

Florida Commission on the Status of Women

Tenth Annual Report

Year 2001



Prevention by Intervention: Girls in Florida's Juvenile Justice System



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STATE OF FLORIDA

January 1, 2002

Dear Florida Citizen:

Welcome to the Florida Commission on the Status of Women's Tenth Annual Report "*Prevention by Intervention: Girls in Florida's Juvenile Justice System*". Pursuant to Section 14.24, Florida Statutes, the Commission is mandated annually to study the changing and developing roles of women in American society, including the implementation of recommendations to improve working conditions, financial security, and the legal status of both sexes. Compounding the Commission's purpose is the recent increase of female offenders in the Juvenile Justice system. The lack of gender specific programming to meet the needs of this increased population has prompted the Commission to conduct a study of girls' involvement in the Juvenile Justice system. Also featured in this publication is information pertinent to the FCSW itself, including our year 2001 accomplishments.

We believe that the research and recommendations provided herein, shed light on the condition of female offenders and their paths to delinquency, as well as, highlighting some of the innovative gender specific programs currently being implemented to remedy this dilemma. We think you will agree that this issue necessitates closer examination on a local and state level—by parents, policy-makers, and law enforcement officials. It is time to recognize young women and their experiences as different from that of young men, and to insure that in seeking to punish delinquency we, as a state, allow for greater understanding in dealing with this issue.

We hope that this report helps its readers understand why there is growing concern for the fate of young women in the Juvenile Justice system. We also hope that this study will inspire some mode of change—either through legislation, further analysis of the issue, public awareness or counselor training—that will meet the specific and often traumatic experiences of girls in the Juvenile Justice system.

Sincerely,

Rose Marie A. Cossick
FCSW Chair

J. Kayty Pappas
Annual Report Committee Chair

We worry about what a child will be tomorrow, yet we forget that [s]he is someone today.

~ Stacia Tauscher ~

Children need love, especially when they don't deserve it.

~ Harold Hulbert ~

Each child is an adventure into a better life – an opportunity to change the old pattern and make it new.

~ Hubert H. Humphrey ~

Children are apt to live up to what you believe of them.

~ Lady Bird Johnson ~

Nothing you do for children is ever wasted. They seem not to notice us, hovering, averting our eyes, and they seldom offer thanks, but what we do for them is never wasted.

~ Garrison Keillor ~

America's future will be determined by the home and the school. The child becomes largely what it is taught; hence we must watch what we teach it, and how we live before it.

~ Jane Addams ~

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A special note of appreciation goes to the FCSW Annual Report Committee: Rose Marie A. Cossick, Commission Chair; Kayty Pappas, Annual Report Committee Chair; Claudia Kirk Barto; Blanca C. Bichara; Patricia Clements; Allison Doliner Hockman; Marsha Griffin Rydberg; Joyce A. Szilvasy; and Dee Williams. Their initiative and guidance were indispensable throughout the duration of this report.

For their contributions throughout the evolution of the report, current and former FCSW employees James M. James, II, Elizabeth Johnston, Jessica Labbé, Michele S. Manning, Linda P. Nelson, and Amethyst Reyes are thanked. Also, we would like to extend our gratitude to Governor Jeb Bush, the Florida Legislature and the Office of the Attorney General for supporting the Commission and making this publication possible.

Finally, the Commission would like to acknowledge the administration and staff of The Centre for Women, The Girls Advocacy Project and The Pace Center for Girls. They have provided innovative and alternative methods for aiding Florida's girls. We thank these organizations for providing a priceless service to our state. It is our hope that these programs will provide the inspiration for a growing state-wide trend to meet the special needs of girls.

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Executive Summary of Recommendations

- ❑ **Implement additional gender-specific requirements in provider contracts**
- ❑ **Improve gender-specific counseling in life skills education**
- ❑ **Establish more intervention and prevention programs in high-risk neighborhoods and for girls in at-risk schools**
- ❑ **Provide safe alternatives to running away**
- ❑ **Recommend same-sex probation officers**
- ❑ **Investigate the high rate of abuse in foster homes**
- ❑ **Equalize length of wait to placement between girls and boys**
- ❑ **Provide additional mentoring opportunities**
- ❑ **Establish free workshops on parenting skills for the parents of girls in detention**
- ❑ **Expand residential facilities for delinquent pregnant girls that teach vocational and parenting skills**
- ❑ **Create a residential program placement planning committee**
- ❑ **Increase funding to research programs for girls in the juvenile justice system**



Introduction

Justice Barbara J. Pariente, Supreme Court of Florida

Thank you for inviting me to introduce the Florida Commission on the Status of Women's 2001 Annual Report, which focuses on Girls in Florida's Juvenile Justice System. In the twenty-first century, as we continue to strive to achieve true equality for women in our society, the startling and disturbing revelation is that girls are the fastest growing segment of the juvenile justice population! Yet, as the research and data demonstrates, those females who become involved in the justice system are, in some significant ways, different from their male counterparts.

We simply cannot ignore the significant interrelationship of other societal problems on girls' behavior; these include the effect of witnessing domestic violence, the effect of having one parent in prison and the effect of the girl being a victim of sexual or physical abuse. In other words, many of the young women who become involved in the juvenile justice system have themselves been the victims of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. And these circumstances affect girls' self-image and behavior differently than it does boys.

Last year, two outstanding Florida women, Martha Barnett (as president of the American Bar Association) and Evett L. Simmons (as president of the National Bar Association), jointly issued a ground-breaking report, entitled "Justice by Gender, The Lack of Appropriate Prevention and Treatment Alternatives for Girls in the Justice System." This report detailed some disturbing findings, including that institutional bias existed throughout the system in the way girls' cases were handled and that there was a lack of effective intervention, treatment and rehabilitation programs for girls--our daughters of today and our women of tomorrow.

I am thrilled with the Commission's commitment to this important problem. As the articles included in this report demonstrate, we can no longer afford to overlook the growing problem of girls in the juvenile justice system by either ignoring the problem, or by committing female offenders to programs developed for male offenders. Although this issue is certainly a challenging and disconcerting one, this State is fortunate to have several programs that are directed towards girls in the juvenile system, and some of these programs are covered by this report. We must all do our part to ensure that communities become educated about the problem and help design solutions, including the requisite array of gender-specific services for girls.

For those of us committed to the equality of women and to giving women an equal chance to succeed, the work of the Commission is an important first step in this State to engender thoughtful debate and develop problem-solving approaches to halt this spiraling and unacceptable trend. For all of us involved with the juvenile justice system in Florida, we must--now more than ever--concentrate on making every case--and every girl--count. It is imperative that we recognize that if we focus our energies on effective prevention strategies, as well as on the needs of girls when they are first touched by the system, we may in fact be able to make a difference in their lives.

FOREWORD

*Eileen Nexer Brown, Co-Chair, Girls
Advocacy Project Community Advisory Board*

Too often we turn our backs and close our hearts when a situation is too painful or overwhelming to bear. The vision of girls—as young as 11 years old, some still sucking their thumbs, sitting in cells—is one of these situations. It is a vision that haunts those who tour the juvenile detention centers in the state of Florida. Many people hold the perception of a female juvenile delinquent as a tough, hardened young woman who needs to be “taught a lesson.” However, those who visit detention centers, speak to the girls and the staff who work with them, and read the research, find that the perception is not, in fact, the reality.

The reality is that a large number of girls in the juvenile justice system have endured horrific experiences in their young lives. *Eighty percent* are victims of physical abuse. *Seventy percent* are victims of sexual abuse and/or assault. They may run away from home, use drugs, or become involved with men who draw them into criminal activities. By the time they enter the system, we see the “attitudes” that mask their feelings, not the maltreated young children who are being incarcerated, most without the therapeutic assistance and support they need to deter them from a life of crime. These girls are simultaneously victims and offenders. They also are the mothers of our next generation.

Research supports the theory that victimization is the first step on the path of a female’s road to the juvenile and criminal justice system. Studies confirm that girls share the same history as adult female prisoners—a history of violent victimization. According to an article written by Leslie Acoca:

Of critical importance to understanding why many women and girls begin to commit offenses are the early age at which they suffer abuse and the negative repercussions of this abuse on their lives....The ages at which adolescent girls interviewed were reportedly most likely to be beaten, stabbed, shot, or raped were 13 and 14. Not surprisingly, a high proportion of girls first enter the juvenile justice system as runaways, who often were seeking to escape abuse at home.¹

The ripple effect of abuse on young lives is insidious and pervasive. Dr. Cathy Spatz Widom speaks of childhood victimization as “derailing” the normal developmental processes experienced by girls. This abuse impacts their ability to cope with the demands of life and results in academic and intellectual performance deficiencies. They have lower average scores on IQ and reading ability tests. They may experience dysfunction from brain injury (physical abuse) or

¹Leslie Acoca, Investing in Girls, A 21st Century Strategy, Today, Juvenile and Family Justice, 28th National Juvenile Justice Conference Issue, Spring 2001, 12.

from malnutrition (neglect). Lower performance creates lower self-esteem, which may result in anti-social behavior and poor interpersonal skills.

Mental and physical health issues pervade their young lives. Studies show a strong link between depression and delinquency. A girl may begin using drugs to cope with her pain and turn to selling drugs to support her habit. Depression also weakens attachments to prosocial institutions. She may be rejected or shy away from activities such as athletics and clubs in school, and drawn to other troubled youth. Her life spirals down as does her sense of self-worth. She runs away or commits a crime. She is arrested and locked up. Incarceration replays the trauma: lack of privacy, confinement, sometimes use of restraint devices, threat of physical force and verbal abuse. She sits in a cell, counts the bricks (each girl I spoke with knew the exact number), cries, screams, withdraws, curls up in a ball, and waits. She is ordered to be released, but her parent does not pick her up. Another weekend of peace in the house for mom, another weekend alone for mom and her boyfriend, someone else to deal with her difficult daughter.

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency's research reveals that between 1993 and 1998 girls' delinquencies in Florida have increased 30 percent statewide (compared to a five percent increase among young males). Florida has the third largest juvenile justice system in the nation. It is imperative that we learn more about the girls in the system, intervene early when they first enter the system, and proactively prevent them from re-entering the system. We cannot react to this seemingly overwhelming challenge by ignoring its existence. Instead, we must view this challenge as an opportunity for change.

This report will provide insight on issues affecting incarcerated girls. The reader will gain an understanding of the challenges society and the juvenile justice system face in turning the tide of incarcerated girls, and learn about cutting-edge programming in our state that is gaining national attention.

It is said that the first step to transformation is awareness. It is my hope that the awareness gained from this report will lead to a powerful transformation in how we view, treat and begin to heal our most vulnerable girls. Join us in conquering the challenge.

HIDDEN VOICES: THE EXPERIENCE OF DELINQUENT GIRLS IN FLORIDA

Kristin Parsons Winokur, Ph.D., Florida State University

Girls remain on the periphery of mainstream criminological inquiry, and in juvenile justice practice the unique circumstances and needs of this growing population often have been ignored. Yet, recent increases in female delinquency, particularly the dramatic growth in girls' involvement in violent offences (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1997), highlight the necessity to examine this offender population to ascertain their pathways to delinquency and their unique gender-specific needs within the juvenile justice system.

This essay focuses on Florida's experience with girls in the juvenile justice system. In particular, it presents findings from the research of the Florida Delinquent Girls Research Project (FDGRP), for which the author served as the Principal Investigator.¹ Two areas of inquiry are explored: characteristics of incarcerated girls and girls' correctional programming in Florida. Together, they provide a profile of delinquent girls in the Florida juvenile justice system and highlight the importance of gender-based delinquency programming. The essay also presents an overview of the delinquency system in this large southeastern state as a backdrop for understanding the experiences of delinquent girls in Florida. With one of the largest delinquency populations among the states, Florida exemplifies much of what occurs with girls in juvenile justice systems throughout the nation.

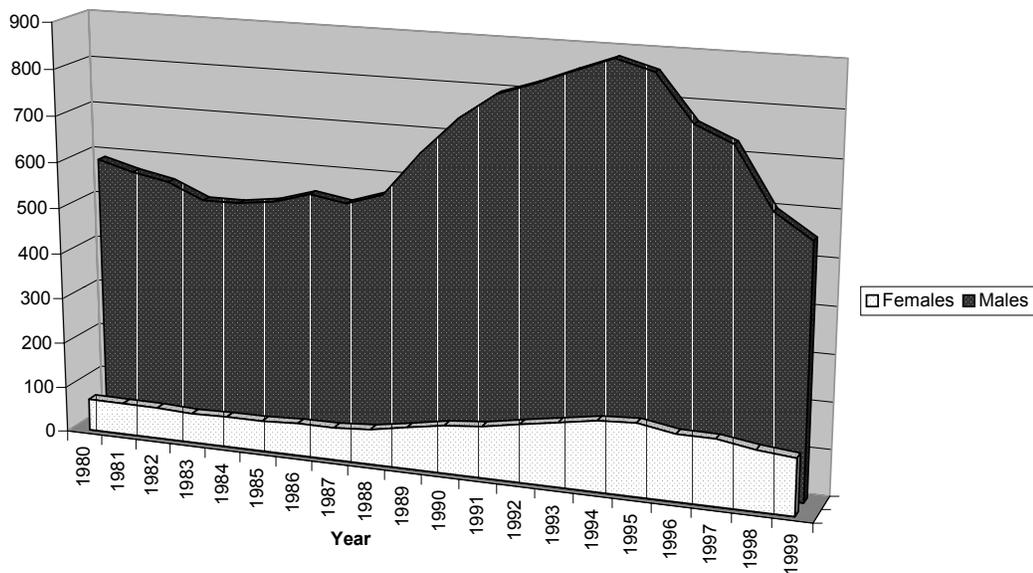
Trends in Female Delinquency

Girls engage in delinquent activity to a much lesser degree than boys, a fact that has been borne out in both official and self-report data (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998). In 1999, a total of 431,697 females under the age of 18 were arrested for crimes in the United States (FBI, 1999). Delinquent girls accounted for 22 percent of all arrests that year (FBI, 1999). While boys commit more delinquent offenses and are more involved in violent offending than girls, the relative gap in male and female juvenile arrests has narrowed in recent years, particularly for less serious crimes. Self-report data indicates that girls and boys are quite similar in their involvement in status offending (i.e., crimes that are considered offences because of the defendant's age), drug crimes, and less serious property offenses (Canter, 1982; Figueira-McDonough, Barton, and Sarri, 1981; Richards, 1981; Belknap et al., 1997). Yet, status offenses continue to comprise a much greater percentage of girls' arrests than those of boys (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998).

¹ The Florida Delinquent Girls Research Project was a four-year project federally-funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and administered by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ).

Anchor Girls' violent offending has grown over the last decade, both in rates and in the proportion of juvenile arrests involving females (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998). As depicted in Figure 1, the Violent Crime Index² arrest rate for girls increased 74 percent between 1980 and 1999, while the rate declined 7 percent for boys during the same period (OJJDP, 2000). The growth in girls' violent offending is caused largely by their increased arrests for aggravated assault and "other" assaults. Between 1980 and 1995, the arrest rate for girls for aggravated assault increased by 112 percent, compared to an increase of 45 percent for boys. Arrests for non-aggravated assaults similarly rose 142 percent for girls and 80 percent for boys during the same 15-year period (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998).

