

# KANE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER



## A Note from the Superintendent

It is important to always keep moving forward and to strive to improve our facility and the services we provide. Equally important is understanding why the facility is successful and acknowledging those responsible.

The Juvenile Justice Center partners with the Kane County Regional Office of Education to provide educational services to our kids. Our teachers have been in the classrooms since the pandemic began and I couldn't ask for a more dedicated and innovative group of educators. The ROE advocates for our kids and is supportive of our mission and facility. Through grants applied for on our behalf, the ROE has assisted us in creating a nurturing and student-focused environment.

Catherine Tilly is an amazing artist and an even better person. She has been tremendously generous of her time and talents. Catherine cares about our kids and is responsible for the wonderful murals throughout our facility. While detention is the last place many people would want to spend their time - especially during a pandemic - Catherine has been here, keeping our kids engaged with art projects and assisting her in painting murals.

Few people care about or take the time understand why kids end up in detention, or empathize with the challenges of working in detention. Jenny Maxwell is one of those people who cares. Be it providing clothing, hygiene items or snacks for the kids, Jenny is always thinking of ways she can make a difference. She and the wonderful people at Random Acts Matter have also partnered to sponsor a coat drive and provide meals for our youth counselors.

The Juvenile Justice Center's maintenance people, cooks and cleaning crew do not get recognized often enough, but without them, the facility could not function.

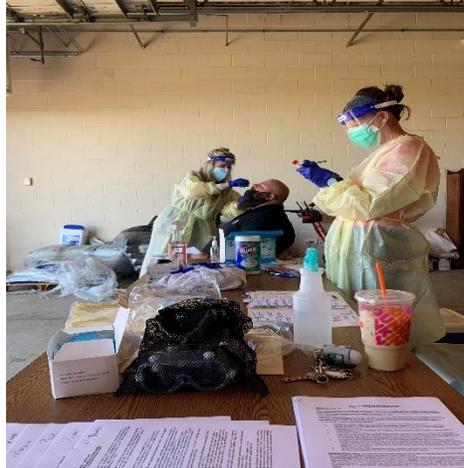
Above all, I am thankful for the dedicated youth counselors, supervisors, mental health clinicians and nurses of the Juvenile Justice Center. Those who have been around me long enough probably get tired of hearing me talk about the challenges of working in detention and the type of person it takes to excel in this field. The added stress of working through a pandemic can test the resolve of the most dedicated and caring people. Yet, time and again, our team puts the needs of others in front of their own. They are some of the most patient and talented people you will find and I am honored to work side by side with them.

*Mike Davis*

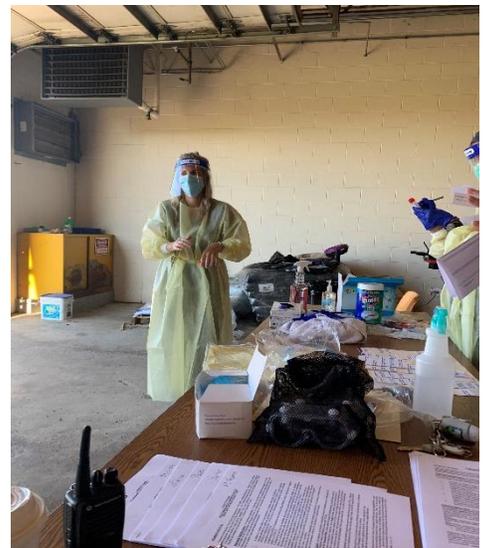
## Contents

Superintendent's Note	1
COVID-19 Recovery	2
Partnership with FSA	3
Remote Learning	3
Apple Orchard	4
Mr. Pawola	5
DCFS and WebEx	5
Murals	6
New Furniture	7
Ms. Dittmer	8
Focus Groups	9
T-Shirt Design Contest	10
Donations	11
Christmas	12
Halloween	13
Valentine's for Vets	13

## COVID-19 Recovery



Through mitigation strategies and a herculean effort by our team, the JJC did not experience its first case of COVID-19 until August 2020. To date, we have had 13 employees and 6 residents test positive for the virus. We are grateful to our nurses, especially Ashley Montes and Maria Escamilla, for their dedication, compassion and the hours spent in full personal protective equipment caring for our kids and conducting COVID tests. We appreciate the Kane County Office of Emergency Management for supplying us with personal protective equipment and are thankful to the Kane County Health Department for their guidance and support over the past year. Further, we want to thank the Health Department for facilitating vaccinations for our employees. I am pleased to report that nearly 70% of our employees have been or are in the process of being vaccinated and we currently have no positive cases of COVID-19 in our facility.



