

Fresh Starts Transformations



2014-2015 Annual Report



Dear Friends,



As I sit down to write the opening to the annual report on a beautiful spring day, I am surrounded by the warm sun, budding flowers, sounds of birds chirping for the first time in months. I am quietly reminded of our ability to transform, renew, and grow.

It has been an honor to serve the community as the Associate Executive Director and now as the Executive Director of the Delaware Center for Justice. Over the past three years, we have been growing and renewing together. As a team, we have been dedicated to improving services and outcomes for the clients we serve, and we have been striving to advocate for and deliver a high

quality of justice for all. We are committed to continuous progress – knowing full well that perfection is unrealistic at first blush but that progress is always attainable. We all know that change, even positive change, is not linear, but that with dedication, grit, and persistence, it is possible. With each step we take in the desired direction, our confidence grows and our resilience strengthens.

We have focused on solidifying our team through staff development, professional trainings, and transparency in operations. We actively work together to find solutions that are effective, comprehensive, and grounded in evidence-based practices and policies. In 2014, we served hundreds of community members, re-tooled a gun violence intervention program known as SWAGG (Student Warriors Against Gangs & Guns), and were awarded a federal grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance focused on reforming pre-trial detention policies and practices. We are united in our values and mission and are open to the difficult discussions around institutional policies and practices in order to create the space for the needed improvements within our criminal justice system.

I am so proud of the accomplishments of our team, thankful for all your support, and optimistic and renewed in my commitment to nurture resilience in all those we serve through our programs, advocacy, and education. We all possess the ability to transform, renew, start again – one step, one day, at a time.

In service,

A handwritten signature in dark green ink that reads "Ashley Biden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Ashley Biden, M.S.W ~ Executive Director

DCJ Staff

Administrative

Ashley Biden, Executive Director
Kirstin Cornell, Director of Operations
Winona Simpson, Administrative
& Development Coordinator
Susan Wilson, Bookkeeper

Achievement Center

Akua Ajarko, Re-Entry Navigator
Charles Dale, Re-Entry Navigator

ADHD Corrections Project

Robin Stramp, Program Coordinator
Patricia Wood, Lead Behavioral Coach
Arthur Horn, Behavioral Coach
Siobhán McDonald Newman, Behavioral Coach

Adult Victims Services Program

Tonia Bell-Delgado, Program Coordinator
Tracie Purnell, Mental Health Counselor
Monique Byers Schaffstall, Mental Health Counselor

Community Reentry Services Program

Jessica Alicea, Program Coordinator
Tanya Bracey, Case Manager
Suzanne Kirk, Case Manager