Figure 1. Male and Female Juvenile Violent Crime in the United States



	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
□ Females	70	69	68	65	67	67	71	72	77	91	105	112	127	140	153	158	144	144	130	122
■ Males	587	565	550	517	517	528	550	538	563	658	736	792	819	850	881	859	760	726	597	545

Data Source: OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, December, 2000.

Similar trends in female delinquency have been found at the statewide level in Florida. Males are more than twice as likely as females to be referred for delinquency in Florida (FDJJ, 1998). Yet, in recent years girls have experienced greater increases in delinquency (FDJJ, 1998). The proportion of delinquency referrals involving girls in Florida rose from 26 percent in 1993-94 to 29 percent in 1997-98, a slightly greater percentage change than that exhibited at the national level (OJJDP, 2000; FDJJ, 1998). Female juvenile referrals for violent offenses in Florida rose 21 percent between 1993-94 and 1997-98, while felony referrals involving male offenders decreased by four percent. One of the largest increases for girls within the felony crime category involved referrals for aggravated assault (31 percent increase).

² The Violent Crime Index includes the offenses of murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault (OJJDP, 2000).

Most delinquent behavior of both male and female youths involves relatively minor offenses. Property offenses comprised the greatest percentage of delinquency referrals in Florida for boys and girls in 1997-98 (49 percent of girls' referrals and 46 percent of boys' referrals). The nature of girls' and boys' property offending differed, however. For example, females were more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system for shoplifting, whereas the most common delinquency referral for males involved the offense of burglary (FDJJ, 1998).

Table 1
Referrals for Minor Delinquency Offenses by Gender,
Fiscal Year 1993-94 to 1997-98 in Florida

Offense	Number of Female Referrals		Percent Change:	Number of Male Referrals		Percent Change:
	1993	1997	1993/4-1997/8	1993	1997	1993/4-1997/8
Resist Arrest Without Violence	208	394	89%	495	838	69%
Contempt of Court	71	177	149%	201	409	103%
Disorderly Conduct	442	600	36%	1,000	1,070	7%
Violation of Probation	236	453	92%	715	1,117	56%
Total	957	1,624	70%	2,411	3,434	42%

Data Source: FDJJ, *Profile of Delinquency Cases and Youths Referred, Fiscal Year 1993-94 through 1997-98* (1998).

Girls experienced greater increases than boys in the number of referrals for resisting arrest without violence, contempt of court, disorderly conduct, and violations of probation (see, Table 1). The five-year change in referrals for each of these offenses was between 20 and 36 percentage points greater for girls than boys. While violations of probation represented only two percent of both male and female delinquency referrals, the number of violation referrals for females rose by 92 percent between 1993-94 and 1997-98, compared to a 56 percent increase in violation referrals for males.

An Overview of Florida's Juvenile Justice System

The juvenile justice system in Florida is centralized and administered largely by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ). Prevention, diversion, intake, detention, community supervision, commitment, and aftercare services are all managed by the FDJJ.

Youths enter the juvenile justice system by a referral to FDJJ, a formal arrest by a law enforcement officer, or a petition for delinquency filed in one of Florida's 20 judicial circuit courts (Juvenile Justice Accountability Board [JJAB], 2000). Upon intake into the system, a youth's case is investigated and assessed to determine the most appropriate recommendation for further processing. During this period and in accordance with federal and state laws governing the placement of youths in secure facilities, a youth may be placed in an FDJJ detention center.³ While law enforcement personnel, victims, and FDJJ personnel may recommend that a youth's case be judicially handled, non-judicially handled, or transferred to adult court, the final decision on the appropriate action in a case resides with the state attorney (Chapter 985, Florida Statutes). Most youths who come into contact with Florida's juvenile justice system are diverted from

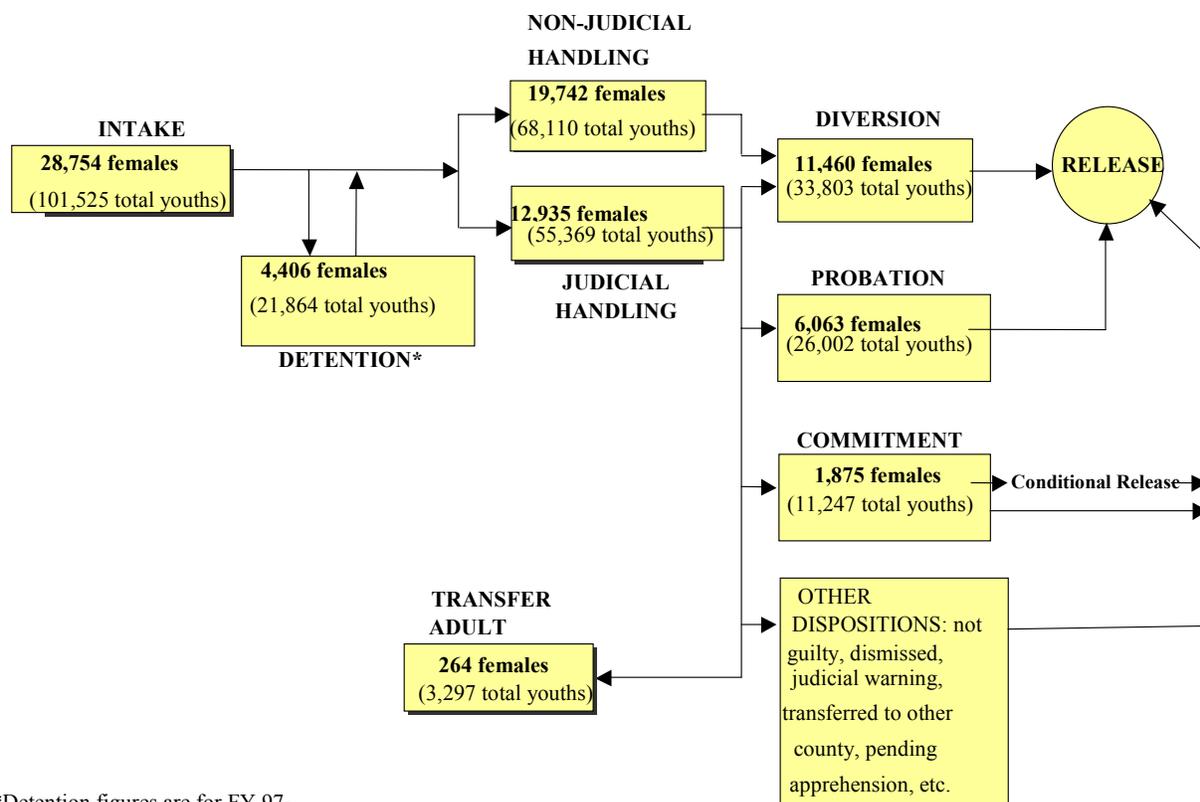
³ For further details regarding the determination to place youths in detention and the allowable uses of detention, see Florida Statutes § 985.213-985.215 (2000).

formal judicial processing and receive alternative treatment (e.g., civil citation, community arbitration, locally-based alternative sanctions). At-risk youth may also be placed in a variety of prevention programs administered by the state (JJAB, 2000).

Should a youth's case not be diverted, the state attorney has the option of filing a formal delinquency petition with the circuit court or seeking to transfer the youth to adult court, if the youth's case warrants such action. Once a delinquency petition is filed with the juvenile court, a youth may plead guilty to the allegations or may have his/her case heard by a juvenile judge, an adjudicatory hearing or trial. At this hearing, the judge either may dismiss the case, adjudicate the youth delinquent, or withhold adjudication. At the disposition hearing, the juvenile judge makes a determination as to the sanction appropriate for the youth. Youths may be placed on probation or receive other community-based sanctions, such as placement in a minimum-risk, non-residential day treatment program. Alternatively, a judge also may commit the youth to the custody of the state and place the youth in an FDJJ commitment program. Depending upon the seriousness of the youth's current offense and the juvenile's prior record, the court may commit a youth to any one of a continuum of residential commitment programs that include: low-risk, moderate-risk, high-risk and maximum-risk residential facilities. Upon release from a commitment program, a youth also may receive conditional release services (formerly referred to as *aftercare*) (JJAB, 2000; Chapter 985, Florida Statutes.)

A flowchart of female delinquency cases processed in fiscal year 1999-00 is depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Florida Female Delinquency Case Flow, Fiscal Year 1999-00*



*Detention figures are for FY 97-

Data source: Florida Department of Juvenile A Profile of Florida Delinquency, 1995-96 to 1999-(2000)

Girls Incarcerated in Florida's Juvenile Justice System

The typical female delinquent in Florida is 15 years of age, white, charged with retail theft, and has two prior delinquency referrals (FDJJ, 2001). While a review of official delinquency statistics provides some information on the backgrounds of female juvenile offenders, it is also important to examine the lives these young women have led to identify causal factors associated with female delinquency and to distinguish these factors from those of delinquent boys. To this end, in-depth interviews with incarcerated girls were an integral component of the FDGRP study. Study participants were selected from a statewide pool of all girls incarcerated in moderate- and high-risk residential facilities in Florida.⁴ A 25 percent sample of these girls (n=68) was randomly selected and interviewed during the Spring of 1998. Interviews ranged from one to three hours in duration and covered an extensive array of topics including families, school, substance use, neighborhoods, childhood, victimization, sexual activity, parenthood, gang involvement, criminal behavior, incarceration, feelings, and future aspirations. What follows is a brief summary of the more significant findings from the interviews with incarcerated girls.

Demographic and Family Characteristics

The girls interviewed ranged in age from 13 to 18, with an average age of 15. A little over one-third (35 percent) of the girls were white non-Hispanic, 53 percent were African-American, and 12 percent were of "other" descent, a category that encompassed ethnic and cultural backgrounds including Cuban, Native-American, and Jamaican. The majority (52 percent) of girls in the sample incarcerated in secure residential programs were committed for a property or public order offense. Forty-five percent were incarcerated for person offenses, most of which involved either aggravated assault or simple assault against a family member or acquaintance.

Nearly half (43 percent) of the girls interviewed said their parents never were married and nine percent were unsure or unclear whether their parents had ever been married. Prior to being incarcerated, 45 percent of the girls lived with their mothers, 17 percent lived with both parents, six percent lived with their fathers, and 32 percent lived with other relatives, friends or adoptive families. Many of the girls interviewed described chaotic and disrupted home lives. One-quarter of the girls had been in foster care at least once and 40 percent had experienced at least one change of their primary caregiver, such as going to live with a grandparent when a parent died or entered prison. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of the girls interviewed said at least one parent had a past or current substance abuse problem and many girls had multiple family members who abused substances.

The girls also were asked whether any immediate family members had been incarcerated or were currently incarcerated. Nearly half of the girls indicated that their mothers had been incarcerated and 34 percent said their fathers had been incarcerated. A little more than a quarter of the girls said that at least one sibling had spent time in jail or prison, 27 percent said their step-father had been incarcerated, and one girl said her father had been killed in prison. Overall, 84 percent had

⁴ At the time of the interviews, these were the most secure residential program levels for girls in the Florida juvenile justice system.

at least one immediate family member who was incarcerated at the time of the interview or had been incarcerated in the past.⁵

These numbers characterize the family situations and environments in which the girls lived prior to their own incarceration. The girls' own words, however, provide greater context and insight into their experiences:

...my mom got out of jail, a little while later my aunt went to jail.... Before she got out my other aunt had done made it there for selling drugs, and my granddaddy, he just stay in jail for selling drugs...cause my mom was selling drugs for my granddad, and my aunt was selling drugs for him.... My dad, he's been to jail for selling drugs...that's what that man do for a living, is sell drugs.... Three or four times I seen them put my dad in handcuffs and take him away.

Everybody [in my family has been arrested] except for like my—I don't think my grandmother ever been arrested.... I know my mama went to prison.... My brother, he in jail now...[my sister is] in a [juvenile justice] program now.

In response to the question, "Has any of your family been arrested besides you?" Yeah. My brothers, my sisters, my mama, my grandma, my uncle, all of them.

[My mom has] never been to prison. She's been to jail a lot of times. Prostitution, burglaries, grand theft auto, stuff like that. Stuff she should be in prison for, but she never went to prison...[once] my dad was in jail for DWI and my mom also went. So we had no parents. So we had to go stay with my uncle, the one that we live with now. And his nephew molested me.

[My mom] recently went to jail for DUI...she's been in jail about three months.... She was helping me out with the baby, so it took away a lot of things I sure could use.

...my real mother, she is incarcerated ever since she was seven months pregnant with me...she killed her foster parents....

[My mom] be in jail all the time. Stealing, cocaine trafficking, killing my brother....She killed my older brother when I was a baby. My grandma told me she dropped him on the floor....And now that she be in jail and stuff, she be writing me saying how she gonna change and stuff. But I don't listen to her, 'cause I know she ain't.

...my dad, he was—he thought my mom was cheating on him or something, because he was drunk and he didn't know what he was doing. And he came over

⁵ It should not necessarily be inferred that maternal incarceration was more prevalent among this sample than incarceration of fathers or stepfathers. The lower percentage for paternal incarceration likely reflects the minimal contact that many girls had with their fathers, such that the girls may not have been aware of their incarceration. On the other hand, some girls who had no contact with their fathers were aware of incarcerations. Similarly, not all girls in the study had a stepfather, therefore, a relatively small number reported that a stepfather had been incarcerated.

to the lady's house that we were at two streets down, and he had a gun and he held it on us....I was just like, dad, what are you doing? He was drunk. And then we called the cops and the cops arrested him and everything.

[My dad is] in prison now....Some lady he been messing around with out there....she claimed that he stabbed her or some junk.

...my daddy went to prison when I was young. For selling drugs....My stepdad went to jail for six months. Him and my mom got into a fight.

All my brothers have [been arrested]. My brothers had a shoot-out somewhere, and they was locked up....My sister...she has been arrested for petty theft, stealing clothes and things like that...my brother...he's in prison. He got 35 years. [For] robbing a bank.

Exposure to Trauma

One of the most consistent findings from the interviews with incarcerated girls was the prevalence of prior traumatic experiences in their lives. Recent research has similarly documented that delinquent girls suffer from extraordinarily high rates of sexual and physical victimization as well as mental health problems, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Cauffman, 1998; Funk, 1999). Childhood abuse significantly impacts the likelihood for involvement in future delinquency and adult criminality (Spatz-Widom and Maxfield, 2001; Funk, 1999). A recent study indicates that this impact is different for males and females. Females who have been the victim of abuse or neglect have an increased risk of arrest for a violent crime. This pattern does not hold true for males (Spatz-Widom and Maxfield, 2001). Funk (1999) notes that female risk factors for re-offending differ substantially from those of male youths. In her study, she found that while a history of abuse was a significant predictor of girls' subsequent involvement in delinquency, it was not for boys (Funk, 1999). Based on their longitudinal study of detained youths in Florida, Dembo and Williams (1993: 76) conclude that “[p]roblem behavior of females [is] associated with an abusive and traumatizing home life, whereas problem behavior of males reflect[s] their involvement in a delinquent lifestyle.”