## Partnership with FSA



Being involved with the court system and being detained is stressful. Providing mental health support to kids in detention is a priority for us, so we decided to strengthen those services by contracting with the Family Service Association of Greater Elgin (FSA). FSA is the largest provider of youth mental health services in Kane County, providing a wide range of programming to support young people and their families, including 24/7 Screening, Assessment and Support Services (SASS). The FSA staff members working at the JJC will spend half of their time in our building and the other half in the community working in FSA's Mental Health Juvenile Justice Program. FSA staff will work alongside our current Mental Health Clinician, Samantha, providing on-site and on-call support. The mental health team will continue to help kids develop coping skills, provide crisis intervention, help kids build interpersonal skills and coordinate services with outside providers. We are excited about our partnership with FSA and the potential to not only improve services within our building, but also continuity of care upon release. We are hopeful that this can serve as a model for other communities. Welcome Erin Saylor, Mental Health Clinician, and Family Service Association of Greater Elgin.



## BBB Remote Learning

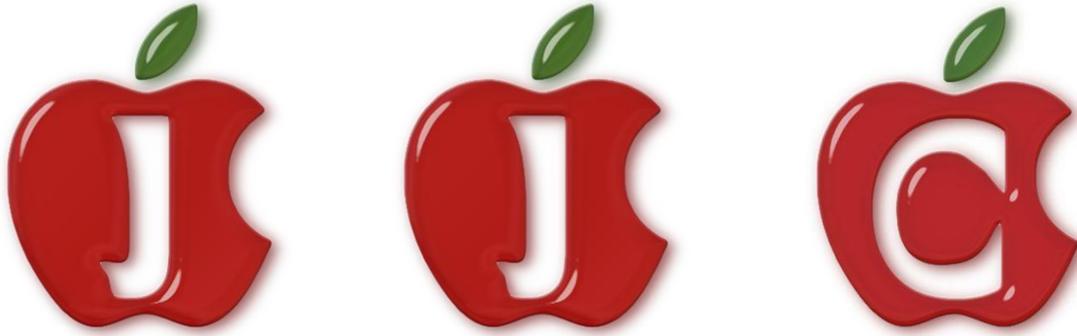


### Kane County JJC School Implements Big Blue Button Remote Learning

Since the COVID-19 pandemic has affected how students are grouped together to keep everyone healthy and safe, the Kane County JJC School was presented with a challenge to provide 300 minutes of instruction for all of its students. Normally, all students in a living unit would be going to class together for in-person instruction with their certified content-area teacher. Due to the pandemic, the facility has had to send one half of a living unit to their classroom at a time with the other half remaining in the living unit. How would these students receive their lessons? In December 2020, under the leadership of Assistant Superintendent Deanna Oliver, IT Director Phil Morris and Principal Ivars Spalis, the Kane County ROE came up with a solution: the students not in the classroom would receive remote learning instruction in their living unit using a program like Zoom know as Big Blue Button. This was no small task, considering the challenges of making the technology work securely and effectively within the thick brick walls of a juvenile detention center. However, the ROE IT team (Phil Morris and CJ Yoder) worked diligently and made it happen.

Implementing the program also involved the ROE initially training the school team. The school team, with the help of Principal Ivars Spalis and teacher James Pawola, worked with the JJC youth counselors to coordinate instruction and supervision. The result: since January 2021, all Kane County JJC students are receiving their full instructional minutes. While their teacher instructs half of their classmates in the classroom using a webcam, document camera, projector, and laptop, the students in the living unit can see their teacher and instructional content on their student iPads. There certainly was a learning curve for students, teachers, and youth counselors to adapt to the new way of learning, but with the virtues of patience and perseverance, there is daily progress.

