



## The Delaware Center for Justice

# Remembering Our Past, Redefining Our Future

Delaware Center for Justice • 100 W 10th St. STE 905 • Wilmington, DE 19801

Dear Friend and Supporter,

As the end of 2015 approaches, we can reflect on a year of many improvements and successes at the Delaware Center for Justice. Your support enabled our team to move closer to our goal of justice in Delaware.

Our state faced many challenges this year due to increased violence, community and state tensions, and negative attention from the national media. In the face of heartache and challenges, DCJ aims to lead the charge to re-envision a better way and make necessary changes to improve quality of life for citizens of Delaware.

2015 marked the first year of fully implementing Delaware's **only pilot gun violence intervention program (DCJ's SWAGG)**, in collaboration with the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF). In addition to pioneering this important effort, DCJ accomplished other key objectives, including:

- Significant strategic improvements to our **Community Reentry Services Program**, including the development of job training partnerships with contractors, a partnership with Healthcare Navigators, the use of evidence-based assessments, and improved behavioral health components for our services
- An 85% success rate for mediations in our **Court of Common Pleas Mediation Program**
- Increasing parent engagement via "Chat & Chew" seminars for the **School Offense Diversion Program**, with 79% of students successfully completing the program (resulting in dismissed criminal charges)
- Convening stakeholders across the state to share information, strategies, and data concerning pretrial reform via the **SMART Pretrial Demonstration Initiative**
- Initiating a strategic partnership with **Aquila of Delaware** to provide behavioral health services for DCJ clients

Since our founding in 1920, DCJ has remained at the cutting edge of national and local policies and practices. We aim to innovate, envisioning Delaware as a model for criminal justice reform.

**We cannot do this alone.** We continue to collaborate with other key organizations, as encouraged by the Center for Disease Control's 2015 report recommending improved transparency among systems. Sharing and analyzing data and best practices will help us cooperatively achieve a safer, more secure Delaware.

You are a partner in our mission, too. Along with building strategic relationships with organizations that have common goals, we rely on continued support from community members like you who believe that change is possible.

**As our vision of 2016 takes shape, I ask that you take this opportunity to invest in DCJ's hope for the future.**

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ashley Biden".

Ashley Biden, Executive Director  
Delaware Center for Justice



**For more on how DCJ is leading the charge for a more just Delaware— turn the page, & visit [www.dcjustice.org](http://www.dcjustice.org)**

## 2016 POLICY AGENDA

The Delaware Center for Justice pursues criminal justice reform by increasing public awareness about pertinent criminal justice issues, educating policymakers, and collaborating with community-based organizations. In 2016, DCJ will prioritize the following key issues:

**Pretrial Reform** – DCJ believes that liberty should be the norm and that detention should be the carefully considered exception. The Smart Pretrial Demonstration Initiative, coordinated by DCJ, is analyzing statewide data in order to propose data-driven pretrial reform in the upcoming year.

**Juvenile Justice** – DCJ will be advocating for specific reforms to DE's expungement statute and will continue to oppose efforts to treat youth in the system equivalently to adults.

**Sentencing Reform** – DCJ supports policies and practices that safely reduce our reliance on incarceration. In 2016, DCJ will continue to advocate for the repeal of the death penalty and will also be launching a campaign to address the plethora of collateral consequences that impact individuals with criminal records.

**Victims' Rights and Restorative Justice** – DCJ supports policies and practices that empower victims and rebuild communities. All stakeholders must be trained to recognize the role that trauma and victimization play in the cycle of crime and punishment, and DCJ will continue to infuse trauma-informed practices into our work and into the work of our partners.

## NEW PROGRAMS

DCJ is proud to announce two new programs and the expansion of one existing program:

**Women in Transition** is an enhanced support class for women at Baylor Women's Correctional Institution delivering an evidence-based curriculum targeting criminogenic factors to improve cognitive restructuring, motivation, and internal resources that promote positive change and healthy living.

**The Healthy Thinking Program** is a 12 week, evidence-based curriculum taught at Howard R. Young Correctional Institution. The program emphasizes coping skills, prosocial behaviors, and cognitive restructuring. All program participants will be signed up for healthcare upon release and will be provided with resources and referrals for a primary care physician, dentist, and behavioral health care provider if needed.

**Read In, Read Out** is expanding to empower both incarcerated mothers AND fathers to record books on tape for their children. We are excited to work with men at Howard R. Young Correctional Institution in 2016.

## DCJ's GUN VIOLENCE INTERVENTION MODEL – PROVEN SUCCESS

In November of 2015, the Center for Disease Control released a report entitled "Elevated Rates of Urban Firearm Violence and Opportunities for Prevention-Wilmington, Delaware," recommending (among other things) wraparound services for youth involved in the criminal justice system in Delaware.

DCJ understood the need for these recommendations back in 2013 when we proposed a pilot program focused on gun violence intervention and gang involvement for youth known as **SWAGG (Student Warriors Against Guns & Gangs)** and in 2014 partnered with the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families to implement an evidence-based gun violence and gang curriculum and Intensive Case Management with wraparound services.

### Key outcomes from SWAGG to date:

- 90% of the students reported positive changes in attitude towards gun and gang involvement
- 85% of the students receiving a portion of instruction and intensive case management did not recidivate with weapons charges within the first year of release

### Key lessons learned to date:

- It takes AT LEAST 300 hours of contact for students to change behavior, and thus 90 days of Intensive Case Management (ICM) is not sufficient
- The top priorities of our students upon release include basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter
- Families engage in services when treated with respect and given agency over their lives
- Former students who did not receive case management services upon release were 56% more likely to be a victim of gun violence or rearrested for weapons charges

55% of individuals who commit gun crimes are between the ages of 12 and 25. DCJ has created a model that, if implemented with fidelity, will decrease gun violence among this particularly vulnerable population. The model offers measurable, proven, and effective outcomes; let's not reinvent the wheel but rather work together to share data, effective strategies, and leverage resources that already exist within our community in order to do so.

