

KANE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER



A Note from the Superintendent

August marked my five (5) year anniversary as Superintendent of the Kane County Juvenile Justice Center. During that time, we have virtually eliminated room confinement, improved programming and implemented a trauma-informed, best-practices approach towards working with our kids. We have proven that we can excel in the current detention environment by meeting, and in most cases exceeding, all detention standards.

As most people would imagine, the majority of the kids we work with have a history of trauma. What many people may not realize is that detention employees are also exposed to trauma at a higher rate than the general population. As an administrator, it can be challenging to balance not wanting to re-traumatize our kids, while still considering the needs of employees. Doing what is best for our kids does not always align perfectly with what might feel best for staff members, especially after being the victim of an assault or witnessing violence. To the credit of our team, everyone has embraced change and understands on a cognitive level that locking kids in their rooms is harmful.

During the upcoming year, we will dive deeper into detention best practices and further master our staffs' skills by providing intensive training on social-emotional learning, trauma-informed care and structured cognitive interventions. The ultimate goal is transformative change, where the concepts learned are inter-woven into every interaction and aspect of daily operations. Understanding that a healthy environment for the kids has to be based on a healthy environment for staff, we will also be rolling out initiatives and providing training to assist staff members in coping with work-related stress and vicarious trauma.

In my opinion, we are already one of the best juvenile detention centers in the State and it is because we have youth counselors, supervisors, mental health clinicians, nurses and teachers who are talented, caring and invested. I am proud of the work they do and I am excited about the future of our building.

Mike Davis

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New Kane County Juvenile Justice Center Courtroom opened July 11

“A new Kane County Juvenile Justice Center courtroom opened on July 11, 2022,” said Sixteenth Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Clint Hull, a result of the effort “to offer a more effective and efficient way to hear juvenile abuse/neglect cases.” When juvenile abuse/neglect cases began to spike in Kane County, nearly tripling since 2018, Chief Judge Hull said he, along with the juvenile judges of the Sixteenth Circuit, needed to do something to better serve the needs of the children and families involved in the juvenile justice system. The judges convened a meeting with their justice system partners to discuss what could be done system-wide to address this important issue.

The solution? In 2021, Chief Judge Hull proposed to the Kane County Board that they approve spending unused funds and savings resulting from the coronavirus pandemic to build out a second juvenile courtroom at the Kane County Juvenile Justice Center at no additional cost to the County.

The Board agreed significant benefits would be achieved by locating the Juvenile Delinquency and Abuse/Neglect courtrooms together in the same building, as the original design plans of the Juvenile Justice Center called for the construction of a second courtroom without needing to add space to the original building.

Before the approval of adding a new Juvenile courtroom, abuse/neglect cases were heard by judges in the Kane County Courthouse (Third Street, Geneva), while juvenile delinquency cases are conducted at the Juvenile Justice Center in St. Charles. Chief Judge Hull said, “It is common for juvenile litigants to have cases in both Abuse/Neglect and Delinquency courtrooms. Having them in different locations caused a hardship for judges, justice partners, staff, and families to be split between the two buildings, therefore, unable to assist one another.”

The Honorable Kathryn Karayannis, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division, praised the addition saying, “The new courtroom and updated court facilities are designed to meet the needs of all families involved in juvenile court under one roof. Thank you to Chief Judge Hull and the Kane County Board for identifying the need and persevering to find and provide the support needed to make this project a reality. Juvenile Delinquency Judge, the Honorable Sandra Parga, mirrored Judge Karayannis’ sentiment, “We are very excited to have a building dedicated to the needs and services that focus on the well-being of all of our kids in Kane County.”

Chief Judge Hull also added, “We are very excited to have both juvenile delinquency and abuse/neglect cases in the same building. It will allow us to serve everyone better by having everyone together. I want to thank the Kane County Board, State’s Attorney’s Office, and Public Defender’s Office for supporting this project.”