Court Of Common Pleas Mediation Program

Karin McManus, Program Coordinator

Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative

Julie Miller, Program Coordinator

Juvenile Restitution Program

Karin McManus, Program Coordinator

Project For Older Prisoners

Ann Exline Starr, Program Coordinator

Project Reach

Nikita Robins-Thompson, Project Coordinator

Read In, Read Out

Robin Stramp, Program Liaison

School Offense Diversion Program

Cindy McDaniel, Program Coordinator
Jessica Cooper, Intern

Smart Pretrial Demonstration Initiative

Kate Parker West, Local Site Coordinator

Stand Up For What's Right And Just

Eugene Young, Advocacy Director

Student Warriors Against Guns And Gangs

Isaac Dunn, Program Coordinator
Corry Wright, Intensive Case Manager

Truancy Reduction Program

Teresa Richards, Program Coordinator
Cassandra Freeman, Case Manager

Victim Sensitivity Program

Angie Walker, Program Coordinator

Fresh Starts & Transformations



Programming

That Transforms Futures

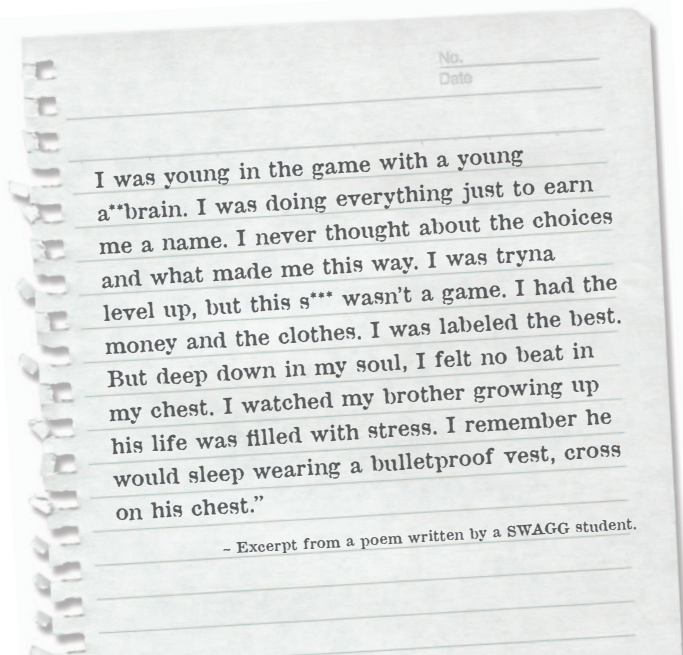
Student Warriors Against Guns and Gangs (SWAGG)

“Our goal at DCJ is to provide the students with the intellectual and cultural tools needed so that they may explore and examine their choices appropriately. The DCJ family believes in the spirit of patience and the possibility that all have potential to contemplate a polemic shift.”

-Isaac Dunn, Program Coordinator

The Student Warriors Against Guns and Gangs (SWAGG) Program is the only gun violence intervention program in the state of Delaware, and operates in partnership with DSCYF- Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services with additional support provided by Bloomberg Philanthropies. Much of our state’s violence is committed by young men, and we must support programming to create positive opportunities for our youth. SWAGG works to reverse the trend of increased gun and gang violence among youth by helping them to understand the impact of gun and gang violence on individuals and communities. The course follows an evidence-based curriculum to help students develop strategies for avoiding negative behaviors and making positive choices. A total of **38 students** at Ferris School for Boys who were charged via Gun Court completed the SWAGG educational curriculum in 2014. Of the 38, 13 have been released to the community for intensive case management services. This was the first year that students received case management services after departure from Ferris to help ensure the participants’ success after they leave the youth correctional facility and return home.

Much of the initial success of the program is due to the case managers’ advocacy on students’ behalves. Program staff is extremely committed to the students, their families, and the mission of the program. Progress can be slow, but having a stable ally can make a world of difference in a student’s future success. Students in the program are learning the history of oppression, cognitive behavioral strategies to change behaviors, and receive motivational and leadership development to improve positive outcomes and overall quality of life.



Youth Services

That Transform the Community

The Juvenile Restitution Determination Program

Program staff assists victims of crime committed by individuals under 18 by assessing and filing court orders of restitution on behalf of victims. Court orders of restitution ensure that juvenile offenders are legally obligated to make amends and to compensate their victims for their financial losses. In 2014, **293 juvenile cases** were processed through this program.

School Offense Diversion Program (SoDP)

“He now thinks before he reacts. I believe the program helped him with that and that in turn helped me tremendously.” ~ Guardian of Program Participant



DCJ’s School Offense Diversion Program (SoDP)

staff work with students referred by the Attorney General’s Office as a result of an arrest for an in-school incident. It is our goal to make each student’s first encounter with the criminal justice system their last. Program staff collect and analyze individual and aggregate data in an attempt to explain and improve student outcomes. Program components include community service, individual and/or family therapies, individualized reading and writing assignments, self-reflective essays, letters of apology, and drug and/or alcohol evaluation and treatment, if applicable. By

successfully participating in and completing SoDP, the student’s charge is dismissed with the expectation that they stay out of trouble, stay in school, and graduate.

Although many of our students have needs that range from the impact of trauma to long-term substance use, accountability for causing harm to self and others is central to our conversations, along with their academic achievement, even when their experience is on both sides – as victim and offender.

