



Collaborative Community Based Rehabilitation Programs for Juveniles

By the Honorable Frederick Mulhauser

The following programs are based on a philosophy that treatment of juvenile offenders must incorporate family and peer relationships and is most effective when juveniles can remain in their community and learn new skills in the environment in which they will live for the foreseeable future. Unless juveniles can make changes in their actual environment, progress will be short lived.

Court Schools

The juvenile court administrates two court schools: The Great Lakes Academy in Charlevoix County and the Lakeview Academy in Emmet County. Both schools are a result of collaboration between the court, a local school system, county government and community members.

The Great Lakes Academy

In 1991 the court secured used computers and software for two six-bed, non-secure detention homes. Because the youth in the homes showed immediate academic success, other juveniles who were on probation, but living at home, were assigned to a detention home “school” during the day.

The court then partnered with the Boyne City School system to provide the detention homes with a certified teacher and educational materials. As the day-time probation school population grew, a local church allowed the use of their building for school purposes.

In 1995, teachers provided by the school system were integrated with probation and counseling personnel so that probation services in substance abuse, anger management, behavior modification, etc. could be added to the court school program.

In 2001, the Boyne City School system purchased a former K-12 building for use by the Great Lakes Academy. The Boyne City School system currently provides

three to four full- time equivalent educational positions, and the court provides about two and half full- time equivalent probation/counseling positions.

The Lakeview Academy

In 2000, Emmet county commissioners provided access to an abandoned county building which became the Lakeview Academy. Although similar in format to the Great Lakes Academy, Lakeview Academy has a different county resource environment resulting in structurally different financial components. Both court schools combine education with rehabilitation services: personal counseling, group counseling, special community programming, volunteer community participation in recreation, and community service programs including several unique art therapy youth projects.

Although each school has a separate funding and structure format, dictated by differences in location and community resources, the common threads include:

- Leadership and administration by the court administration combining services from various community agencies;
- Court employees performing non-teaching functions;
- Capturing state student per diem funding.

Juveniles who attend the court schools may do so for brief stays during detention placement or public school suspensions; they may attend for weeks, months, semesters or even several years. Juveniles are able to return to their home schools when appropriate or when they graduate from the court schools. For juveniles who remain on probation, graduation rates are nearly 100%.

Substance Abuse Treatment

Recovery High

Recovery High is a 5 phase program ranging in intensity from substance abuse education to 24/7 treatment. The 24/7 treatment is comprised of foster care, court school, and outpatient treatment. In addition to substance abuse education and outpatient treatment, youth may be placed in the court school (the Great Lakes Academy), and/or court licensed foster care.

Juveniles may access any component or phase of services at any point in the program dependent upon their need. This flexible approach permits youth and

their families to move forward at their own pace and to access more intensive services in the event of relapse.

In the most intensive phase, Recovery High offers referrals a 90 day residential program where the teens live in foster homes and work on family living skills. They participate in the court's school program in cooperation with Boyne City Public Schools where they can do credit recovery and work toward high school graduation while receiving intensive substance abuse services five days per week.

Youth who are released from the intensive phase continue to access recovery services, recovery maintenance groups and family counseling at a level that meets their need to integrate back into the community.

The majority of our graduates utilize the recovery skills they learn during the program and avoid further legal involvement, return to their family, graduate high school and no longer present a threat to their community.

Over 60% of the teens have a co-occurring mental health diagnosis. Without intervention, this group appears to be on a fast track for escalating criminal activities and major life altering addictive behaviors that often leads to a felony offense.

See the Recovery High web site, <http://www.recoveryhigh.org/>, for additional information.

Juvenile Drug Courts

The court operates two juvenile drug courts. The Emmet County program began in 2006, the Charlevoix County program in 2007. Both programs have similar professions represented on their drug court team with the exception of the judicial member who is the only individual that serves on both teams.

In an effort to remove the stigma of drug use identification, the Charlevoix County program is named STARS (Supporting Teens and Recovery Skills), and the Emmet County team is named SURE (Substance Use and Recovery Education).

The program is incentive-based and incorporates intensive family contacts. The weekly hearings are informal; each youth, together with their family and all of the other team members, stand as a group in front of the judge for a dialogue about each individual's progress.

Juveniles who make weekly progress receive positive feedback and a tangible reward. Lack of weekly progress may result in no incentive, and a constructive dialogue about how to improve compliance. The drug court program has four phases and a graduation. Juveniles advance at an individual pace and present a project at each phase, and again at graduation.

For more information, contact:

Honorable Frederick Mulhauser
Charlevoix County Building
301 State St.
Charlevoix, MI 49720
Phone: (231) 547-7243