The girls interviewed as part of the FDGRP study were asked a series of questions regarding their exposure to traumatic experiences, including witnessing domestic violence, community violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and death of a caregiver or immediate relative. Abuse and trauma exposure rates among the sample were consistent with those found in other studies of incarcerated girls. Most of the girls interviewed (87 percent) reported being exposed to violence and other forms of trauma, with the majority reporting multiple traumatic experiences in their pasts. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of the girls had witnessed domestic violence. The majority of girls exposed to domestic violence saw their mothers beaten, though a few saw the assaults of other female relatives, and one girl described her father being assaulted by her mother. Many girls described severe, life-threatening attacks. Seventy percent of the girls interviewed had experienced individual victimization in the form of either physical or sexual abuse. The impact of such trauma and corresponding interconnection with their involvement in the juvenile justice system is exemplified in the girls' statements:

My mom's been arrested due to the charges of child abuse on me...she was drinking....And she thought I had kids in the house, and so she had slung me up against the wall and everything. And my nose started bleeding. And she busted the side of my head and I had belt welts on my back and everything. And she threw a bottle of pills at me and told me I could commit suicide. And then she told me that if I called HRS that she was gonna kill me...[the neighbors] brought me next door. And they had to physically hold me down because I was so scared...they called the cops and the cops saw what they did....The cops made me strip and they took pictures of me and everything....And then, that's when I was put into that runaway shelter and stuff.

[My sister and I] were abused bad in the foster home....I remember everything.... I think [our foster mother] hit her daughter, too, but she mostly beat me and my little sister...she always went to get this next door neighbor and they would come over and run water in the sink. And she would grab me first and she would put my head in the sink, and she would be like, till she learn, you learn your lesson, learn your lesson and stuff like that.... Her friend was like, you know, take her head out—bring her up, 'cause you gonna kill her. Bring her head up.... Then they finally brought me up, but I wish I would have, you know, I wish I would have died when she did do that. Then I wouldn't have to go through all that I'm going through now...they tell me we go to treatment groups and class, they ask you if you had a wish, I said, I wish I was never born. I honestly feel that way, I was never born.

...one time I almost clicked on my sister, and I almost hit her.... And I wanted to grab her, but I had to catch myself, I was like, oh my God. And you know, I need help on that, because I could be a danger to my children...now, this is, this is when it all started.... I felt, I looked at a child in a way a molester would look at a child....I'm like, oh my God, please take this away...that's when I wanted to kill myself.... Because, the person [who molested me] took everything from me. He took all my self-respect. I don't care if I was to live or die.

...I learned a lot while I was [in a prior juvenile program]. And, you know, I no longer committed crimes or anything else. All I did was run away, I guess. Because I was just sick of the abuse so much that I couldn't take it. I'd just had so much of it, just, I couldn't handle it anymore.

Mental Health and Behavioral Problems

Given the histories of the girls interviewed, it is not surprising that most of the girls evidenced one or more mental health, substance abuse, or behavioral problems.⁶ The interview schedule included a series of questions about suicide attempts and self-harming behavior. Thirty-four percent described serious suicide attempts and an additional 14 percent described threatening

⁶ It is important to note that this should not imply an inherent causal order to mental health/behavioral problems and delinquency. These behaviors are interrelated and may serve as both causes as well as effects.

suicide. Twenty percent of the girls admitted to intentionally cutting or burning themselves. All of the girls who described such self-mutilation also had histories of sexual abuse. Three-quarters of those interviewed had run away from home.

Half of the girls reported that they drank regularly prior to residential placement and 60 percent said they had used drugs regularly. Among those who used drugs, marijuana was by far the most prevalent and frequently used. Girls gave various explanations for their drug use. Some attributed their drug use to a desire to “escape.”

The profile of girls incarcerated in Florida’s most secure juvenile correctional facilities emerging from the FDGRP study depicts girls who have experienced tumultuous childhood characterized by traumatic events, who were experiencing a familial cycle of violence and criminal behavior, and who were exhibiting often multiple forms of mental and behavioral problems. While this represents a snapshot of the findings from the interviews, it provides a foundation upon which to identify the unique programming needs of girls in the juvenile justice system.

The Importance of Gender-Specific Programming

Despite research and evidence documenting gender differences in criminal offending and pathways to delinquency, juvenile correctional agencies have been slow to implement services designed to target the gender-specific needs of girls. Delinquent girls have been considered a low priority in juvenile justice systems throughout the country, and have been relegated to facilities originally designed for males and ill-equipped to house female offenders (Chesney-Lind and Sheldon, 1998). The use of strip searches, administrative segregation, and military-based boot camp programming, are all practices that can have significant detrimental effects on incarcerated girls when implemented with no consideration for the prevalence of victimization and corresponding mental health problems. A lack of programming designed to address the behavioral choices of girls in the context of their life experiences, is destined to have little to no impact on the future behavior of delinquent girls. Most state juvenile justice systems, however, have yet to examine the services currently offered to girls or to develop gender-based treatment protocols (Greene, Peters, and Associates, 1998; Maniglia, 1996).

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, through the FDGRP study, recently compiled a descriptive profile of all commitment programs and services available to female juvenile offenders in Florida (Winokur, 1999). While 63 percent of the female juvenile commitment programs reported providing some form of gender-specific services, most of this programming only entailed instruction in health and sex education. In some instances, services were limited to vocational programming based on traditional gender roles such as instruction in sewing and cooking, secretarial and receptionist skills, and having a “full-makeover” day. Although a significant proportion of committed girls in Florida were placed in non-residential programs, these programs were least equipped to address girls’ needs as very few offered any form of gender-specific services. Very few programs provided domestic violence counseling and education. Sexual and physical abuse counseling was non-existent in non-residential programs and only 41 percent of the moderate-risk residential programs offered such services to girls in Florida. The majority of low-risk residential programs provided abuse counseling. Unfortunately, such programs comprised a small proportion (21 percent) of all facilities available

to girls in Florida. In describing their services, the only female juvenile boot camp in the state indicated that their programming for girls was offered with the understanding that “gender shall be viewed as a fact, not an excuse.”

Recent efforts to develop gender-specific juvenile justice programming emphasize the following: 1) Good gender specific services begin with good services; 2) Young women are different from young men; 3) Equality does not equal sameness; 4) Services for young women cannot be viewed in isolation (Maniglia, 1996). Others have highlighted the need for empowerment and assertiveness training, self-defense training, discussions of combating negative sex-role stereotypes, awareness of the dual impact of gender and race, and services to address the depression and coping skills mechanisms unique to young women (Greene, Peters & Associates, 1998).

While Florida has begun the process of assessing female juvenile commitment programs and implementing gender-specific programming, room for improvement remains. Gender-based treatment manuals must be developed building upon the growing body of research that documents the distinct social, psychological, and biological characteristics of girls and pathways to their delinquency (Maniglia, 1996; Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998; Cauffman, 1998; Funk, 1999; Spatz-Widom and Maxfield, 2001; Dembo and Williams, 1993). This should not, however, imply that boys do not need similar services. While certain programmatic components may exist in both male and female juvenile offender programs, they are not necessarily “equal” in content or scope. As reviewed here, national research indicates that programming for girls should be provided with the recognition that delinquent girls are more likely than their male counterparts to be the victims of sexual abuse and to suffer from depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, low self-esteem, and related mental health problems (Winokur and Jackson, 2001; Greene et al., 1998; Acoia, 1998; Bowers, 1997; Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, 1993; Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998; and Cauffman, 1998). No longer can we afford to ignore the growing population of female offenders by relegating them to juvenile commitment programs developed for male offenders. Likewise, in the interest of humane treatment and with the goal of rehabilitation, we cannot ignore the pervasiveness of victimization and trauma among this population when developing practices and procedures for implementing female juvenile justice programs.

THE CENTRE FOR GIRLS: A UNIQUE APPROACH TO REACHING FEMALE ADOLESCENTS

Stephanie Johns, Ed.S., Director of Girls' Services, The Centre for Women

Adolescence is an important time of transition marked by physical and psychological change, self-absorption, preoccupation with peer approval, risk-taking, and identity formation. This period of development is difficult for both children *and* parents. Coupled with the growing independence of the adolescent members of Generation Y, the effects of these issues result in difficulty for children, particularly girls, as they develop into young adulthood.

The Centre for Girls is an innovative program of Tampa's The Centre for Women, designed to help girls and their families navigate and manage the unique challenges of adolescence. The first of its kind in the state and the nation, The Centre for Girls is a prototype facility offering after-school, summer and weekend activities for girls residing in Hillsborough County. The goal of this project is prevention and early intervention, accomplished by providing girls with a support system and a place to spend time, get information, make friends, and be involved in the community.

The Centre for Girls seeks to provide a physically and emotionally safe place for girls to learn about themselves; receive respect, recognition and reinforcement; learn critical life skills that support healthy decision-making; and strengthen their self-confidence, coping skills and identity. By encouraging girls to become involved in positive activities at The Centre for Girls, and by supporting them in the process and encouraging family members to participate, the project seeks to protect female youth from many of the problematic behaviors that typically plague them during adolescence including pregnancy, substance abuse/experimentation, poor grades, truancy, and acting-out.

What is The Centre for Girls?

The quest to develop The Centre for Girls began in the mid-90s, when The Centre for Women—an agency that historically had served adult women and the elderly—was asked to provide services for children and teenagers. Recognized within Hillsborough County as a leader with regard to women's issues, The Centre for Women was approached by the 13th Judicial Circuit Court in 1995 to assist in offering programming for female adolescents. At that time, girls were entering the juvenile justice system at an alarming rate and the court system had discovered that traditional programs designed for boys did not seem to be working with girls. The result of The Centre's collaboration with the judicial system was GIRLS CAN!, a program to teach responsible decision-making skills to first or second time female offenders, 12 to 18 years of age. Over time and in the process of reviewing current research and literature on girls' issues, The Centre for Women became aware of the fact that girls were becoming involved in negative behaviors long before high school or an arrest. To be proactive, The Centre expanded its services in 1996 to include pregnancy prevention and body education services for younger

female adolescents. With the addition of this program (called Especially for Girls), the Girls' Services department expanded its target population, encompassing youth as young as 10 years of age.

As these girls' programs continued to thrive and grow, The Centre identified a gap in services for girls within Hillsborough County. Studies of girls' services found that adolescent females were in need of opportunities for involvement in positive activities, including healthy family interactions. Neighborhood-based services were lacking, as were programs providing supervision to youth during the times of day when they were most likely to be home alone and, therefore, more prone to get into trouble. Programs promoting empowerment and coping skills in the lives of troubled girls *before* they got into trouble were few, consistent community advocacy for girls' issues was absent.

Knowledge of this need was reinforced by The Centre's involvement with the Girls Initiative Sub-Committee of the Juvenile Justice Council (an organization of local agencies working with female youth), and the findings of a study of placement options for girls involved in the juvenile justice system, published in the year 2000 by the Children's Board of Hillsborough County. Specifically, a general deficit of prevention and early intervention programs and a lack of gender-specific services, including age-specific and developmentally appropriate programs for girls were noted.

Often the term "gender-specific" is mistakenly assumed to simply mean that girls should be separated from boys while receiving services. However, gender-specificity involves the design of specialized activities and services with regard to the gender, culture and age (or developmental level) of the participants. This means that projects are designed to address the unique needs of boys and/or girls, while taking note of the impacting issues, needs and risk factors of participants and their families.

Studies and focus groups documenting the interests of teen and pre-teen adolescents note that boys prefer to socialize and interact with others through participation in physical activities, such as sports. Female youth, on the other hand, are relationship-oriented and enjoy interactions such as talking and sharing their feelings and thoughts with others. Girls also acknowledge the need for their own space and the opportunity to express themselves without the interference of peer pressure from the opposite sex. Because females are relationship-oriented, girls will not succeed in settings that lack the opportunity to develop healthy relationships with adults and peers.⁷

The girls and the families of those participating in The Centre for Women's girls' services programs reiterated these findings, and made it clear that female youth needed a place to learn and grow. By conducting focus groups, staff learned that girls needed a safe environment to discuss what was happening in their lives with their families, friends, boyfriends and teachers. They also wanted information about their bodies, relationships, feelings, jobs, and options for post-secondary education.

⁷ Adelson, V. and Alvarez, P. (2000). *Placement Options for Adolescent Girls in Hillsborough County*. Tampa, FL: The Children's Board of Hillsborough County.

The Centre for Girls officially opened its doors to the community on May 1, 2001. It is designed to be a warm and homelike place where girls can participate in activities and organized clubs. The Centre is NOT a day care center, but instead a girls-only community center. It is staffed by full and part-time counselors and trained, screened volunteers. With over 4000 square feet of space, it boasts a full computer lab, as well as individual and group counseling/activity rooms, a living room and a learning kitchen.

Although all of the girls' services programs (including the aforementioned GIRLS CAN! and Especially for Girls) are housed at The Centre for Girls, the cornerstone of this facility is the Drop-In Program. The Drop-In Program provides activities for female youth after school, on Saturdays, and during the summer months. All Drop-In Program activities are supervised, and a staff-to-participant ratio of 1:15 is maintained.

The services delivered by the Drop-In Program include activities that fall into two basic categories: psycho-educational and life skills groups. Values clarification, issues of grief and loss, anger/stress management, career exploration, post-secondary education, sexually responsible behavior, goal setting, and familial/romantic relationships are topics that are regularly addressed in psycho-educational sessions. These groups also provide the girls with the opportunity to discuss the challenges and issues in their own lives, an element of utmost importance in the development of girls' programming.

Life skills activities offered at The Centre can include working in the computer lab, participating in a cooking lesson or exercise session, learning about basic health and nutrition for young women, or developing The Centre's monthly newsletter. Girls at The Centre are encouraged, but not required, to participate in groups and activities offered on site. Participants are given the option to read, play games, or just to "hang-out" and talk to peers and staff. This option reinforces the message that there is reward in simply visiting The Centre and staying safe under adult supervision.

The Centre for Girls is accessible and free of charge to all girls in Hillsborough County between the ages of 10 and 18 years. When a youth visits The Centre for Girls, she is given a membership card and told that she now belongs to a very special place. Once enrolled by a parent or guardian, participants receive monthly newsletters and a calendar of upcoming activities.

Within the framework of a neighborhood-based facility, programs at The Centre are designed according to principles of gender-specific programming and positive youth development, an approach that stresses the importance of involving youth at all levels of program planning, development and implementation. Through participation in The Centre's Girls Advisory Committee, girls are given the opportunity to suggest activities to be offered at The Centre. By incorporating the girls feedback into the design of programming, Centre staff ensure that sponsored activities are developmentally-appropriate and of interest to the participants. This involvement also helps to fuel the girls' sense of responsibility and impact on the world around them.

Activities promoting the involvement of family members at The Centre are also offered on a regular basis. Family events, such as picnics and mother-daughter bonding activities are planned. Parents are also provided with workshops, support groups, parenting information, and referrals.