State Senators Karina Villa (Left), FSA Director Bernadette May (2nd from Left), and Kane County Juvenile Justice Center Superintendent Mike Davis (Middle) were some of the representatives in Springfield to discuss psychiatric needs of detained youth



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On June 30, 2022, at the request of Senator Karina Villa's Mental Health Advisory Committee, a joint House and Senate Behavioral and Mental Health Subject Matter Hearing was convened to discuss the psychiatric needs of detain youth. We at the Kane County Juvenile Justice Center want to thank Senator Villa for advocating for our kids and for her ongoing support of our facility and its mission. It was my honor to be involved and I appreciate Senator Villa giving me the opportunity to get this important issue heard. Below is the statement I read at the hearing:

The Kane County Juvenile Justice Center is 1 of 16 county-operated juvenile detention centers in the State. When a police agency makes an arrest for a delinquent offense and the SAO seeks detention, these facilities are where those kids are detained. Most kids have a detention hearing the following day and are either released or ordered to remain in custody. Because of the seriousness of their offense, concerns for their own or the safety of the community, some kids will remain detained pending the disposition of their case. At times, some kids remain detained because they are awaiting placement at a treatment facility and there are simply no other less-restrictive options available.

County-operated juvenile detention centers fall under the dual oversight of the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and the Administrative Office of the Illinois Court; because of this, we follow standards and undergo inspections by both agencies.

The JJC is a regional detention center that serves eight (8) counties: Kane, DuPage, DeKalb, Kendall, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson & Lee Counties. We serve a combined population of over 2 million people.

In 2014, our average daily population was 63 kids. As a result of a shift in the philosophical approach to working with criminally-involved youth, our average daily population dropped to 31 kids in 2021. While our population has decreased, the JJC has seen a dramatic increase in the numbers of kids with significant mental health disorders. This has also contributed to a significant increase in our average length of stay, which has jumped from 13 days in 2019 to 25 days in 2021.

Mental Health Subject Matter Hearing statement continued:

Many kids in detention have a trauma history and nearly 95% of the girls detained have experienced sexual abuse. Nearly 50% of the kids in my building are currently prescribed psychotropic medication and there are underlying cognitive and mental health issues driving some of their behaviors. While my facility employs three mental health clinicians and contracts with a psychiatric nurse practitioner, the majority of their work involves medication management and crisis intervention. Detention is not equipped to provide the intensive therapeutic mental health services that some kids require. We are designed to work with criminal thinkers and we do a good job with that population. But due to the lack of mental health resources, working with kids who are severely cognitively delayed or suffering from serious mental health disorders is the new reality for juvenile detention.

When it is determined that a youth at my facility requires immediate mental health services beyond those that can be provided in detention, we will either transport the youth to the local emergency room to be evaluated or we will call the CARES line and someone from screening assessment and support services (SASS) will come to our facility to assess the youth. In most cases, even when a youth is determined to be in need of in-patient mental health services, SASS is unable to find a mental health facility willing to accept them.

In the past month alone, we have had numerous kids with significant mental health issues detained in my facility. One youth who was self-injuring and threatening self-harm, was evaluated and found to be in need of in-patient mental health services, but no hospital was willing to accept her. She remained in our facility, but despite having been placed on suicide precaution and being closely monitored, she was able to swallow a potentially dangerous item. The youth was transported to the emergency room and from there was admitted to Lutheran General, where she remained hospitalized for five days (5) until a procedure was performed to remove the item. Despite all of that, she was still never accepted for in-patient treatment at a mental health facility and she is back in my facility.

Another youth was self-injuring with her eye glasses and expressing suicidal ideation. She too was assessed and found in need of in-patient mental health services, but again, no hospital was willing to accept her. Two days later, she swallowed broken pieces of plastic and began banging her head on the cement floor. She was transported to the emergency room for treatment and remained there for two days before eventually being accepted to a mental health facility.

When a youth from my facility is transported to the emergency room for an assessment and found in need of in-patient mental health services, they are not admitted to the medical hospital; rather, they remain in the ER until a mental health facility willing to accept them is found. In most cases, a mental health facility willing to accept them is never found. The youth is then reassessed by the ER after 72 hours and despite having received no mental health services, they are most often no longer found to be in need of in-patient treatment and are returned to my facility. While in the ER awaiting a potential transfer to a mental health facility or while receiving medical treatment, it is necessary for me to assign two employees to supervise the youth, around the clock, while out of the building. As you can imagine, this significantly impacts staffing and operations within the facility.