In 2014, SoDP saw a ninety percent increase in students demonstrating a commitment to school, which is very significant for the **154 students enrolled** in the program. There was also a ninety percent decrease in days missed from school due to violations and/or disciplinary actions. One hundred percent of clients received referrals to services which include but are not limited to, behavioral health, community service, legal services, tutoring, mentoring, recreation, and community and after-school programming. One of the most significant areas of improvement was in building healthy relationships. Ninety percent of program participants demonstrated increased skills and knowledge related to anger management, effective communication, social interaction with teachers and school administrators, and boundaries with peers.

Truancy Reduction Program

“The Truancy Reduction Program requires collaboration and teamwork from all involved parties: educators, judicial staff, families, and, most importantly, the student. It is necessary to truly listen to the youth’s story in order to appreciate what he or she has experienced as well to understand where the student would like to go. It is our job to guide such students on their own path to success by offering support and encouragement as well as working to remove the barriers in their way.”

~ Teresa Richards, Program Coordinator

The Truancy Reduction Program works with high-risk students whose school attendance has ceased or dropped dramatically. The program seeks to increase truant students’ engagement in school to decrease dropout rates and to prevent future criminality. Through intensive case management, students and their families receive support in addressing the underlying causes of truancy, which may include factors such as bullying, lack of appropriate clothing or transportation, undiagnosed learning disabilities, precarious housing situations, and/or lack of academic support. The Truancy Reduction Program has two dedicated case managers who creatively engage students in their own learning and self-development while addressing internal and external barriers, including abuse, neglect, mental health issues, substance abuse, and bullying. Students remain on caseloads for six months to a year or longer, and the program currently operates within the Red Clay and Christina school districts.

Victim Sensitivity Program

The Victim Sensitivity Program provides opportunities for adjudicated youth at juvenile detention facilities to learn about the impact of their delinquent behavior. The program develops empathy among its participants as they are confronted by the realities of the impact of their crimes on the people whom they were committed against, as well as the families of those victims, the community, and themselves. With the overall high rate of violence in the City of Wilmington, this program hits home for many youth because it allows them to hear real life stories from individuals that have lived through violent acts or committed violent acts themselves.

In 2014, **104 students** from Ferris School for Boys, Grace Cottage, and Snowden Cottage participated. Students are surveyed before and after the program to determine the impact of participation on their thinking. After completion of the program, one hundred percent of the students reported that the program had broadened their understanding of the impact of crime on the community.

Adult Services

That Transform the Community

Community Reentry Services Program (CRSP)

“Sometimes I wanted to just give up, just say forget everything and stop caring. I’m glad I didn’t though because now I have a steady job, stable living, and I was released early from probation. All because of good people in my corner constantly staying on me about how important it is to do the right thing.”

~ CRSP program participant

DCJ staff provides voluntary case management services to adults on probation in New Castle County, working with participants to eliminate barriers to successful completion of probation and towards achievement of personal goals. Participants range from all levels of probation and are diverse in their ages, criminal charges, needs, challenges, and goals. The universal task is to assist participants with resolving challenges, building skills, and working towards a better life. Some clients opt to enroll in intensive case management services, while others opt to receive referrals, information, and short-term support. This support could be receiving bus passes or help accessing items such as clothing and/or food benefits.



In 2014, **222 clients** were referred to CRSP and enrolled in the program for crisis alleviation. Of the clients who were eligible for one-month secure housing and utility assistance, eighty percent achieved this goal. Eighty percent of clients assessed for mental health substance abuse disorders accessed mental health and substance abuse treatment. One hundred percent of clients who were unemployed or underemployed were assessed for job placement. Forty-five percent of clients who were in need of employment achieved

employment while enrolled in this program. Seventy percent of eligible clients successfully earned their GEDs. Additionally, access to healthcare has become a major focus for CRSP staff since the rollout of the Affordable Care Act. Many clients are covered as soon as they exit prison by the I-ADAPT program, but one hundred percent of clients who were uninsured are now covered, which is roughly 42 clients.