Another important feature of the program at The Centre for Girls is that the majority of staff are counseling professionals. This allows the girls' daily issues and pressures of family, school and peers to be expressed in an appropriate setting and immediately addressed. Though many other after-school and summer programs exist in the Hillsborough County area, few consistently provide on-site counselors—individuals with whom the children have developed relationships. In addition to breaking down myths and apprehension about counseling services, the maintenance of these relationships with staff members serves as a model for healthy interactions and as a general source of information for other supportive services available to the girls and their families.

What is the GIRLS CAN! Program?

In 1997, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) acknowledged the need for gender-specific programming to deal with the needs of delinquent girls, the result of an increasing number of female offenders being charged, detained and committed to the Department. Statistics from the *1999 Florida DJJ's Juvenile Justice in Florida: County Facts and Figures* demonstrate that from 1991-1992 through 1997-1998, the number of youths referred for delinquency in Hillsborough County increased 22 percent for males and 51 percent for females.

National statistics reveal that delinquent girls are likely to begin engaging in risky behaviors between the ages of 13 and 14 years, and identify a "window of opportunity" in early adolescence for the onset of intensive intervention services (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 1998).

A period of one year from the time of a girl's first DJJ referral to adjudication would be an optimal time during which intense intervention could be provided. This study also found a deficit of gender-specific prevention, diversion and intervention programs, and a focus on moderate and maximum commitment programs within Hillsborough County (Placement Options for Adolescent Girls, 2000).

Lack of front-end services is a major problem for youth at risk of becoming serious offenders. Prevention/intervention services are most successful in the initial stages of the youth's contact with the DJJ system, when the probability of changing patterns of behavior is the greatest (Children's Board of Hillsborough County, 1993). The sanctions of initial offenses have typically been inadequate. This has resulted in a system that is ineffective to meet the needs of first-time offenders (Children's Board of Hillsborough County, 1993).

As an alternative sanctions program, referrals for GIRLS CAN! come from county diversion programs (Teen Court, Juvenile Arbitration, the Intensive Delinquency Diversionary Services program, and the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC)). Department of Juvenile Justice probation officers also have utilized the services of GIRLS CAN! with girls that they believe would benefit

from a structured group counseling program. GIRLS CAN! also accepts community referrals from parents, schools, and community-based organizations.

GIRLS CAN! is utilized by the Juvenile Diversionary Programs of the Thirteenth Judicial Court Circuit, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the community at large. GIRLS CAN! targets girls who may be first or second-time misdemeanor or status offenders and those who may be at-risk for delinquency, and engages them in activities that promote a healthy, responsible lifestyle. The program is designed to serve 100 girls and their parents per year.

The objectives of the GIRLS CAN! program are to prevent initial involvement or deeper involvement of participants within the juvenile justice system; to prevent participant pregnancy through body education; to prevent truancy and to strengthen the relationship between participants and their families. GIRLS CAN! seeks to serve families as an effective prevention program helping girls to avoid the need for social services in the future.

The goals of the GIRLS CAN! program for participants include the identification of long and short-term career and personal goals, learning decision-making skills, dealing with grief and loss issues and expansion of knowledge in the areas of anger management and responsible behavior. Goals for parents involved in the program include increased understanding of issues of female adolescent physical and psychological development, and training in effective parenting and communication skills.

At the heart of GIRLS CAN! are intensive psycho-educational classes that focus on the areas identified as being critical for this population. Class exercises help girls to identify their beliefs about themselves, heal the past, build a value system, set goals, interact respectfully with others and take positive control of their lives. GIRLS CAN! classes are led by an experienced counseling professional, and classes include both didactic presentations and group discussions. Thus, the girls acquire knowledge with an opportunity to discuss its application to their own situations. New classes begin each month to minimize the possibility of recidivism prior to treatment. The girls' classes meet for two hours each week for a 12-week session. Class size averages ten girls per group meeting, and typically eight girls successfully complete each session.

Parent workshops are also facilitated by a counseling professional and provide education and supportive services. Parent involvement is essential to the success of these girls. Parents are required to attend an introductory, two-hour meeting and are invited to attend three additional follow up workshops. The introductory meeting presents an outline of material to be covered in the girls' workshops. Written parental consent to participate in the classes also is obtained in this first session. Topics addressed in parenting sessions include female adolescent development, parenting techniques and communication, and also incorporate issues that are brought up for discussion in the open forum of the group. The goal of these sessions is to help parents understand the issues their daughters face.

Families benefit from GIRLS CAN! and its emphasis on the consequences of behavior. The program attempts to strengthen mother/daughter bonds that may be weak or inconsistent. It is important that the parents understand the pivotal role that they, as adults, play in the lives of their

children. Likewise, the participants must identify the significant members of their support systems and recognize their contributions and potential in influencing behavioral change. Often GIRLS CAN! is the first opportunity that a girl and her parents have to begin to address issues that require special attention or counseling. Through their participation in the program, the girls and their families also become aware of the network of resources available to them, including ongoing parental support and counseling/educative services.

The benefit of the GIRLS CAN! program is evident among the participants, their families, the community and the juvenile justice system. As has been demonstrated in the most recent data gathered from GIRLS CAN! graduates, 86 percent of girls who completed the program had not incurred a new offense six months after program completion. In addition, 94 percent of those contacted six months after completion were not pregnant and 90 percent were enrolled in school. In the year 2000, 72 percent of those who enrolled graduated from the program.

A Unique Opportunity

The Centre for Girls is unique on many levels. First and foremost, The Centre targets only female adolescents and their families. It is the only community center of its kind in the state and is drawing attention to the special developmental needs of female adolescents. Also important is its role as an example of true community partnership.

During the planning and construction phases, The Centre for Women received tremendous community support and enthusiasm for The Centre for Girls. While The Centre for Women raised over \$160,000 in private contributions, the City of Tampa donated the land on which The Centre for Girls was built. The Department of Juvenile Justice awarded a \$200,000 grant toward construction costs. All of the architectural and engineering services, paint, computer network cabling, telephone wire cabling and interior design work also were donated.

Funding for the services offered at The Centre for Girls also is a partnership, split among federal Byrne crime prevention funds which are administered through the Anti-Drug Alliance of Hillsborough County, The Eckerd Family Foundation (a private funding source), and the Children's Board of Hillsborough County. This partnership allows each agency to fund a portion of the services provided to approximately 500 girls and their families per year. The cost of operating the Drop-In Program is approximately \$300,000. This cost includes program and office supplies, occupancy and indirect costs and salaries. Drop-In Program funds are used to pay for two full-time counselors, two to three part-time counselors and a full-time site manager. Funds also are used to partially fund the department director, receptionist and community liaison, a position that does outreach with community partners to recruit girls for the Drop-In Program. Thus, a portion of funding helps to support positions that divide time among several programs. Valuable agency partnerships are another unique element of The Centre for Girls. Drug prevention classes, opportunities to be linked with a mentor and participation in support groups are examples of some of the services provided to the girls by these partnerships. The staff may also provide agency referrals to individuals or families in need of intensive psychotherapy services.

Where do we go from here?

Long-term program goals for The Centre for Girls include protecting girls from the negative behaviors that typically accompany adolescence such as, school truancy, sexual experimentation, criminal involvement and drug and alcohol use. Equally as important, The Centre seeks to serve as an information and referral source to parents and guardians. Designed as a neighborhood-based program, The Centre for Girls also hopes to replicate itself in other parts of Hillsborough County and the state.

The Centre for Girls is a visible provider and advocate for services designed to meet girls' needs. The Centre hopes to play an important role in the transitions from female adolescence into young adulthood by encouraging the girls to feel like they are a part of something special in their community, giving them basic life skills instruction so often absent in their households; informing them of the consequences of delinquent behaviors; and addressing the pertinent emotional and psychological issues in their lives. With the assistance of our community partners and the general public, The Centre for Girls will impact the community in a unique and powerful way.

THE PACE CENTER FOR GIRLS

Natalie M. Schaible, Development Officer and Special Projects Manager

The nation and our state are struggling with a grim statistic: the number of girls entering the juvenile justice system is continuing to increase at an alarming rate. The recent joint report of the American and National Bar Associations, *Justice by Gender—The Lack of Appropriate Prevention, Diversion and Treatment Alternatives for Girls in the Justice System*, May 2001, called the 83 percent increase in female delinquency cases a “national emergency.” The 1999 Florida Department of Juvenile Justice’s statistics show a 53 percent increase in the number of girls referred over the past five years. The need for effective prevention services to help this population has never been greater.

Fortunately, Florida possesses one of the only statewide prevention programs in the country that is making a significant impact on these escalating numbers. In 1985, the PACE (Practical Academic and Cultural Education) Center for Girls was established in Jacksonville as an alternative to incarceration or institutionalization of at-risk adolescent girls. With only \$100 in a bank account and a donated room at a local church, PACE opened its doors to 10 girls referred by the courts. With a board of five community volunteers dedicated to making changes in the juvenile justice system, PACE was incorporated as a 501(c)3 organization. Through numerous advocacy efforts, PACE brought the need for gender responsive programming that was preventive and interventive in nature to the attention of decision makers in the juvenile justice system. This advocacy, coupled with the success of the Jacksonville center and the request of juvenile court judges, led PACE to receive expansion funding from the state. Its continued growth resulted from a combination of community based initiatives, the growing demand for prevention services for girls, and effectiveness of the PACE holistic program approach.

Currently, PACE’s revenue is derived from 59 percent state grants, 21 percent county grants, 17 percent private funds, two percent federal grants and one percent city grants. It currently expends 86 percent of its funding on program expenses and 14 percent on administrative expenses. At the request of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, PACE has been successfully replicated in 19 cities throughout the state. Since its opening, PACE has served over 5,000 at-risk girls and has helped 93 percent of the girls completing PACE avoid or not to become reinvolvement with the juvenile justice system. This is prevention programming that works.

While Pace’s statistics are impressive, it is the visible results, one girl at a time, that confirm the program is making a difference. PACE Center for Girls has hundreds of success stories resulting from prevention programming designed to meet the needs of individual clients. Here is just a glimpse:

Alicia

At 16-years old, Alicia was shy and withdrawn, ridiculed continuously by others because her front teeth were missing. Not surprisingly, she was truant from school and had little hope for a bright future. Her excessive truancy led to her PACE referral. When asked upon enrollment to set a five-year goal for herself, the best she could predict was she would “have three to four children and work at McDonald’s.” With Alicia, it was painfully obvious that her attitude was driven by her poor self-esteem. As a first step, a PACE board member arranged for the donation of dental work to replace her missing teeth. Alicia wrote, “Thank you for making my life different. Now people look at me for who I am and what I am.” With this boost in self-confidence, Alicia blossomed into a strong student who aspired to attend college.

Sophia

Before coming to PACE at age 15, Sophia had performed poorly at the 13 different schools she attended while moving with her military family, headed by her single parent father. She found recognition as a gang member and was heading toward a confrontation with the law. Upon coming to PACE, she thrived on the individualized attention, completing her course work for high school graduation and performing over 100 hours of community service in one year. With PACE’s help, she learned how to gain positive recognition through positive actions and won a scholarship to art school.

Teri

Brought to PACE by her single recovering alcoholic mother who had just regained custody of six children, Teri was two years behind in school and juggling family responsibilities. As the oldest child, she had been forced to grow up fast as the caretaker of both children and parent. With the help of the case management and counseling at PACE, she turned her destructive anger into constructive energy. Equipped with the goal setting and coping skills learned at PACE, she is attending community college on scholarship and working two jobs to provide support to her brothers and sisters who are back in foster care.

As these examples illustrate, it is the victimizing circumstances our girls endure (not the girls themselves) that are the basis for the nonproductive behaviors that lead to juvenile justice involvement. One of the secrets to PACE’s success is understanding the relationship between victimization and female juvenile crime, then creating a safe, nurturing environment for these girls to share their stories and begin the healing process. How does PACE accomplish this? First and foremost, its philosophy is to value all girls and young women, believing each one deserves an opportunity to find her voice, achieve her potential and celebrate a life defined by responsibility, dignity, serenity and grace. Secondly, throughout its programs, PACE uses a strength-based approach, which focuses on the potential of each girl, not the poor choices she may make. Constantly looking for opportunities for recognition, PACE begins the process of helping the girls build self-confidence in an environment that celebrates the female perspective, giving many their first chance to just enjoy being a girl. In this environment, PACE girls go on to become productive citizens who take responsibility for themselves and for helping others.

They complete their education, begin careers, repair family relationships and rejoice at their achievements.

The structure of PACE's program pivots on its mission to provide holistic, effective gender responsive education, counseling, training and advocacy continuum to its girls. The specific components are as follows:

Initial Screening and Intake: Intake interviews and assessments are conducted with each prospective girl to assess the risk factors in her life and the support she needs to possess the necessary motivation to attend the program.

Academic Education: Each PACE Center has a cooperative agreement with the local school board to provide academic programs. These include remedial services, individual instruction and specialized education plans. Middle and high school self-paced curriculum are offered during a minimum of 300 minutes of academic instruction daily which is designed to meet the academic level of each student. While enrolled in PACE, each girl must work toward obtaining her educational goal. After leaving PACE, the girls are encouraged to continue their education, and offered assistance in financial planning for vocational or college enrollment through transitional services case management.

Individualized Attention: The low student/staff ratio of 10:1 provides enough caring staff to focus on each girl's potential and helps PACE provide consistent structure and ongoing recognition of the girls' accomplishments, no matter how small.

Gender Specific Life Management Skills Enhancement: This PACE-designed curriculum, known as SPIRITED GIRLS!®, is a gender-sensitive program designed specifically for the needs of girls. It consists of modules that teach positive lifestyle choices. For example:

- SMARTTALK assists the girls in learning the importance of using appropriate communication in varying situations.
- ICE (Inclusive Cultural Education) focuses on the appreciation of cultural differences.
- NINE TO FIVE ON FLEX-TIME emphasizes career awareness and the necessary steps to employment security.
- SOS (Save Our Sisters) encompasses healthy lifestyle choices in regards to topics such as sexuality, fitness, nutrition, drugs, etc.
- SAFETYSMART is a violence prevention module that helps students to identify the cycle of violence and teaches a non-violent lifestyle.

Therapeutic Services: Individual case management/treatment plans are developed for each student based on a detailed psychosocial needs assessment. Individual, group and family counseling sessions are conducted to meet the needs of the student and her family. A staff member is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Parental Involvement: Engaging the significant adults in a girl's life is critical. At a minimum, staff maintains regular contact with parents that includes home visits, office sessions and

telephone calls. An integral part of the program are the parent groups and other activities that help the parents learn the skills necessary to assist in their daughter's growth.

Community Volunteer Service: Girls are required to participate in monthly volunteer service projects to promote self-worth and involvement within their community. The students learn project management skills, and begin to see themselves as a part of something larger.

Transitional Services: PACE conducts an unprecedented three years of comprehensive follow-up for all girls attending the program for more than 30 days to ensure that the girls continue with their education, employment or appropriate referral services. For girls served less than 30 days, three months of transitional services are provided.