Mental health facilities for juveniles are private agencies and the court cannot compel them to accept our kids. With a limited number of beds available and an increased demand for mental health services overall, hospitals can pick and choose who they admit. Detained youth seem to have been pushed to the back of the line and they deserve better.



Mental Health Clinicians
Brittany Hetzel and Jaymee Goodspeed

Meet our new Mental Health Manager and Clinicians

Jaymee Goodspeed is a Licensed Social Worker (LSW) who recently graduated from Aurora University with her MSW. She also is a certified Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) and Anger Management facilitator. Jaymee completed her master's level internship at the Kane County Sheriff's Office in the Corrections Diversion Unit, where she facilitated MRT groups with the adult male and female populations. Jaymee worked briefly at Family Counseling Service in Aurora as a Behavioral Health Therapist conducting play therapy, school-based therapy, and individual therapy prior to her employment at Kane County Juvenile Justice Center as a Mental Health Clinician. Jaymee's professional experience includes six years as a Correctional Deputy for Kendall County Sheriff's Office, and eleven years as a 911 Telecommunicator for KenCom Public Safety. Jaymee enjoys traveling, spending her free time with her husband and children, friends, and especially enjoys her role as a grandmother. Jaymee looks forward to exploring and expanding her social work knowledge, learning more about the juvenile population and eventually obtaining clinical licensure.

Brittany Hetzel is a Licensed Social Worker (LSW) and 200-HR certified yoga instructor. Brittany graduated from Aurora University with her bachelor's and master's in Social Work. She completed both of her internships at World Relief Chicagoland, a refugee resettlement and immigrant services agency. She worked at World Relief as the Aurora After-School Program Coordinator in which she ran Social Emotional Learning (SEL) groups for children and youth. She also worked at Grace Holistic Center for Education as the Mindfulness Program Director. There she oversaw interns, SEL groups, and provided therapeutic services to students. Brittany specializes in working with adolescents and young adults who suffer from anxiety, depression, trauma, and addiction. She utilizes mindfulness techniques, yoga, CBT, DBT, and addiction and trauma-informed care in her role as a therapist in private practice and in her new role as a Mental Health Clinician at JJC. Brittany enjoys working with adolescents, young adults, and those suffering from addiction. Brittany enjoys spending time with her family, friends, and dog, June bug. She also enjoys running and taking yoga classes and is currently preparing to sit for her LCSW exam.



Mental Health Manager
Pam Ely

Pam Ely is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) with a master's degree in Counseling. She has over 30 years of experience working with at-risk children. Pam began her career as a Probation Officer, became a Child Protection Investigator for DCFS, which led to her doing forensic interviews for the Kane County Child Advocacy Center. She then became the PREA Coordinator at the Kane County Juvenile Justice Center. After writing and implementing the JJC's policies for PREA, she formed a work group with the PREA Coordinators at the Illinois detention centers. She helped the JJC successfully pass two PREA Audits. In April 2022, she was hired as the Mental Health Coordinator for the JJC. Pam is thrilled to have Jaymee Goodspeed and Brittany Hetzel on her team as they serve the youth in detention. Pam is an Adjunct Instructor at Aurora University and enjoys spending her free time with her three rescue dogs, as well as Forrest, the Kane County Facility dog who is a regular visitor.



The annual JJC cookout was held on July 6th of this year, and we were lucky that it was a beautiful day! As usual, Superintendent Mike Davis manned the grill, cooking up brats, burgers and hotdogs. Side dishes included watermelon, potato salad, chips and ice cream. A fun time was had by all who work at the JJC, including the youth counselors, teachers, nurses, mental health staff, cooks and managers. This is one way that we show appreciation for our entire JJC team, and a time for us all to relax for a few minutes, share a meal and enjoy each other's company. Chief Judge Clint Hull stopped by to join the festivities and show his support, as did Court Services Executive Director Lisa Aust and ROE Assistant Superintendent Deanna Oliver. Afterwards, all of the residents enjoyed the same meal.