**The Delaware Center for Justice also employs two case managers who supply re-entry case management services at the Achievement Center. These staff work in partnership with the Wilmington HOPE Commission to provide a continuum of evidence based re-entry services from a single location.*

Project for Older Prisoners (POPS)

The POPS Program seeks older inmates for early release based on their age, medical condition, and decreased risk of reoffending. In accordance with current national statistics, the average cost to incarcerate an elderly prisoner is \$68,270 per year as compared to \$34,135 for the average prisoner. Elderly prisoners who participate must meet strict eligibility criteria. Volunteers interview candidates recommended by the Department of Correction. The volunteers then prepare and file petitions on behalf of qualified inmates to the Institutional Release Classification Board and the Delaware Board of Parole. DCJ works to develop a re-entry plan to assist in securing housing, employment and other necessary support for the candidates. Since the inception of the program, five inmates have been released, with several petitions now in process.

The ADHD Corrections Project

“Around 4% of individuals in the general U.S. population have ADHD, but an estimated 25% of inmates have the disorder. We cannot change the fact that an individual has ADHD, but we can offer education, skills practice, and support to help him take control of that ADHD. With control comes the power to stop and think before acting on an impulsive thought, and that brief moment of stopping to think could mean the difference between successful reentry and recidivism.” ~ Robin Stramp, Program Coordinator

“Now its starting to make sense... not that its [ADHD] an excuse for my actions that led me to incarceration, it's more of an explanation. I can look back and see where I messed up, and now I know why.” ~ Program Participant

The ADHD Corrections Project continues to serve individuals with undiagnosed and untreated Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) at Howard R. Young Correctional Institution. Using cognitive behavioral therapy conducted by a certified ADHD coach, the sessions provide a supportive atmosphere for participants to learn and grow by affirming one another's experiences with ADHD and the criminal justice system and gaining tools for managing their ADHD. Activities include learning how to manage a schedule and calendar, how to communicate with others about having ADHD, how to set and track goals, time management, and positive self-talk.

In 2014, The ADHD Corrections Project was awarded a generous one-year grant by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware and hired three part-time behavioral coaches. The program enrolled **55 clients** in 2014, and outcomes for managing health conditions are consistently above eighty percent for all clients eligible and served. Ninety-two percent of clients gained access to community-based support services, and eighty-three percent of individuals demonstrated increased skill, knowledge, and improved attitude on how to manage a condition such as mental health and/or substance abuse disorders.

Court of Common Pleas Mediation Program



“Our program promotes justice through resolution, not prosecution. We help our clients resolve conflict, reach understanding, and let go.”

~ Karin McManus, Program Coordinator

Mediation services at DCJ provide a voluntary, safe, and confidential alternative to adjudication in court for victims and defendants. Participants are able to work out their conflicts without having to go to trial, and both parties have an opportunity to share the impact of the incident, to create an agreement for how the situation can be resolved and for how amends can be made. In 2014, our staff and team of trained volunteers successfully mediated **168 cases** that resulted in signed agreements between parties. Referrals are made by the New Castle County Court of Common Pleas.

Project REACH

“Caring for a child with an incarcerated parent comes with several unique challenges, but program coordinator Nikita Robins-Thompson gives parents and caregivers the knowledge, tools, and confidence they need to succeed in what we call a ‘unique’ parenting situation.”

~ Robin Stramp, Project Assistant

Project REACH facilitates visits between incarcerated mothers and their children so that mothers can practice their parenting skills and children can build positive relationships with their mothers. Prior to participating in supervised visits with their children, mothers complete parenting classes. In preparation for visits with their child(ren), mothers work together with our program coordinator to develop short- and long-term goals for their visits, receive coaching from the program coordinator during the visit to practice the relevant parenting skills, and debrief with the program coordinator after the visit to discuss the interactions they had with their child(ren). In 2014, program staff increased their presence within Baylor and worked to minimize the discomfort associated with reunification in order to build long lasting mother-child relationships.