It is these components of PACE programming, along with its dedication to the plight of the girls involved in the juvenile justice system, that have given PACE national attention. Publications from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, The American Bar Association, The National Bar Association and the Stanford Law Review all have identified PACE as one of a handful of agencies successfully addressing the issue of prevention and intervention for girls.¹

As one of the leaders in this field, PACE is continuously called upon to assist other organizations in the service of this population. In response to this need, PACE has developed the PACE Training Shop, which lists available staff, organizational training and technical assistance. PACE also offers training that is appropriate for employees of juvenile detention centers, including:

- **Gender Responsive Case Management for Juvenile Probation Officers**

This training is specifically designed for juvenile probation officers (JPO) working with female offenders. A JPO Curriculum Manual is provided which comprehensively outlines roles and responsibilities, gender responsive programming, strategies for intervention, risk factors of growing up female, goal setting techniques, and strength based case management modalities. Participants gain fundamental concepts of working with female offenders, effective, individualized, gender-responsive case management and a significantly increased knowledge of the profile and treatment needs of girls in the juvenile justice system.

- **The Nuts & Bolts of Effective Programming For Girls**

This training provides an overview of the Six Domains of Adolescent Development for at-risk girls, encompassing the Intellectual, Spiritual, Emotional, Relationships, Sexual, & the Physical. Girls bring complex issues that necessitate specialized interventions and programming. This training is designed for all levels of personnel who have an interest in gaining cutting edge information about effective programming for girls. The scope of the training information ranges

¹ ("Investing in Girls: A 21st Century Strategy," Juvenile Justice, vol. VI, no. 1, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, October, 1999; Educate or Incarcerate—Girls in the Florida and Duval County Juvenile Justice Systems, Leslie Acoca, National Council on Crime and Delinquency, November 2000; Justice by Gender—The Lack of Appropriate Prevention, Diversion and Treatment Alternatives for Girls in the Justice System, American Bar Association/National Bar Association, May 2001; "Severing Family Ties: The Plight of Nonviolent Female Offenders and their Children," Stanford Law and Policy Review, Winter 1999; "Women Offenders and the Criminal Justice System," Criminal Justice, American Bar Association.)

from prevention to commitment programs. A review of the core components of gender responsive programming is fully explored.

- **Getting to the Heart of the Matter**

This training provides a roadmap for gender specific, individualized, strength-based treatment planning designed to meet the unique needs of at-risk adolescent girls. The Six Domains of Adolescent Development are reviewed and staff are trained in the use of complementary assessment and treatment planning tools. This training is designed for all levels of treatment team members, program personnel and direct caregivers serving at-risk girls who are interested in a holistic, effective and gender responsive approach. Participants can expect to gain concrete strategies that actively nurture the development of competencies for each and every girl. A manual outlining the technical information entitled “A Heightened Confidence in Providing Services to Girls” is provided.

- **SPIRITED GIRLS! ®**

This training is designed for facilitators of Life Skills prevention programming. The curriculum is designed to meet the unique needs of girls. The program paints a picture of healthy educated young women and creates a forum for skills building in the areas of violence prevention, healthy life style choices, career exploration, drug and alcohol prevention, diversity awareness and acceptance, and independent living. This program focuses on the essential skills girls need to become empowered young women and gives the facilitator and the female student a clear roadmap of how to get there. Participants can expect to gain: a comprehensive knowledge of a prevention curriculum for girls, enhanced skills in group facilitation with girls and confidence in serving girls developmental needs.

- **Spirit Singers**

Research indicates adolescents who are spiritually anchored have a lower rate of substance abuse, depression, suicide, and promiscuity, and are more likely to finish school and stay out of trouble with the law. Staff often is unsure how to deal with the issue of spiritual development. To address this problem, PACE designed the Spirit Singers training, which teaches staff how to help girls explore the body, mind and spirit connection, while learning to create and preserve balance in their own lives.

The content of the PACE Training Shop can be found on its web site at www.pacecenter.org.

PACE has consistently exceeded outcome goals and achieved some of the highest quality assurance ratings in the state of Florida, producing direct care that delivers life-changing programs for girls, developing management that is focused on the delivery of quality gender responsive services to girls, and maintaining a corporate culture centered on continuous improvement and fiscal responsibility. For over 15 years, PACE has consistently advocated for the changes necessary to produce programming and systems that effectively assists girls in the juvenile justice system. The offering of training and technical assistance is just the next action step in PACE’s effort to help girls at risk or involved in the juvenile justice system.

GIRLS ADVOCACY PROJECT...

Help, Healing and Hope

Eileen Nexer Brown, Co-Chair, Girls Advocacy Project Community Advisory Board and Maria A. Larrea, Program Director, Girls Advocacy Project

Tara* slouches in the back of the room, chin pointing to the floor, hooded eyes glaring towards the animated speaker. The woman pauses, locks onto the young girl's face and asks, "Do you have something you want to tell me?" Hesitantly, in a small voice Tara replies, "Why are you doing this? Why do you care about us?" The speaker responds, "Because we are in the same family—the family of women. When one of us falls, we all stumble. Because you deserve to have a healthy, productive, safe, fulfilling life." Tara's eyes lift and a smile spreads across her face.

This encounter took place in the Miami-Dade County Juvenile Detention Center and sums up the purpose of prevention and intervention programs for girls caught in the web of our juvenile justice system. Many of these girls have been damaged, left with no sense of deserving, no sense of self, no sense of community, no glimpse into a future that provides hope. If we do not intervene and take steps to build a sense of worth and to prevent their re-entry into the system, they are doomed to a life of incarceration. Additionally, we doom their children to be at risk of replicating their young mothers' self-destructive behavior.

First, we must understand why it is critical to provide gender-specific programming when intervening. Girls' paths into the system do not mirror those of boys. And yet most attempts at intervention throughout the country do not address the unique needs of girls.

Eighty percent of girls in the system are victims of physical abuse. ***Seventy percent*** are victims of sexual abuse or sexual assault.¹ Victimization causes "derailment" in girls. Multiple problems occur—lower academic and intellectual performance, more stressful life-events, more suicide attempts, increased likelihood of abusing alcohol, higher levels of hostility and sensation-seeking, and lower levels of self-esteem, mastery and sense of control.² The high prevalence of physical, sexual and emotional abuse/victimization in the lives of adolescent girls could be the most significant underlying cause of high-risk behaviors leading to delinquency.³

*name has been changed to preserve the girl's anonymity

¹ Patricia Chamberlain & John B. Reid, Differences in Risk Factors and Adjustment for Male and Female Delinquents in Treatment Foster Care, *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1994

² Cathy Spatz Widom, Childhood Victimization and the Derailment of Girls and Women to the Criminal Justice System, 8 (1999) (unpublished paper, presented at the Annual Conference on Criminal Justice Research and Evaluation: Enhancing Policy and Practice, Washington, D.C., July 20, 1999)

³ Laura Prescott, Gains Center, Improving Policy and Practice for Adolescent Girls with Co-Occurring Disorders in the Juvenile Justice System, 3 (June 1998)

There are suggestions from interviews with girls and those who work with them that the statistics do not accurately reflect the abuse taking place. Not only are there instances where fear, ignorance, and inaccessibility to authorities are barriers, there are more subtle forms of abuse which are not required to be reported.

Girls describe running away from home because the men in their lives engage in voyeurism, invading the girls' privacy by repeatedly entering their rooms while the girls are undressing, and other infractions that are not officially labeled as sexual abuse. When girls leave, they are labeled "runaways." Some of these girls refer to themselves as "push-outs." What is considered a healthy choice for an adult woman—leaving an abusive home—can constitute "delinquent" behavior in an adolescent girl. Unless a girl is considered "emancipated," she does not have the freedom to remove herself from an environment that jeopardizes her health, safety and well-being. The juvenile justice system and its representatives have been extremely slow to recognize that there may be legitimate reasons for girls to leave their homes, and that judicial paternalism contributes to harsh treatment of female offenders.⁴

Girls have become the fastest growing segment of the juvenile justice population. According to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Agency Strategic Plan for 1998-2003, the number of males arrested increased by 23 percent from 1991-92 to 1996, while the number of females arrested increased by 55 percent. What is particularly disturbing is that girls are more likely to be incarcerated for less-serious crimes than boys.

A girl who has been victimized may exhibit negative behaviors. She tends to become sexually active at an earlier age to validate herself and feel loved. She is at greater risk for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. She may resort to prostitution to survive on the streets. She may use drugs to medicate her pain, and sell drugs to support her habit. Older men often take advantage of her vulnerability. She is drawn into criminal activity under their direction and seeks their approval. She becomes *both* the victim and the offender. By this time, her appearance, attitude and conduct label her—she is a delinquent.

It is not surprising that girls who have been victimized perform poorly in school. A large percentage of girls in the juvenile justice system have failed at least one grade, been suspended or expelled and/or placed in special classrooms.

Physical and mental health problems add to the layers of issues faced by girls in the system. They act out. Instead of attacking the root of the behavior, the system views the behavior as uncontrollable and unmanageable. The consequences are punitive, not rehabilitative. The juvenile justice system only knows—or sees—the offender on the arrest form.

In response to the need to help our most vulnerable girls—girls caught in the web of the juvenile justice system—Judge Cindy S. Lederman, Administrative Judge of the Juvenile Division, Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, initiated the Girls Advocacy Project (GAP), which was funded by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. An advisory team of professionals familiar with the needs of girls within the system contributed to the development of the project, which is now gaining statewide and national attention. The primary goal of GAP is to obtain an

⁴ *Supra* Widom, at 28

in-depth understanding of the special needs of girls; to identify unmet service needs; and to evaluate curriculum. The project further aims to assist the juvenile justice system in determining what type of gender-specific programs are needed and to provide more proactive intervention. Not only is the project making an immediate impact on the girls in detention today, it is compiling a body of much-needed research to contribute towards helping girls in the juvenile justice system in the future.

GAP is a first-step intervention program for girls in the Miami-Dade Juvenile Detention Center awaiting trial, placement and/or release. In theory, the facility is for short-term stays. In reality, many girls languish in cells for months. The paucity of placements for girls is just one of the reasons why their time in detention is extended. Until GAP, the girls went to school in the center for a few hours each day and received no additional programming.

Judge Lederman saw the girls' isolated time in detention as an opportunity akin to a "retreat" from the every-day negative influences that led them into the system. As ironic as it seems, incarceration can be a positive experience if it brings about self-affirming change in a young woman's life. This "time out" can be used to begin to mend them, to educate them, to garner their trust, to inspire them, to modify their behavior and to give them opportunities they have never had in their short, difficult lives. This is not only a humane approach—it is a practical approach to breaking the cycle of dependency and incarceration of women.

GAP's staff includes a Project Director, Co-Project Director, two Assistant Coordinators, a Support Coordinator and a Project Evaluator. Regular meetings are held to ensure high quality treatment for the girls and to resolve obstacles and make adjustments to the on-going project. The girls range from as young as 11 to 18 years old. One of the primary roles of the GAP Assistant Coordinators (two women who work directly with the girls) is to bridge the gap between girls, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Public Defender's Office, and the Department of Children and Families. As they assist in creating linkages, the girls learn to access community-based services and to become a partner in the process. These collaborative linkages have opened a positive line of communication to address and ensure equal justice for detained girls—and to give them a sense of empowerment. The GAP Assistant Coordinators provide caring and support; foster strong positive relationships in their peer group; provide norms for healthy behavior in their families; and encourage strong positive bonds to families. They also help identify other sources of support when the girls have no family or the dysfunction of the family is so severe that support is needed from the outside. In addition, GAP Assistant Coordinators act as liaisons between the girls and detention staff.

All girls placed in the Juvenile Detention Center are first seen at the Juvenile Assessment Center. This is where the girls are processed and initially screened. This information is placed in the girls' detention files and is available to GAP staff prior to initiation of the education program. Upon informed, written consent, girls volunteer to participate in the program. A marker of the success of the project is that girls in detention enthusiastically urge new girls to participate. Once admitted, GAP staff interview the girls.

The educational component is at the heart of the project. Several intensive, educational group talks, lasting two hours in duration, are presented every day (excluding weekends) in 14-day

rotations. The girls are given the opportunity to request topics of interest to GAP staff, and engage in one-on-one discussions regarding issues not offered during a particular rotation. Girls' self-protective shells are often cracked with in-depth discussions including:

- basic education skills as tools for the future
- the difference between "using" and/or "abusing" alcohol and drugs
- the use of computer technology to create opportunities in the future
- how to resolve conflicts and act responsibly when angry
- getting help in leaving a gang safely
- the connection between physical health and hygiene
- managing income, finding and paying for child care services and living independently
- forms of self-expression and using artistic talents to express negative feelings
- learning to like and accept oneself and dealing with peer pressure
- creating support systems through family, friends, spirituality and religion
- learning about avoiding victimizing relationships
- coping with illness and/or death of a parent, care giver, family member, boyfriend, girlfriend, friend or a pet
- dealing with violence, personal—physical, verbal and emotional, violence in the media and exposure to violence in her neighborhood

GAP has issued three “update reports” during the life of the project. Ninety-nine girls had participated in the project by the end of the first report period. The current analyses are based on 456 GAP girls. In order to help with future treatment/education studies and with the ongoing GAP project, extensive background information was gathered on this sample. The girls made therapeutic gain in the categories of technology and computers information, substance abuse, dangers of being involved in gangs, human sexuality and conflict resolution.

Pre and post-tests are used to assess the impact of the group talks. What cannot be measured, however, is the impact of the dedicated women who work directly with the girls. The girls request one-on-one sessions with GAP staff. Since staff does not actively seek these discussions, this interaction is a testament to the trust gained by the Assistant Coordinators. When asked what the GAP Assistant Coordinators have done for them, girls respond, "They listen." Others chime in..."They teach me not to disrespect myself." "They care about us even after we make mistakes." "They help me be a leader—a *good* leader." "They are there for me...no matter what."

A powerful outlet for the girls is the GAP Journal. For many girls who have had their voices muffled, expression erupts in writing and drawing when they are unable or under equipped to express their thoughts and feelings in a scripted manner. It is a work in progress with entries being read by new girls entering the detention center. This creates a common thread that bonds the girls to each other and fosters a support system because of their shared experiences.

Currently, GAP is spreading its wings beyond the walls of the Juvenile Detention Center. Leading female community leaders have come together to form the GAP Community Advisory Board. They are giving the girls the message that they are not alone—that there are caring people in the community who want to help them succeed. After learning that the harsh personal

products used in detention sometimes dried and cracked the girls' skin, these women began a "campaign" to collect hotel samples of lotions, shampoos and soaps. When they heard about a shortage of toothbrushes and toothpaste, they purchased these items for distribution. They also have donated magazines, books, journals and videotapes. Instead of leaving detention with their meager belongings in a paper bag, the girls now have tote bags with gifts. The girls are clearly told that they deserve to live with dignity and have their most basic needs met, and that they are not being rewarded for negative behavior.

The corporate community also has joined in the effort. American Airlines has provided the tote bags, donated food for the holiday party, and sent employees to deliver programming. The Junior League of Miami has made GAP one of its community service projects. "Hands on Miami" coordinated members of the community to paint the modules of the detention center with stenciled flowers around cell doors, transforming a dull, depressing environment to one that is more livable for young girls. Neat Stuff, Inc., provides clothing for the girls, especially essential items such as jackets, sweaters, and appropriate clothing for jobs and interviews.