## Apple Orchard



The JJC has added fruit to our garden. Through the garden grant, we were able to purchase 3 blueberry bushes, 3 raspberry bushes, 5 honey crisp apple trees and 6 Gala apple trees last fall. The orchard is located between our outside recreation area and the new Kane County Multi-Use Facility. Although it may take a year or two to produce fruit, we are excited about the addition. We are appreciative of the Farm-to-School grant, Seven Generations Ahead, the Kane County Development Department and the Kane County Master gardeners, who made the garden and orchard possible.

## Mr. Pawola

### All Have the Right to Question: Inquiry in the Incarcerated Environment

By: James Pawola

Over the past 4 years, Dr. Aubrey Southall from Aurora University has been researching my classroom to show the educational community what Inquiry-Based Learning looks like inside a detention environment. Inquiry-Based Learning is a student-centered approach to teaching Social Studies. In a traditional classroom setting, it focuses on student-driven inquiries about a given topic and students then conduct research to find answers to their inquiries. The result is to hopefully give students a sense of ownership over what they learn, boost engagement, and foster lifelong learning skills. Even though we try to make our classroom as traditional as possible at the JJC, some barriers still exist. I took Inquiry-Based Learning and molded it to fit what works best in our environment. The first step in this process is to build good professional relationships with my students to create an environment where students feel safe to ask questions. Students then ask questions at the beginning of every unit and then I teach specifically to those questions. This strategy, in my own experience, works wonders for boosting engagement and shows students that History may not be as boring as they think.



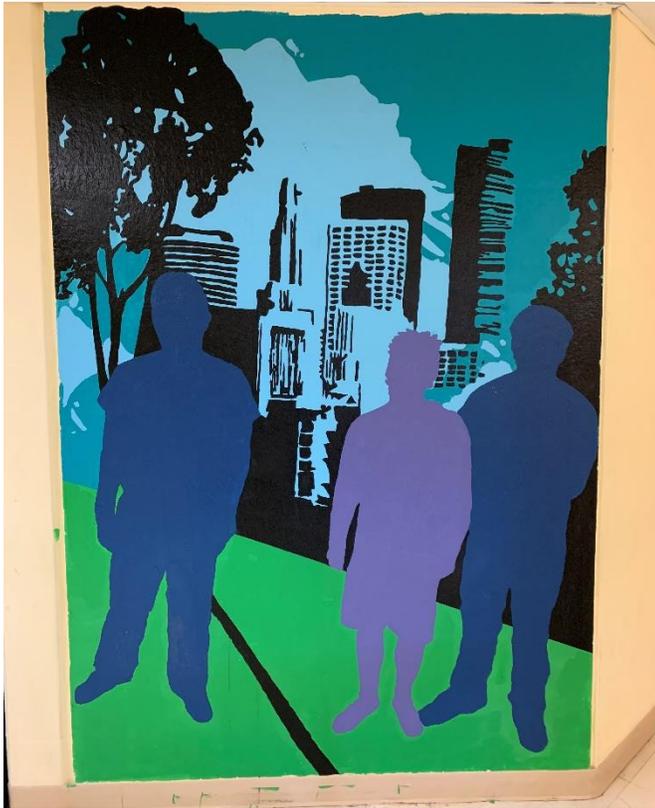
Congratulations to Mr. Pawola, who was published in the *Teaching Social Studies* scholarly journal. We are lucky to have him working with our kids.



The JJC is happy to partner with DCFS to provide services to the dually-involved youth at our facility. We have regular meetings with Sheila Traylor, the Dually-Involved Specialist for DCFS.

We also recently enabled the WebEx application on our JJC iPads to help facilitate sibling visitations. If you or your client need assistance with WebEx visits, please contact Program Manager Pam Ely at 630-762-2169 or [elypam@16thcircuit.illinoiscourts.gov](mailto:elypam@16thcircuit.illinoiscourts.gov).