Adult Victim Services Program (AVS)

I thank God for the help that I have gotten from the program so far. It is such a blessing to be able to get good counseling after all I have been through. I was so scared after what happened to me and I felt so alone in it all. Going to court used to be so scary but knowing that I wouldn't be alone anymore made the difference."

~ Program Participant

The Adult Victim Services Program (AVS), formerly known as the Elderly Victim Services program, services men and women ages fifty and older who have experienced victimizations. Referrals to the AVS program primarily come from the Wilmington Police Department, New Castle County Police Department, and the Delaware Department of Justice. The majority of clients we serve are women of color from lower socioeconomic status, and the majority of crimes against program participants are elder abuse, domestic abuse, financial exploitation, robbery and theft, and fraud.

The primary goal of AVS is to provide specialized case management and counseling services to elderly victims of crime in New Castle County, DE. The program conducts public presentations and/or outreach activities in multiple communities regarding victimization and provides remedies to mitigate victimization. Seventy percent of clients followed through on their Care Plan, and one hundred percent of AVS clients demonstrated improved attitude, knowledge, and skills needed to manage a health condition and were able to gain access to community based support services such as legal services, counseling, health clinics, and doctors' appointments. Clients access intensive case management through a masters level social worker and counseling through a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

Read In, Read Out Program (RIRO)

"We have children who rewind their cassette tapes over and over again so many times that the tapes and players break. We have children who fall asleep every night listening to their mothers read them stories. ~ Robin Stramp, Program Liaison

In 2014, the **Read In, Read Out Program** provided **53** incarcerated mothers an opportunity to read books to their children on tape. A copy of the book is sent to the children along with the audio tape and a tape player. The program strengthens family bonds, improves literacy skills, and encourages the children of incarcerated parents to read. This service is provided in cooperation with Read Aloud Delaware.

Public Education & Advocacy

That Transform the Community

Stand Up for What's Right and Just (SURJ)

SURJ serves as one of DCJ's advocacy based programs. SURJ accomplishes its mission to pursue criminal justice reform by raising public awareness about pertinent criminal justice issues, educating legislators and policy makers, lobbying for relevant legislative reform, collaborating with community-based organizations, and disseminating research and position papers. Ongoing advocacy issue include, but are not limited to, advocating for the repeal of the death penalty; advocating for developmentally appropriate policies for youth involved in the justice system; advocating for the elimination of mandatory minimum sentencing schemes; and supporting policies and practices that allow for second chances and successful reintegration back in to communities.



In September 2014, the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance named the City and County of Denver, Colorado; Yakima County, Washington; and the State of Delaware as the recipients of the Justice Department's first Smart Pretrial Demonstration Initiative grants aimed at creating more fair and effective local pretrial justice practices.* DCJ was selected to locally coordinate this two year grant. **The Smart Pretrial Demonstration Initiative** aligns with DCJ's multiple year focus on pretrial reform in Delaware through its SURJ Program. The new Initiative will test the cost savings and public

safety enhancements that can be achieved by improving pretrial policies and practices. Specifically, the program will evaluate the impact of moving to a pretrial system that relies on risk assessment to inform pretrial release decision-making and demonstrates how risk management strategies can improve pretrial outcomes.

**This project is supported by Grant No. 2014-DB-BX-0006 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative (DYOI)

“Over the last five years, DYOI has become an institution for advocacy efforts in child welfare in Delaware, including developing landmark legislation and speaking nationally about best practices happening around the state. None of this would be possible without the youth advocates who work tirelessly to reform the system they once were a part of. Their passion drives DYOI to success beyond expectations.” –Julie Miller, Program Coordinator

Through the **Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative (DYOI)**, DCJ is working toward ensuring successful transitions for youth aging out of Delaware’s foster care system. Without continuing support into adulthood, this population is at high risk for becoming engaged in the justice system and other challenges such as homelessness and unemployment. With financial and technical support from the **Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, DYOI** continues to leverage community support to generate child welfare policies and practices that will support a comprehensive array of developmentally appropriate supports and opportunities for youth aging out of foster care.