Through the donation of many pro bono hours by a Webmaster "angel," GAP has acquired a state-of-the-art website *gapgirls.org* that can be accessed by the community and the girls. This will create an important link to give girls support after they leave detention. Monitored chat rooms will be set up periodically that can only be visited by "GAP Graduates."

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice's grant to fund GAP is \$150,000. The budget consists of \$119,600 for employees/staff salaries and benefits; \$10,000 for contractual staff or services; \$5,000 for equipment; \$5,500 for materials/supplies; \$500 for postage; \$5,900 for printing/copying; \$1,000 for training/seminars; and \$2,500 for staff travel. Local matching contributions total \$37,633.12 (\$18,933.12 for employee/staff salaries and benefits and \$18,700 for rent/telephone/utilities).

According to the Florida Corrections Commission's 1999 Annual Report, "Florida's female inmate population is one of the largest female populations in the United States." The obvious, logical place to intervene is before they become women, when they enter into the juvenile justice system as girls. We envision GAP-like programs throughout Florida. We envision girls going back into their communities without recycling into the system. We envision reversing the trend of increasing numbers of girls being incarcerated. This can only be accomplished by giving troubled girls a high priority with funding and gender-specific programming. It will take a team effort throughout our communities and our state. It is an effort well worth the rewards for young girls today and future generations in Florida tomorrow. We invite all to join in GAP's motto: Let us be: Creators of hope. Builders of strength. Partners in dreams.

Entries From the GAP Journal

Is worth it?

by: Veronica C.

*Shattered to a thousand pieces of glass
my soul hurts and burns with pain.
Thinking of all the crap that has passed,
I'm still shedding tears like non-stop rain.
While a flood builds I think to myself
is life worth living or should I blast myself?
Is a broken heart worth going through?
Are hurtful moments worth passing through?
But in the end none of this matters
because heaven or hell is all that comes after.*

What it's like to be a victim

by: Amanda W.

At least half of all the girls I know are victims. Victims of abuse, all kinds of abuse. Verbal physical, sexual...all kinds. I myself know what it's like to be a victim. It's not something I talk about, ever. It's painful and embarrassing. But I choose to overlook it. I know that's not a good thing to do. But right now I'm comfortable keeping it a secret from the world. It's a horrible thing to happen to a person. Not only does it happen to girls though. My boyfriend was molested when he was younger too. It's an awful thing to happen to a person. But sometimes there is nothing you can do about it except realize it hurts and it's unfair and then put it in the past.

All alone

by Angela S.

*I used to like to be all alone,
Until the day I realized I wasn't fully grown,
At that point I was confused,
I had missed so much time from being sexually abused,
But it was partially my fault for letting it get to my head,
Now I'm thinking back on all the nights I wished I was dead,
Wishing for the lightning to brighten up the sky,
Hoping about 10 bolts would hit me and now I'm realizing why,
I put up a wall against love, you see,
I wouldn't believe anyone loved me,
All though I would use the word fast as could be,
The definition of love meant nothing to me,
I tried very hard to forget the past,*

*But I knew that type of amnesia would never last...
not even for a second in a half,
Half of my years,
Shattered in tears,
Why, why did a girl like me, love to be
ALL ALONE.*

Destiny

by Destiny C.

The life I live now is just a game,
but as I get older things will change.

I'll have a career and never look back,
interfering with the past can get me off track.

So I'll focus on my future and forget the past,
believe in myself and I know I'll last.

Some things in life I do regret,
I can't turn back time so those things I'll forget.

There's a word called "faith" which I know I have,
and that powerful word leads to a path.

My future which depends on me,
Lies in the hands of Destiny

Because I have violated

by: Nicole L.

I have been isolated.

*I have made these four walls my home
for things I've done wrong
for things I don't condone.*

*I took a look at myself and I analyze
what I need to change.*

I'll start with a list of tries.

*Try to win this fight against myself
is what it seems*

*before I put an end to my future
by self-destruction before my time to leave.
The time for reconstruction has to proceed.*

CONCLUSION

Elizabeth Johnston, FCSW

Children are our most valuable natural resource.

~ Herbert Clark Hoover ~

31st President of the United States of America

In the above quote, Herbert Hoover articulates the driving force behind the Florida Commission on the Status of Women's 2001 Annual Report *Prevention by Intervention: Girls in Florida's Juvenile Justice System*. Children are key to our state's bright future, and their needs should be in the forefront of our society's conscience. Addressing the special needs of "at-risk" girls, or those who have or may come into contact with the juvenile justice system, is essential for them to become productive and independent adults.

The 1999 Florida Department of Juvenile Justice's statistics show a 53 percent increase in the number of girls referred over the past five years. Because of the alarming rate at which girls are entering our juvenile justice system, there is a growing need to find out why this is happening and to increase prevention services. We cannot afford to ignore this situation. The articles in this report highlight the need for increased research, funding and efforts. Florida must take this situation seriously and begin to establish concrete goals to correct it. The three leading girls prevention and intervention programs highlighted earlier in this report — Girls Advocacy Project, The PACE Center For Girls and The Centre For Girls — are all excellent models that could help Florida achieve these goals if implemented on a statewide scale. There is a lack of preventative and early intervention services for girls nationally, and evaluations have shown that this deficiency is pervasive throughout Florida.

Florida's citizens and policymakers may question what can be done to improve this trend. Gender-specific programming is one of the solutions that has been offered and proven effective when implemented. Often girls are put in programs and facilities designed for boys, with "the walls painted pink," meaning these programs do very little to actually address the needs of girls. Instead, the groundbreaking ideas of gender-specificity involve the design of specialized programs and services with regard to the gender, culture and age of the participants. This means that projects are designed to address the unique needs of girls, while taking note of the specific impacting issues, needs, and risk and protective factors of the girls. Because gender related issues are so dramatically linked with the criminal behavior that puts girls in the juvenile system, they must be addressed. Much of the success of the programs for girls described in this report was due to recognizing the link between the victimizing circumstances most of these girls endure, and the destructive behaviors that put them in the juvenile justice system.

It is important not only that the juvenile justice system recognizes the links between victimization and criminal behavior, but that it builds on these theories through action. There are numerous problems that specifically relate to girls and that could be incorporated into gender-specific programming. Several studies have estimated the percentage of girls in the juvenile justice system who have been sexually assaulted to be 70 percent. Abundant studies also have observed that girls have a dramatic drop in self-esteem during adolescence that could lead to these negative behaviors. Gender related issues like

these must be recognized and addressed in an effort to improve these girls' futures. Education and counseling on several topics would be highly valuable to these girls whether it is given at a preventative stage or while the girls are in detention. Issues such as depression/low self esteem, drug abuse and prevention, sexual and physical violence, sexual education, relationship skills, eating disorders/body image, empowerment and assertiveness training, and career/post-secondary education are all important facets. By addressing these problems, the programs already mentioned have been very effective in boosting girls' confidence, academic performance, and life skills. They have also made strides through focusing on each girl's ability to achieve her potential, instead of the poor choices she's made. Instilling a sense of self-worth and self-respect may be one of the best strategies towards improving girls' behavior. Addressing these issues now will help Florida to save money in the long run by reducing repeat juvenile offenders, STD treatment, teen pregnancy, welfare costs and further clogging of the adult prison system.

Parents also must be a factor in the solution to this problem. Unfortunately, parents of the girls in trouble may not be suitable role models, or are out of the picture altogether. Parents may need information on how to communicate better with their children and programs, which help to facilitate parental involvement and participation.

It is imperative that the citizens of Florida and their government do more to help girls at risk and girls inside the juvenile justice system. Gender-specific programming has already proved to be highly effective at helping girls. If implemented on a statewide scale, it would make a great improvement for Florida's girls and our juvenile justice system. Educating and counseling girls will address the roots of their problems, not only lowering the numbers of repeat offenders, but also giving girls a new chance at a better life. It can improve their futures and the future of Florida.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Elizabeth Johnston, FCSW

1) Implement additional gender-specific requirements in provider contracts

When the juvenile justice system creates a new facility, it makes a contract with either a private provider or with its own unit that will run the facility. This contract is weighty because it lays out such things as what programs, training, and services will be provided. Great strides have been made in contract requirement language, however, the following areas need improvement:

A) Training- Currently, there is no required gender-specific training. Providers should be required to conduct gender-specific staff training that focuses on: effective relationship-building with girls, knowledge of developmental differences in males and females, gender-specific risk factors for delinquency, gender-specific programming and delivery of services within this context, the effects of physical and sexual abuse, the behaviors associated with mental health common among delinquent girls, distinguishing between disciplinary and psychological problems, and an understanding of the ethnic diversity of girls. The provider should also be required to conduct training with staff when they are initially employed, as well as throughout the course of their employment with the facility. Training is important to ensure that all staff members share a common set of understandings and knowledge about girls and how to treat them, as well as to ensure that all preconceived ideas or biases about female offenders are addressed.¹ It is also important for staff to be aware of the high rates of victimization among this population and recognize that girls' displays of anger and aggression may represent normal reactions among survivors of abuse.²

B) Educational Enhancement- Girls in the juvenile justice system need to be educated about their own bodies and health risks in order to grow up to be healthy adults. According to a 1999 self report study in *Facing the Challenge: A Profile of Florida's Female Juvenile Commitment Programs*, only 48 percent of commitment programs offered pregnancy, sexuality, and/or parenting instruction.² We recommend that providers be required to include the delivery of an educational. This education should include such topics as sexually transmitted diseases, contraception and family planning, the effects of alcohol and substance abuse, prenatal care, stress management, domestic violence and the cycle of violence, and the dangers of tobacco use. Not only would this education empower girls to take control of their own bodies but it would also save state funding on welfare, public health, and police by increasing prevention of unplanned pregnancy, drug abuse and domestic violence.

2) Improve gender-specific counseling in life skills education

Any future contracts require that residential facilities offer gender-specific programming. However, some existing facilities offer inadequate gender-specific programming, such as only a sewing class. According to Winokur, "At the time of the survey in Feb. 1998, the majority of commitment programs accepting girls in Florida offered at least some gender-specific services. However, 37% of commitment programs for girls did not offer any services tailored specifically for girls."³ It is imperative that the

¹ Winokur, Kristin Parsons. *Facing the Challenge: A Profile of Florida's Female Juvenile Commitment Programs*. Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Florida Delinquent Girls Research Project, Bureau of Data and Research, December 1999, pg. 28

² Ibid, 32

³ Ibid, 31

issues central to these girls' lives are addressed. Topics such as depression/ low self-esteem, drug abuse and prevention, sexual and physical violence, sexual education, relationship skills, eating disorders/body image, empowerment and assertiveness training, pregnancy and parenting instruction, and domestic violence are pivotal factors in most of these girls lives. These topics could be grouped together in a life skills class that would rotate topics on a weekly or daily basis. Giving these girls the tools and education they need to live in the real world would reduce recidivism, saving the state money on repeat offenders. It would also reduce state costs on welfare and health.

3) Establish more intervention and prevention programs in high-risk neighborhoods and for girls in at-risk schools

Florida needs more programs that promote empowerment and coping skills in the lives of troubled girls before they get into trouble. As shown by the preceding articles about PACE, GAP and the Centre for Girls intervention and prevention programs are effective not only at improving girls lives, but at preventing and reducing recidivism. It is logical for the state to spend more money to reach delinquent girls before they end up in the juvenile justice system, rather than spending the substantial money required to incarcerate these girls. These programs are needed most in high-risk neighborhoods and for girls attending at-risk schools.

4) Provide safe alternatives to running away

According to the Department of Health, more than 1 million teenagers run away from home each year. The National Runaway Switchboard reports that 86% of runaways are between the ages of 14 to 17 and 74% are female, while 26% are male.⁴ Rather than seeking adventures, most of today's runaways are running from intolerable domestic situations. It has been estimated that at least 60-70% of these young people are fleeing from families in which they have been mentally, physically, or sexually abused.⁵ Besides outright physical or sexual abuse, runaways may be reacting to persistent tension between family members, including parental fighting or competition among siblings (especially step-siblings), or feelings of rejection by their families.⁶

While running away is not a criminal offence, many judges will court order a juvenile to stay home or not run away and breaking that court order is a criminal offence. This is often referred to as 'bootstrapping' It is unjust to incarcerate these children for trying to escape abuse, or in some cases trying to survive. We recommend that running away be completely decriminalized in all cases, so that these victims of violence are not further punished by the justice system. We also recommend that alternatives such as shelters and independent living are used in place of incarceration for these children and that all judges are aware of these options.

5) Recommend same-sex probation officers

Currently, most probation officers in Florida oversee cases that deal with both males and females. Some of these probation officers receive gender-specific training and some do not. Other places, such as Baltimore, have had a great deal of success in creating a single unit that supervises all girls on probation. We recommend that Florida follow suit by having each juvenile probation circuit office create a single unit designed specifically for female juvenile offenders. This unit should have an all female staff and receive ongoing, gender-specific training.

⁴[http:// www.parentingteens.com%2Fprevention18.shtml](http://www.parentingteens.com%2Fprevention18.shtml)

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

6) Investigate the high rate of abuse in foster homes

According to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justices 2001 Outcome Evaluation Report, 25 percent of girls included in a recent self-report study in the justice system have either been in foster care or Department of Children and Families custody at some point.⁷ The researchers have suggested that this number is an underestimate because it was based on a self-report study. Why is this number so high? One reason might be the high rate of abuse in Florida's foster care. As mentioned earlier girls' victimization can lead to delinquent behavior. According to the Tallahassee Democrat, "Florida's rate of abuse in foster care—about one in every 11 children—is three times the state goal and three times higher than the national standard. And the abuse has gotten worse in the last three years. The rate of abuse in foster care for the year 2000 is more than double that of 1999. The number of children mistreated in foster care has risen every year since 1998, according to the Department of Children and Families and the Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability."⁸

What can be done to stop the flow of girls from foster care to the juvenile justice system? First, the high rate of abuse needs to be investigated. Then, Children and Families must implement stricter standards in accepting individuals as foster parents. It is imperative that foster parents have no prior history of abusing or harming children in any way, and that they be effectively screened for such behaviors on an ongoing basis. Another way to improve the standards for foster parents would be the implementation of mandatory drug testing. Currently, the Department of Children and Families does not perform any drug or alcohol screening of potential foster parents. The number of people interested in becoming a foster parent is already small. If the Department of Children and Families raises its standards, more incentives must be in place to increase the number of qualified individuals interested in participating in the system.