Youth Counselor Appreciation Week

Every year, the Kane County Juvenile Justice Center celebrates Youth Counselor Appreciation Week. Our staff work hard all year long and this week is just a small token of what we are able to offer them for all the meaningful work they do. Each day, we have something scheduled that allows our staff to show some individuality, participate in some games and have some special meals. This year, our appreciation week was July 18th through July 22nd.

On Monday, the staff were given the opportunity to wear clothing that represented their favorite cause. We had staff wearing green for Mental Health Awareness, pink for Breast Cancer, blue for Juvenile Diabetes and many more. Along with that, our kitchen prepared a nacho bar for our staff and we had a drawing for a staff to win a Meijer Gas Gift Card.

On Tuesday, our staff were able to show some school pride, as it was our College Sweatshirt day. We had shirts from Aurora University, Illinois State, Western Illinois and many others. The Regional Office of Education provided a snack for the staff and everyone was given a lottery scratch off ticket.

On Wednesday, our staff were able to channel their festive side, as it was wear your favorite holiday shirt. Christmas, Halloween and even a red, white and blue shirt for the 4th of July were represented. Supervisors treated the staff to pizza and we had a Dunkin Donut gift raffled off to staff.

On Thursday, it was wear your favorite team's shirt. There were the usual suspects: Chicago Bears, Cubs, White Sox, Bulls and then a few outliers. This led us to have our annual 3pt Shooting Contest. Our dayshift winner was Ms. Warren and out midnight champ was Ms. Rivera.

On Friday, it was wear your favorite Superhero shirt. It was also treat day for the staff. Our kitchen made pies and there were several other treats brought in for our staff.

This week is just one of many ways that we recognize and thank our staff. They do so much and work so hard, so we can't say thank you enough. Without them, this building would not be what is today.



JJC Reorganization



Operations Manager
Victor Rivera

In order to bolster programming; address turnover; increase support and training of new employees; and implement a more effective way to manage our building, the JJC has recently undergone a reorganization. Aside from revamping our mental health department by moving Pam Ely from PREA Coordinator to Mental Health Coordinator and promoting Victor Rivera to Operations Manager. Victor is now responsible for effectively implementing and overseeing programming within our facility. Amy Sierra remains our Assistant Superintendent, but added PREA Coordinator to her list of responsibilities. We have expanded our number of supervisors from seven (7) to eight (8), with three of them (Durin Caplan, Corey Harris & Stephanie Sauriol) being designated as Training and Programming supervisors. Our supervisors are some of our most experienced employees; therefore, adding a supervisor and designating three others as the primary Training and Programming supervisors allows all the supervisors to spend more time on the floor coaching, mentoring, training, modeling and supporting our youth counselors. This is especially important given our turnover and the implementation of new Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts standards and Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice standards. This will also assist in getting new employees acclimated to detention more quickly and ensure fidelity of our programming.

2022 Kane County JJC Inspection Report

As we are charged with the care and supervision of youth, there are a significant number of statutory obligations which must be adhered to in juvenile detention. We must abide by all standards established by the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and the Illinois Administrative Office of the Illinois Court. We at the Kane County Juvenile Justice Center believe in transparency and would like to share the results of our June 14, 2022, inspection by the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. Read the complete report here:

2022 IDJJ Inspection Report

FRESH PRODUCE



Smile Illinois

On September 1st, Smile Illinois came to the JJC and completed dental cleanings for 16 kids.

Smile Program, the mobile dentist group, is an “in-school” dental program designed to address today’s dental care crisis and keep children healthy. Their innovative model offers state-of-the-art dental care. This program is easy and convenient, and is offered at no cost to parents* and no cost to the JJC.

Many children sadly find themselves without affordable access to dental care. The Smile Program uses the latest technology in portable equipment, bringing dental services directly to the JJC. They use their network of locally-licensed dentists, hygienists, and assistants to provide high-quality care to our residents. Their program sets up a mini dental clinic directly in the JJC Medical Unit.

The residents receive:

- Complete oral exam
- Cleaning
- Oral health education
- A Report Card from the dentist
- A free toothbrush

*In most states for children with Medicaid



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