

Panel: Judge Prescott, Cathy Burgos, Dr. Rashaana Blenman, Pascual Guerrero, Ralph McCloud.

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his was a very difficult subject and was chosen after several GALs advocating on behalf of teens expressed their frustrations with kids who were “ungovernable, oppositional defiant, manipulative, etc. requested this topic. We put together the best panel to address some of these frustrations while recognizing that many of the issues still wouldn’t be resolved, but might help GALs understand the system a little better or learn about new resources.

Cathy Burgos- Miami Dade County Juvenile Services Department

- The JAC (juvenile assessment center) is the facility that processes all arrested children in Miami Dade County
- The good news is that since 1997 there is more than a 70% drop in juvenile arrest population. This is due to a strong prevention and diversion program. The goal (with the exception of egregious acts) is diversion.
 - For cases that come in with civil citations and first time misdemeanors there is no arrest record if entered and complete diversion program. There is also a violence intervention program. These programs generally are approximately 4 months.
 - There are still too many children killing children.
- JSD has developed partnerships with the parks department. There are now free after school programs for children ages 12-14. There are mentoring programs available. There is also a very strong relationship between JSD and Miami Dade County public schools.
- The “point system” or scoring. This determines the eligibility for detention along with the felony offense charges or history with an open case
 - DRI- this is the detention risk instrument. It considers the charge, the history and probation/supervision.
 - 0-6 points- defendant released
 - 7-11 points- home detention. Child attends school and court only.
 - 12+ points- secure detention until a hearing before the Judge
 - The points can be mitigated or aggravated depending on several factors or circumstances
- GPS is the electronic monitor (ankle bracelet). These are used for children in home detention. It was asked why we can’t use those for children in dependency who run away. This is a federal grant strictly for delinquent children.
- When assessing a child all factors are considered. They have access to FSFN (dcf system), the juvenile justice system and all diversion program systems. They look at the child in his/her totality. The assessment is evidence based.
- It was asked how the parents are held accountable. That is the biggest challenge. Many parents are in denial and their resistance is a problem. JSD focuses on engagement.
- Prevention initiative goal is to intervene early enough to prevent kids from entering juvenile justice system. For any youth 17 and under experiencing behavioral and family difficulties and at risk of being arrested. Areas addressed are: substance abuse, low academics, school attendance, disciplinary problems, runaway and mental health issues.
 - Services include referrals that will address: anger management, disruptive behavior, family issues, drug experimentation and negative peer association.

Pascual Guerrero- Our Kids, Specialized Therapeutic Services Administrator

- MDT- multi-disciplinary team. Held every Wednesday. Any child eligible to have an MDT staffing. The agency must staff internally with the case manager prior to MDT. This is to ensure that therapy is already in place. Must have mental health service request form and all clinical documents. GALS should participate in these staffings!!!!
- 3 higher level programs available: STFC (specialized therapeutic foster care), STGC (specialized therapeutic group care) and SIPP (state inpatient psychiatric program)
- STFC

- Must have MDT, be a foster child in the dependency system, have a mental health diagnosis and have emotional and behavioral problems that cannot be treated in a less restrictive setting
- This is a temporary placement and discharge planning should be addressed upon admission. CM must participate in MDT and court order NOT required for admission.
- STGC
 - MDT required, Court order required for admission, must have suitability assessment recommending Residential STGC and have all required documents. Must continue to have MDT staffings every 60-90 days.
 - There are no STGC programs in Dade County. Child gets new suitability assessment every 90 days from original assessment. Suitability assessment and/or treatment team determine discharge plans and date. CM must participate in monthly treatment team meetings.
- SIPP
 - Must have suitability assessment recommending residential SIPP and have court order, all documents and an MDT 60-90 days prior to discharge
 - Once placed child receives new suitability assessment every 60-90 days. Suitability assessment and/or treatment team determine discharge plans and date. CM must participate in monthly treatment team meetings.
- Court issues: suitability assessments take 2-4 weeks between initiation and results. If residential recommended can take between 2-4 weeks between results and admission. Remedy- entire SIPP packet is being recommenced on initiation of the assessment. Once recommended for SIPP to speed up the search a court order is needed. 90 day suitability assessments are coordinated based on the initial suitability assessment date. Child eligible for 90 day review on the 60th day after initial assessment.