The cornerstone of DYOI’s work is collaboration of partners throughout the state. DYOI convened more than **150 community meetings**, trainings, and workshops in 2014, with over **75 agencies** and organizations represented. This has helped to leverage over \$1 million of in-kind contributions from those partners. In addition, DYOI has begun to gather data to inform policy change by administering a Youth Involvement in Court and Legal Representation Survey to over 150 professionals and 96 youth and developing a housing survey completed by 68 youth.

DYOI launched the Opportunity Passport™ program in 2014. The program is an important financial literacy and matched savings program that helps Delaware youth develop a general understanding about personal finances and goal setting. After determination of eligibility and training, participants open an Individual Development Account, a matched savings account. Money saved in the account by the youth will be matched, dollar for dollar up to \$1,250 per year, upon purchase of specific assets. This is made possible through a partnership with the West End Neighborhood House. With **Stand By Me**,



youth have a financial coach to help plan for asset purchases. Since launch, **50 youth** have enrolled reaching, full program capacity.

In 2013, legislation, entitled **Ready By 21** was passed in Delaware, and this package of reforms has become a model for expanded services for foster youth around the country. As the lead on this effort, DYOI has received national recognition for including youth and young adults who have experienced care in crafting the program and the legislation. Ready By 21 is a developmentally appropriate, comprehensive program that fully integrates independent living services such as employment, medical, education, connection to resources, and housing until age 21 and assists youth with their successful transition to adulthood. The program also includes needs-based maintenance stipends, or ASSIST funds. **Over 190 youth** have received these funds in 2014.

This past year, DYOI, along with the **Delaware Youth Advisory Council (YAC)**, oversaw the Family Court Mural Project. **Over 30 foster youth participated** in painting a large-scale mural, which will be a permanent installation in the waiting area outside the second floor courtrooms in Family Court. In December, over 100 current and former foster youth and foster care stakeholders, including DCJ's DYOI Program, participated in an event at the White House. The event highlighted the Administration's commitment to improving the lives of youth who have experienced foster care and celebrated several new announcements aimed at improving the outcomes of youth in and aging out of care.

We Love our Interns!

DCJ welcomes interns from across the state to help us promote fresh starts and transformations. Interns greatly expand our capacity to serve and advocate, while earning valuable experience as the next generation of leaders. Interns assisted us with tasks such as office administration, tracking and reporting program data, event planning and management, policy research, and many other important tasks. We actively seek interns to assist us with a variety of programs and tasks. To get involved, check our website for listed openings or contact **Kirstin Cornell at kcornnell@dejustice.org** to discuss opportunities.



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That Transform the Community

Donations Received During Calendar Year 2014

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\$1,000 or more

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Revenue

United Way Of Delaware	\$108,802
Fundraiser, Contribution & Investment Income	\$148,829
Government Funds (State and Federal)	\$825,919
Foundation Grants	\$433,031
Misc Income	\$1,273
Total Revenue	\$1,517,854

Expenses

Employee Salaries, Benefits & Payroll taxes	\$819,260
Insurance - Business	\$12,188
Occupancy	\$50,003
Other Expenses	\$53,021
Outside Contractors	\$56,853
Postage, Printing, Shipping & Telephone	\$20,620
Rental & Maintenance of Equipment	\$12,767
Supplies	\$14,285
Travel, Conference Costs & Professional Dues	\$36,114
Total Expenses	\$1,075,111

The following foundations/funders supported DCJ in 2014

Arsht Cannon Fund, Betsy Rawls & Fund for Women; Borkee Hagley Foundation; Chichester DuPont Foundation; Delaware Bar Foundation; Delaware Community Foundation; Delaware Criminal Justice Council (by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime); Highmark Delaware; Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative; Public Welfare Foundation; Richard, Layton & Finger; Robin Foundation; Speer Trust; State of Delaware; United Way of Delaware.

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