 CATHERINE TILLY DESIGN



## Unit Furniture



With the recent addition to Units 1 and 3, the Kane County Regional Office of Education (through the Title I grant), has now purchased new furniture for all of our living units. The furniture, along with the murals, goes a long way in our ongoing effort to create a more nurturing and less-institutional environment. We would still like to paint walls and update the flooring in a couple of our living units, but the building is already more aesthetically pleasing than ever before. We work with kids and want to create a safe and warm environment for them.



## 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

### *Ms. Dittmer*

Rarely does an employee of the JJC make it to 20 years of service. In fact, there are currently only four other employees working at the facility with more than 20 years of service. Ms. Dittmer is well liked and respected by the residents and loved by her coworkers. She is still, and has been, an asset to the facility for the past 20 years, we appreciate her hard work and congratulate her on 20 years of service.



## Focus Groups

Twice daily, our youth counselors facilitate cognitive-based focus groups. Most groups are designed to encourage the kids to pay attention to their thoughts, change thinking patterns, avoid negative thoughts, understand their feelings, better handle emotions, encourage empathy and ultimately make better decisions. All groups include discussion, but some include written exercises that are discussed as a group. Below is an example of one of the focus group activities completed by one of our kids.

### Little Brother Focus Group

You are a resident in JJC. You get to make a phone call home. Your mom tells you that your younger brother idolizes you and wants to be just like you. When you talk to your little brother, he tells you what he has been doing and it is exactly what you were doing before you got into trouble.

Please write a letter to your little brother giving him some advice.

You are not the limitations society has put up on you. You are not a "gang banger," "trapper," or "scammer!" You have worth and purpose. You are a brother that will someday be a responsible father. Know your worth and own it, so therefore you don't end up living up to expectations society has put on to us as black men in america. Women and sexual experiences are not important at a young age. Most young kids do it because they feel they have something to prove as a man. It is a trap, and will always cause you to serve your own ego to your own timely demise. Find your outlet of self-expression through what you are good at. It will save you from a lot of trouble and self-esteem issues. —Your big bro

# T-Shirt Contest

In addition to murals and art projects, Catherine Tilly is a mentor and role model for the kids in detention. She has helped numerous kids realize their creative and artistic side through the art projects she teaches. One project was “design your own t-shirt.” The kids thoroughly enjoyed this project and began by choosing a theme for the t-shirts. They agreed on two themes: “We paint and fly and beyond the walls.” Congratulations to Unit 3 for coming in 1<sup>st</sup> Place.





Many thanks to volunteer Jenny Maxwell and her team, as well as the St. Charles Random Acts Matter team for their donations of clothing, backpacks, socks and hygiene items for our kids to take upon release. We frequently come across kids who are in need of basic items and it is wonderful to be able to pack them a bag when they leave. We would also like to thank Cameron DeHaven and the Sneakerheartz organization for their donation of shoes for the kids.



## Christmas – 2020



### Christmas 2020

The JJC was filled with the holiday spirit on Christmas Day. Volunteer Jenny Maxwell treated all the kids to Dunkin Donuts and helped put together a gift bag for each of them. The Regional Office of Education provided additional gift bags for the kids that contained candy, new socks, notebooks, calendars, deodorant, body wash, shampoo, toothpaste and a toothbrush. The kitchen prepared a special Christmas meal, as well as special holiday snacks throughout the month of December. Jenny Maxwell also made sure the youth counselors were well fed by providing pizza for all three shifts. Thank you Jenny! We appreciate you!

The week prior to Christmas, the kids were able to “purchase” gifts for their family members with coupons they earned for demonstrating good behavior. The kids wrapped and mailed the gifts, as well. This opportunity to “give back” to family members is always well received by the residents.



Thank you to the Altrusa Women's Club for their donation of Halloween treats.

## Valentine's for Veterans



The JJC residents partnered with the Altrusa Organization in making Valentines for Veterans. Altrusa donated the valentine materials and the kids enjoyed putting them together for the veterans. We are always looking for projects at the JJC to help encourage empathy for others.