed as “high risk” for school failure, dropping out or being expelled and having behavioral problems. Shanna began doing gender specific groups right away during one of the elective periods and has just recently completed the first semester. The department is in the process of developing more programming for a male specific group which will begin in January. Shanna also meets with a number of youth individually throughout the day targeting improved grades, attendance and a decrease in behavioral referrals. Another portion of Shanna’s time will be used to develop a framework to help the adults working with youth deal with day to day youth crisis’. Shanna has attended the Life Spaces Crisis Intervention (LSCI) training and will be a resource to teachers as this program is implemented county wide. A primary goal of this portion of the grant is developing a common language used by the adults so that youth are getting the same messages consistently even if it is another agency.