7) Equalize length of wait to placement between girls and boys

The initial function of detention care, according to a definition provided by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice⁹, is to provide temporary care of a juvenile in secure, non-secure or home detention, pending a court adjudication or disposition or execution of a court order. Detention centers are used primarily as a pre-disposition holding facility for serious offenders. Detention is not a commitment program, and compares to a jail in the adult system. The second reason a youth is placed in detention is when he/she is transferred, defined as one who is awaiting placement in their assigned facility. A female juvenile awaiting placement in a high-risk, level 8 residential commitment program can expect an average wait of 17 weeks or approximately four months.¹⁰ In comparison a male will wait less time, an average of 4.8 weeks.¹¹

Because the time a juvenile spends in a detention center is not considered a part of their time served, female juvenile offenders may spend over three times longer in the system than their male counterparts.¹² In the adult prison system, any time spent in detention is counted toward their time

⁷ <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/RnD/mr/outcome.html#2001-5>

⁸ <http://web.tallahasseedemocrat.com/context/2001/11/05.nws.fl.fostercare.htm> 11/05/01

⁹ <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/definitions.html>

¹⁰ Winokur, Kristin Parsons. *Facing the Challenge: A Profile of Florida's Female Juvenile Commitment Programs*. Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Florida Delinquent Girls Research Project, Bureau of Data and Research, December 1999

pg15

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

served. We recommend that the time juvenile offenders spend in detention be counted towards the total amount of their time served. We also recommend that DJJ find a way to make the time spent in detention more equitable to girls.

8) Provide additional mentoring opportunities

Any current or future contracts require that residential facilities include mentoring in all girls programs. However, this means that many programs have been grandfathered in and do not provide mentoring services. In fact, based on self-report data from 1999 only 11% of Florida's female juvenile commitment programs offer female mentoring/role models as a service.¹³ We recommend that programs not offering mentoring be required to do so. As discussed in *Facing the Challenge: A Profile of Florida's Female Juvenile Commitment Programs*, an examination of Florida's female juvenile commitment programs, "All girls benefit from the opportunity to interact with successful female role models. Such role models offer girls insight into positive careers and educational opportunities available to women in today's society. Mentoring is one method of relationship-building and therefore should be an available resource to delinquent girls."¹⁴

Since its conception in August of 1999, The Governor's Mentoring Initiative has quickly grown into a comprehensive and successful program for many children. Governor Bush said, "This is the one thing we need to ensure a bright future for our state."¹⁵ Research shows that mentoring has a positive effect on children. A 1997 study of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program showed that children with mentors are less likely to use drugs, less likely to skip school and often improve in academics.¹⁶ We recommend that this program be expanded to include children in the juvenile justice system. Surely if any children are in need of positive role models, it is Florida's juvenile offenders.

9) Establish free workshops on parenting skills for the parents of girls in detention

Currently, some programs make efforts to encourage more family interaction between the girls and their families. However, this is by no means uniform for all girls' programs in Florida. While these parents can go to local providers for advice on parenting, there is no statewide organization that offers this service. Often these local services are concentrated in metropolitan areas and can be costly. Knowing that many of these children come from low income families, we recommend that the Department of Juvenile Justice offer free workshops throughout Florida for the parents of incarcerated girls on parenting skills and include gender-specific information in these workshops. We also recommend that all parents of incarcerated children be made aware of such services as well as other local resources through mail as soon as their child is prosecuted. We recommend that parents be sent informational kits on parenting skills, including a reminder of local resources, created by DJJ and mailed approximately a week before their child is released.

10) Expand residential facilities for delinquent pregnant girls that teach vocational and parenting skills

Currently, the Department of Juvenile Justice's only residential facility specifically designed for pregnant girls in Florida is the YMCA Group Treatment Home, Character House in Sarasota. There, girls are taught parenting skills and receive counseling that addresses their pregnancy issues, post-partum depression, childbirth education, personal care, Healthy Start care and child development. The

¹³ Ibid, 32

¹⁴ Ibid, 30

¹⁵ http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/011500/met_1811191.html, November 9, 2001

¹⁶ Ibid

girls are given prenatal medical care and allowed to deliver and keep their baby while in the program. Unfortunately, this facility's 16 beds are constantly full, with an average waiting list of five to six girls. This means that some girls have to wait months in detention just to get into the program.

If placed elsewhere in the system, pregnant girls receive little to no education on childcare or pregnancy issues. Their babies are taken from them at least 24 hours after delivery and placed in the care of a guardian. Normally, mother and child form strong bonds at this time. Taking the child away is a painful experience for the mother and has an adverse effect on the ability of mother and baby to form a strong, healthy relationship. We recommend that more facilities be created specifically to address the needs of pregnant girls.

11) Create a residential program placement planning committee

Currently, the Department of Juvenile Justice oversees the decision as to where juvenile justice facilities should be geographically placed, with little consideration of current facility locations and geographic programming needs. According to Facing the Challenge, "Densely-populated areas of the state had few or no "deep-end" commitment programs for girls, which can result in girls being committed to programs far from families. It is difficult to fully engage a youth's family in counseling or other interventions when they are geographically distant." When a girl is placed in a facility on the other side of the state, her chances for parental contact are even further reduced. Many of these girls come from low-income families who may not be able to afford to travel a significant distance. We recommend a residential program placement planning committee comprised of representatives from the Office of the Florida Attorney General, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice and private providers to plan where residential programs will be located and discuss the factors relevant to this decision (e.g. location of current facilities, bed needs, restrictiveness level needs). This effort would help to bring these girls closer to their families, encouraging family interaction.

12) Increase funding to research programs for girls in the juvenile justice system

Currently, little data is available to know the effects of programs provided to girls while they are incarcerated and their respective impact on recidivism. Statewide data is being collected on the effectiveness of girls programs by DJJ's PAM report. However, this only monitors the programs effectiveness with regard to repeat offenders. We recommend that more in-depth research is done on the effectiveness of these programs (i.e. How the graduates of a program feel it impacted their lives, how is the relationship with staff, what did juveniles learn from programs?). Effectiveness of a program encompasses more than just the ability to prevent girls from reentering the system. The system should conduct longitudinal, self-monitoring initiatives with follow-up surveys and services to girls after they leave the institution to determine their success, areas of need, and gaps in service that could be addressed prior to release or during transition to the community.¹⁷ Coordination with graduate schools, especially those with a women's studies program would produce interest in evaluation.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Women in Prison: Status Report on Maryland's Women in Prison*, Maryland Commission on the Status of Women, Fran Tracy-Mumford, Ph.D., October, 2000. Pg. 22

¹⁸ Ibid

Overview of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women, through coordinating, researching, communicating, and encouraging legislation, is dedicated to empowering women from all walks of life in achieving their fullest potential, to eliminating barriers to that achievement, and to recognizing women's accomplishments.

Who We Are...

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) is established in the office of the Attorney General, State of Florida, and consists of 22 members. The Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the Attorney General appoint three members, and the Comptroller, the Secretary of State, the Insurance Commissioner, the Commissioner of Agriculture, and the Commissioner of Education each appoint two members. Each member serves for a term of four years. No member may serve more than eight consecutive years.

What We Are About...

As required by Section 14.24, Florida Statutes, the Commission's mandate is to study and make recommendations to the Governor, Cabinet and Legislature on issues affecting women. These recommendations are presented in the form of an annual report, which is distributed during the first quarter of each year. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- socioeconomic factors influencing the status of women;
- the development of individual potential;
- the encouragement of women to utilize their capabilities and assume leadership roles;
- the coordination of efforts of numerous organizations interested in the welfare of women;
- the identification and recognition of contributions made by women to the community, state and nation; and
- the implementation of recommendations to improve working conditions, financial security, and legal status of both sexes.

Publications

- 1992 Annual Report "Women in the Workplace"
- 1993 Annual Report "Women's Health Care"
- 1994 Annual Report "Justice and Human Rights; How They Apply to Women"
- 1995 Annual Report "Welfare Reform in Florida"
- 1996 Annual Report Benchmark Study

- 1996 Publication “Women and Health, A Status Report”
- 1997 Annual Report “Women and Economic Development”
- 1998 Annual Report “A Definitive Study on Young Women Ages 12-18 in Florida”
- 1999 Annual Report “Reflections and Projections: Women in Florida”
- 2000 Annual Report “A Study of Women’s History Education in Florida’s Public Schools
- 1999 and 2000 FCSW Calendar
- 2001 and 2002 Women’s History Calendar
- Women’s Hall of Fame Brochure
- Sexual Harassment Brochure

Events and Projects

- Women’s Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony
- Women in the Workplace Survey and Press Conference
- Essay Contest: Women’s Suffrage Movement
- Public Hearings: Farm Workers, Welfare Reform, Public Housing, Young Women in the ‘90s, Women and Finances, Obstacles for Women Coming off Welfare, Women in Prison
- Press Conference Kickoff for the 75th Anniversary of Suffrage
- Women’s History Month Programs
- National Association of Commissions for Women Outstanding Achievement Award
- Workshops with Local Commissions on the Status of Women
- Minority Commissions Conference
- Civil Rights Conference
- Non-governmental Organizations Forum at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China

Commission Priorities

- Domestic Violence
- Employment and Education
- Family
- Gender Equity
- Health Care
- Judicial System
- Welfare Reform

FCSW Project Committees

- Annual Report
- Legislative Advocacy
- Research
- Resources
- Women’s Hall of Fame/Women’s History

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women meets quarterly in different locations throughout the state.

History of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women

The 1961 creation of the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) by President John F. Kennedy was in response to the urging of the appointed head of the Women's Bureau in the U.S. Department of Labor, Esther Peterson. Kennedy's action was groundbreaking in that it was the first time women's issues were critically and thoroughly addressed by the federal government. He appointed acclaimed human rights activist Eleanor Roosevelt as chair of the PCSW, with Peterson acting as vice chair.

Roosevelt established seven committees to examine issues such as the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), employment policies, and the provision of social services for women. After a number of legislative victories, the PCSW formed an institutional structure to continue its efforts. This entity, the President's Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women, paired with the Citizen's Advisory Council on the Status of Women and determined that each state should have a commission on the status of women to carry on the PCSW's work at that level.

Florida Governor Farris Bryant created the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women (COSW) in 1964. The COSW was designed to study laws and regulations pertaining to women in Florida and make recommendations to the legislature based on their findings. In January 1966, the Commission presented its first report to the governor.

In December 1967, Governor Claude Kirk was elected. He announced the appointment of 14 new members to the COSW, bringing the total number of commissioners to 24. It took two years for the chair, Helen Krauss Leslie, to successfully coordinate a meeting. The greatest obstacle facing the COSW was funding, as members had to pay their own travel expenses, mailing and mimeography costs. In October of 1968, Governor Kirk appointed eight new members to the Commission, including a new chair, Mary R. Grizzle, a Republican legislator from Pinellas County. Recognizing that the COSW's main impediment was monetary, Grizzle lobbied for inclusion of the Commission's fiscal needs within the Legislature's budget. She also redirected the COSW and introduced issues such as women's property rights, civil service on a local level, the Economic Opportunity Act, labor laws affecting women and migrants, nursery resources, social services, and the governor's employment placement project. Grizzle's commission also worked closely with the Florida Federation of Professional Business and Professional Women's Clubs to pass equal pay legislation.

The year following his election as governor in 1971, Reubin Askew reestablished the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women by executive order. In 1974, Askew appointed an executive director to help coordinate the Commission's activities and to assist in its daily operations. The executive director and a part-time secretary ran the Commission on a budget of \$27,000. The Commission published regular newsletters reporting on legislative and women's issues, produced brochures and manuals to assist women, created a talent bank and established local commissions throughout the state. In their 1974 annual report, the Commission made numerous recommendations to the Governor with the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment presiding at the top of their list. The report also highlighted the areas focused on by the Commission that year: women and employment, education, law and business.

The Commission's budget was cut \$7,000 for 1975-76. This budget had to cover the salary of the executive director, the Commission's annual meeting and eight brochure printings. It is apparent that the Commission attempted to remain active, maintaining deep involvement in legislative matters, the ERA, welfare reform, employment, and problems faced by displaced homemakers and female offenders. According to records, however, the Commission was forced to discontinue projects due to budget constraints. Documentation as to the Commission's fate between the years 1977 and 1978 has not been located.

On July 31, 1979, Governor Bob Graham reactivated the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women (still referred to as the COSW) by means of Executive Order 79-60. The Commission maintained adequate funding throughout his tenure. It was extremely active in 1981: printing newsletters, hosting a public program on women and violence, and bringing together numerous local commissions on the status of women for an "exchange session" to share ideas and discuss problems facing women.

The first Florida Women's Hall of Fame ceremony and reception was held by the Commission at the Governor's Mansion in Tallahassee in May of 1982. Records again suggest that funding problems left the commissioners searching for a source of income for the inductee plaques. The Hall of Fame was still going thriving in 1984, when eight women were inducted. Thirteen more women were inducted in 1986.

Throughout these years, the COSW continued its commitment to the battle for the ERA, working closely with Governor Graham to answer the public's questions and concerns. It did the same with Title IX, employment and economic issues, animal rights and domestic violence.

As the Commission existed only by gubernatorial appointment, it found itself at the mercy of changing political climates. When Governor Bob Martinez came into office in 1987, no members were appointed. Florida Women's Hall of Fame member's plaques, which had hung in the Governor's Office during the Graham administration, were found in a broom closet in the 1990s.

Governor Lawton Chiles lobbied the Florida Legislature to statutorily create the Florida Commission on the Status of Women after he took office in 1991. The leading sponsor in the House of Representatives for CS/CS/HB 109 was Representative Elaine Gordon, while Senator Carrie Meek sponsored the companion bill, SB 1324. The Commission's legislative authority now exists in Section 14.24, Florida Statutes. Since 1991, the Florida Commission on the Status of Women has been fully supported by the Governor, the Cabinet and the Florida Legislature.

Members of the FCSW

Claudia Kirk Barto of West Palm Beach

Blanca Bichara of Miami

Cathy M. Boyer of Orlando

Patricia Clements, Ph.D. of Tallahassee

Rose Marie Cossick of Hollywood

Helen Gordon Davis of Tampa

Kathryn L. Gooderham of Ft. Myers

Allison Doliner Hockman, J.D. of Coral Gables

Lena Juarez of Tallahassee

Bob Levy of Miami/Tallahassee

Anita Mitchell-Bridgeman of West Palm Beach

Peggy Morgan of Merritt Island

Jeanne L. O’Kon, Ph.D of Tallahassee

Kayty Pappas of Gulf Breeze

Nancy Patterson of Orlando

Kathleen Passidomo, J.D. of Naples

Caroline Routson of Maitland

Marsha Griffin Rydberg, J.D. of Tampa

Joyce A. Szilvasy of DeFuniak Springs

Norma White of Jacksonville

Dee Williams of Sun City Center

Barbara Zdravecky of Sarasota

STAFF

Linda P. Nelson, Executive Director

Michele S. Manning, Administrative Assistant III

James M. James II, Staff Assistant

FORMER COMMISSIONERS

Karen C. Amlong, J.D.
The Honorable Rosemary Barkett
Roxcy O’Neal Bolton
Conchy Bretos
Yvonne Burkholz-Megar
Barbara Carey del Castillo, J.D.
Toni Crawford, R.N.
Jennifer Knapp Crock
Elsie Crowell
Karen Cunningham, Ph.D.
Marilyn J. Dewey
Barbara Effman
Peggy Gagnon
Susan Gilbert
Susan Glickman
Debbie Green
Susan Guber
Donna Hansen
The Honorable Edward Healey
The Honorable Sally Heyman
Mohinder “Mona” Jain, Ph.D.
Navita Cummings James, Ph.D.
Martha “Marty” Pinkston, Ed.D.
Mona Reis
Judith Byrne Riley
D. Anne Terrell, J.D.
Lisa A. Tropepe, P.E.
Laura Ward
Debbie Warren
Doris Weatherford
Judy K. Wilson, Ph.D.
Susan Wilson
Karen Woodall

Florida Women's Hall of Fame Members

The Florida Women's Hall of Fame began in 1982 under the aegis of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women. A total of 27 women were selected as members of the Hall in 1982, 1984 and 1986. In 1992, legislation was passed that created a permanent Florida Women's Hall of Fame. Since 1993, three women have been inducted into the Hall annually pursuant to Section 265.001, Florida Statutes. Nominations to the Hall may be made between April 15 and July 15 of each year.

To obtain a nomination form or review member biographies, visit the commissions web site at <http://legal.firn.edu/units/fcsw> or contact the office at 850-414-3300. The Commission appreciates the public input that assists in honoring meritorious women and in educating citizens on the significant and varied accomplishments of women in Florida's history.

Annie Ackerman, 1914—1989, 1986*
Rosemary Barkett, 1939—, 1986*
Alicia Baro, 1918—, 1997*
Nikki Beare, 1928—, 1994*
Mary McLeod Bethune, 1875-1955, 1982*
Roxcy O'Neal Bolton, 1926—, 1984*
Marjorie Harris Carr, 1915-1997, 1996*
Betty Castor, 1941—, 1996*
Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry, 1923-1979, 1986*
Jacqueline Cochran, 1910?—1980, 1992*
Helene S. Coleman, 1925—, 1982*
Carita Doggett Corse, 1891-1978, 1997*
Evelyn Stocking Crosslin, 1919-1991, 1995*
Helen Gordon Davis, 1926—, 1998*
Mattie Belle Davis, 1910—, 1998*
Dorothy Dodd, 1902-1994, 1986*
Marjory Stoneman Douglas, 1890-1998, 1986*
Chris Evert, 1954—, 2000*
Betty Skelton Frankman, 1926—, 1993*
Barbara Landstreet Frye, 1922-1982, 1984*
Christine Fulwylie-Bankston, 1916-1998, 1998*
Althea Gibson, 1927—, 1999*
Elaine Gordon, 1931-2000, 1982*
Elsie Jones Hare, 1903-1985, 1986*
Wilhelmina C. Goehring Harvey, 1912—, 1982*
Paula Hawkins, 1927—, 2000*
Lena B. Smithers Hughes, 1910-1987, 1984*
Zora Neale Hurston, 1901-1960, 1894*

Elizabeth McCollough Johnson, 1909-1973, 1986*
Betty Mae Jumper, 1923—, 1994*
Frances Bartlett Kinne, 1986*
MG Marianne Mathewson-Chapman, 1948-, 2000*
Carrie P. Meek, 1926—, 1992*
Gladys D. Milton, 1924-1999, 1994*
Paula Mae Milton, 1939-1980, 1982*
Sybil Collins Mobley, 1925—, 1984*
JoAnn Hardin Morgan, 1940—, 1995*
Helen Muir, 1911—, 1984*
Sister Jeanne O'Laughlin, OP, Ph.D. 1929—, 1999*
Ruth Bryan Owen, 1885-1954, 1992*
Barbara Jo Palmer, 1948—, 1982*
Arva Jean Moore Parks, 1939—, 1986*
Paulina Pedroso, 1845-1925, 1993*
Dessie Smith Prescott, 1906—, 1999*
Sarah "Aunt Frances" Brooks Pryor, 1877-1972, 1995*
M. Athalie Range, 1916—, 1997*
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, 1896-1953, 1986*
Janet Reno, 1938—, 1993*
Florence Barbara Seibert, 1898-1991, 1986*
Marilyn K. Smith, 1936-1985, 1986*
Gladys Pumariega Soler, 1930-1993, 1984*
Ivy Julia Cromartie Stranahan, 1881-1971, 1996*
Julia DeForest Sturtevant Tuttle, 1848-1898, 1984*
Eartha Mary Magdalene White, 1876-1974, 1986*

*Denotes year of induction.

Florida Commission on the Status of Women Year 2001 Accomplishments

~ COMMITTEE PROJECTS ~

The Annual Report, Bylaws, Executive, Finance and Budget, Legislative Advocacy, Nominating, Research, Resources, Women's Hall of Fame and Women's History Committees of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) held meetings to plan and execute their functions throughout the year. The following list details each committee's projects and accomplishments.

Annual Report Committee

- Completed and distributed the FCSW's 2000 Annual Report *A Study of Women's History Education in Florida's Public Schools, January 2001.*

Bylaws Committee

- Conducted review/revision of Commission Bylaws and Policies and Procedures, *Summer/Fall 2001.*

Legislative Advocacy Committee

- Secured the passage of the Commission's budget for Fiscal Year 2001-2002.
- Assisted in the passage of SB 0226/HB 0285, which provided protection against sexual violence in Florida's jails and prisons.

Research Committee

- Conducted research on girls in Florida's juvenile justice system, and women's health issues.

Resources Committee

- Compiled and distributed a state-wide women's organization directory, *Spring-Fall 2001.*
- Secured private funding for receptions for the Women's Legislative Caucus and the 2001 Florida Women's Hall of Fame. *Quarterly*
- Distributed the Governor's Vacancy Report with instructions to encourage women to apply for appointments. *Quarterly*
- Created a bi-annual newsletter to be published in March & September.

Women's Hall of Fame/Women's History Committee

- Administered the nomination process for the 2001 Florida Women's Hall of Fame, accepted and analyzed nominations, and recommended the names of 10 nominees to the Governor (for his selection of three) for induction into the Hall, *Spring-Fall 2001.*
- Coordinated the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda, featuring Governor Jeb Bush and Attorney General Bob Butterworth., and inducting **Jessie Ball duPont**, wife and advisor to Alfred I. DuPont, who used her personal wealth to enhance the lives of others through philanthropy and social justice, **Lynda Keever**, publisher of *Florida Trend* magazine, and **Judge Lenore Carrero Nesbitt**, the first female judge and person of Hispanic decent appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

Coordinated the Hall of Fame Reception in the Senate Chambers of the Old Capitol, *November, 2001*

- Created and distributed the FCSW's second Women's History Calendar, highlighting Florida Women's Hall of Fame members and detailing various events in women's history, *January-December 2001*.

~ COMMISSION ACTIVITIES ~

- Created a Women's History Month exhibit honoring American women artists and raising awareness of the Florida Women's Hall of Fame at the Mary Brogan Museum of Art in Tallahassee, *March 2001*.
- Participated in Tallahassee Community College's Women's History Month Celebration, *March 2001*.
- Coordinated and conducted a full Commission meeting in Tallahassee, including reports from the Executive, Legislative Advocacy, Family, Health Care, Employment and Education, Finance and Budget, Resources and Women's Hall of Fame/Women's History Committees; and featuring speakers Katherine Harris, Secretary of State; Tom Gallagher, Commissioner of Insurance; and Kelley Otte, President, Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, *First Quarter, 2001*.
- Encouraged Tallahassee-based state agencies, state-wide university women's studies centers and local commissions on the status of women to participate in Take Our Daughters to Work® Day, *April 2001*.
- Coordinated and conducted a full Commission quarterly meeting in Key West, including reports from the Executive, Annual Report, Legislative Advocacy, Bylaws, Research, Employment, Finance and Budget, Resources, and Women's Hall of Fame/Women's History Committees; and featuring speakers Susan Glickman, Former FCSW Chair; Elmira Leto, Administrator of Samuel's House, Inc.; Pam Martin, President, Monroe County Commission on the Status of Women; and Cindy Lerner, Florida House of Representatives, *Second Quarter, 2001*.
- Conducted a full Commission conference call. *Third Quarter, 2001*.
- Coordinated and conducted a full Commission quarterly meeting in Tallahassee, including reports from the Executive, Annual Report, Bylaws, Research, Employment, Finance and Budget, Legislative Advocacy, Nominating, Resources, Women's Hall of Fame/Women's History Committee; and featuring speakers Joyce Peterside, Director, Center for Equity and Cultural Diversity, Florida A&M University, Carlotta Mitchell, Center for Equity and Cultural Diversity, Florida A&M University, Dr. Joyce L. Carbonell, Director, Women's Studies Program, Florida State University, Peggy Lissanke, Executive Director, Elder Floridians Foundation. *Fourth Quarter, 2001*.

- Administered the FCSW web site <http://legal.firn.edu/units/fcsw> including a state-wide calendar, member photographs and biographies, news releases, meeting minutes, and Florida Women's Hall of Fame photographs and biographies, *January-December, 2001*.

~ **2001 CONFERENCES/SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS** ~

- Florida Women's Consortium Legislative/Lobby Days, Tallahassee, FL, *March 2001*.
- "Behind Closed Doors III" Breaking the Silence In Rural Communities In The New Millennium, Chipola Junior College, Marianna, FL, *March 2001*.
- WomanWise Legislative Screening Day, Tallahassee, FL, *April 2001*.
- Southern Women in Public Service, New Orleans, LA, *June 2001*.
- 33rd Annual National Association of Commissions on the Status of Women Convention, Washington D.C., *July 2001*.
- 10th Annual Florida Civil Rights Conference, West Palm Beach, FL, *November 2001*.

~ **RESOLUTIONS and PROCLAMATIONS** ~

- Women's History Month, *March 2001*. (Issued by Governor Jeb Bush)
- Take Your Daughters to Work Day ®, *April 2001*. (Issued by Governor Jeb Bush)
- A Resolution of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women Congratulating the Florida Association of Women Lawyers on their 50th Anniversary, *June 2001*. (Issued by the FCSW)
- Equal Pay Day, *November 2001*. (Issued by the FCSW)

Strategic Plan of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women

Vision Statement

Florida will be a state in which women are able to achieve their full potential uninhibited by gender-related barriers, and be appropriately compensated and recognized.

Guiding Principles

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women supports:

- **Equity** in wages, healthcare, career opportunities, education, political leadership, career advancement and criminal justice.
- **Acceptance** of women in the workplace, political arena, and within educational institutions.
- **Zero Tolerance** for domestic violence, sexual harassment, inappropriate treatment of incarcerated women, and financial neglect of children.
- **Social Infrastructure** including high quality childcare, job flexibility, high quality eldercare, and high quality accessible healthcare, that allows women to achieve their full potential.
- **Acknowledgment** of home and career callings as equally valid life choices.
- **Criminal Justice** policies that promote the dignified treatment of women in Florida's criminal justice system including the fostering of relationships between incarcerated women and their families/children; elimination of male guards for female prisoners, and the provision of adequate medical care for incarcerated women.
- **Recognition** of women's historic contributions.
- **Leadership** opportunities for women from all walks of life and of all ages.
- **Mentoring** to assist women in reaching their full potential.
- **Family Friendly** policies that promote, preserve and protect the sanctity, importance and fundamental role of the family in society.

Appendix

Gender-specific Programs in Other States

Areas outside Florida have realized the magnitude of the influx of girls into the juvenile justice system. Maryland, Oregon, Minnesota and Cook County, Illinois have taken groundbreaking steps to improve services for delinquent girls. They have learned through experience that the best methods of prevention and treatment are those designed with the specific experiences of girls in mind.

Maryland

In 1992, a statewide task force posed the critical question, “What are we doing to serve girls?” This question fueled an investigation of the needs and issues of females in the juvenile justice system. The first change involved reorganizing caseloads. In Baltimore, a single unit supervises all girls on probation. The probation officers within this unit are all trained to work exclusively with juvenile females. Additional improvements include connecting girls with existing services, training staff to work with girls, remaining flexible to better meet the needs of the individual girls, building positive gender identity and developing career and job skills. Taking into consideration that juvenile female offenders include girls who are teen parents, steps are taken to involve families and to create a female-friendly environment within the detention center.

Oregon

In Oregon, the movement to coordinate services for girls in the juvenile justice system was initiated by a group of social service providers in 1987. They began by sharing concerns and formalizing a study group. This study group also utilized initial findings to establish recommendations that would improve services. Key aspects of the study group’s recommendations to improve services include: developing a solid funding base for a coordinated system of services designed to meet the needs of girls; establishing education and training activities and materials to increase public awareness and to assist agencies in serving at-risk females; developing strategies to promote policy and system reform to assure adequate services for female juveniles and to reduce the number of girls at risk in Oregon; and developing regional, coordinated planning efforts to further study the needs of at-risk girls and young women in Oregon’s communities.

Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming depicts Oregon’s process of developing and implementing their program on a timeline. The purpose of first year projects is to increase local and statewide awareness. Second year projects identify target populations, as well as distinguish model programs and key features, while working for gender equity for juvenile offenders on an ongoing status.

Minnesota

Minnesota formed its first statewide task force to examine the needs of female offenders (both youth and adult) over two decades ago in 1978. Within this state, the key steps that were used as guidelines for improving services for delinquent girls included planning for gender equity, addressing special needs of girls, seeking creative solutions, encouraging girls' voices, planning across disciplines, promoting model programs, building allies and overcoming obstacles (such as educating policy makers on the demand for gender-specific programming). According to Mary Scully Whitaker, Minnesota's Director of Planning for female offenders, delivering gendered-services demands that "people have to think differently." Success in program development is contingent on learning how to think outside of the box and accommodating the needs of girls.

Cook County, Illinois

A collaboration in Cook County, Illinois has culminated in the development of a cutting edge program—Girls Link, a network of specialized services provided by juvenile justice and community agencies that addresses the needs of girls in the juvenile justice system. According to Clotilda Kyle, division chief of the Juvenile probation department, "Girls Link brings together all the major players in Cook County." (as cited in Gaseau, 1998) According to Travis Cain, a program manager for Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, this style of case management and specialized programs has proved its effectiveness, as spin-offs from the original Girls Link collaboration are already under way throughout Chicago.

This project began with a committee in Cook County, Illinois that conducted research on girls in the juvenile justice system in 1994. Their progress is marked by the following gender-specific initiatives: developing gender-specific assessment tools, publishing a resource directory, coordinating training programs, piloting a gender-specific care management model and establishing a mission, goals and new initiatives. Gender-specific assessment tools include tests such as the Risk Assessment Instrument and the Strengths/Needs Assessment Instrument, which measures a girl's risk of re-offending and helps service providers determine which gender-specific interventions are necessary. Another initiative involved publishing a resource directory of gender-specific programs for girls in the juvenile justice system that provides an educational tool for agencies on programs that address issues such as physical and sexual abuse, teen pregnancy and parenthood and gang involvement. Coordinating training programs involves creating training programs that focus on "cover[ing] the latest gender-specific research and provid[ing] both resource materials and technical assistance necessary to expand the continuum of services for girls involved in or at the risk of involvement in the juvenile justice program." An additional initiative is piloting a gender-specific care-management model that links a case manager with a girl. The case manager builds a trusting relationship to foster effective intervention. Finally, it is important to establish a mission, goals and new initiatives. Standing committees are developed to follow through on major goals.