● Clinical Program Cheat Sheet

	STFC	STGC	SIPP
court order needed for placement	NO	YES	YES
suitability assessment required	NO	YES	YES
MDT required	YES	YES	YES
90 day suitability required	NO	YES	YES
Must be in custody of the state	Yes	NO	NO
medical and dental clearance	NO	YES	YES
discharge determined at MDT	YES	YES	YES
medicaid/magellan funded	YES	YES	YES
residential	NO	YES	YES
locked facility	NO	NO	YES

- They are fully aware that there are not enough homes and that temporary placement in an STFC is an extremely flawed system. They have the same frustrations with moving a child that is showing progress as we do but there is a waiting list for these placements.
- MDT hearings include all parties- anyone involved in the case is invited and encouraged to participate. They address ALL The needs of the child.
- Suitability assessments cover severe mental health issues.

Ralph McCloud- Teen Court

- Teen court is a diversion program designed to help youth succeed
- Offers youth who commit misdemeanor offenses a second chance.
- Youth offenders must be referred by the State Attorney’s office to Miami Dade Juvenile Services Department (JSD), who then refers the offenders to teen court. They receive over 500 referrals annually.
- Participants must admit guilt and parent/guardian must sign a “waiver of speedy trial” form.

- The prevention initiative program (PIP) offers additional resource to help get kids on the right track. Parents or school officials (#2 source of referrals is school police) refer non-offenders to JSD through PIP. PIP then refers youth to a formal network of private and public community based organizations that address issues of anger management, disruptive behavior, family issues, drug experimentation and negative peer association.
 - PIP makes referral to teen court
 - Must be 17 or under, experiencing behavioral and familial difficulties and at risk of being arrested
 - Youth go through process that includes jail tours and access to educational and community service opportunities
- Youth participants are sanctioned by their peers who act as jury, defense and prosecuting attorneys. They recommend specific sanctions to an adult judge (member of Fl. Bar in good standing) which are served by the offender.
 - Sanctions depend on the level of the committed offense. After listening to both sides and jury deliberations, judge delivers final sanctions.
 - Sanctions include: 1) serving jury duty, 2) attending educational workshops such as conflict resolution, ethics, anti-theft, victim awareness and substance abuse, 3) participating in jail tours, 4) completing required community service hours, 5) composing and presenting essays, 6) providing oral/written apologies to victims and parents.
- Teen court is for civil citations and misdemeanors. The most common civil citation is retail theft.
- Non-offenders can serve as jurors, bailiffs, clerks and attorneys.
- Peers tend to give harsher sanctions than a judge ordinarily would,
- It is also an opportunity to participate in the judicial process and the community.
- Teen court needs volunteers. Youth volunteers develop confidence and strengthen public speaking skills, gain experience with actual courtroom procedures, obtain community service hours and pursue an interest in law enforcement and the judicial system. Attorneys are needed as volunteer judges. It will fulfill pro bono credit requirements.

Dr. Reshaana Blenman- Citrus Health

- There is a big difference between a “clinician” and a “therapist”. The clinician is involved with all aspects of the child’s life and speaks to everyone. The therapist meets with the child for a specified time period (1 hour 2x week).
- Advice to GALS- communicate with the therapist. Share information (although what they can share back will be limited!). Reach out and establish a relationship!!
- Extensive experience and longevity in STFC.
 - There are homes that have been recognized as clinically necessary for youth offenders with mental health diagnosis and DJJ history. In those specific situations, can extend in STFC for 1 year.
- CHANCE program (Citrus Helping Adolescents Negatively impacted by Commercial Exploitation).
 - Children in CHANCE receive individualized clinical treatment centered around trauma focused care, cognitive behavioral treatment and motivational interviewing.
 - ANY child in community who has been a victim of CSEC can receive services from CHANCE even if they are not in STFC.
 - Each child is assigned: an individual therapist, family therapist, targeted case manager, life coach and certified behavioral analyst services when applicable.
 - Psychoeducational group therapy provided to both children and caregivers as part of 16 week curriculum.
- CSEC (commercial sexual exploitation of children) is child abuse. It happens when individuals buy, trade or sell sexual acts with a child under the age of 18.
- CBA- certified behavioral analyst- work on targeted behaviors. They also work with the parent or caregiver.
- Wrap-around services- child remains in their regular foster home or biological/relative home and in-home services are provided.

Judge Orlando Prescott

- Cross over cases- cases that have both an open dependency and delinquency. These cases previously will now be part of UFC (unified family court). Any case that has more than 1 open case involving the child with a dependency will be a UFC case: divorce, domestic violence, delinquency, custody, etc.
- Although GALs are NOT a party in a delinquency case the judges want your input.
- Georgetown model bridges the chasm between delinquency and dependency. A staffing is held with ALL people involved with the child and the child is present. Together a plan is designed for the child. DJJ and DCF are both involved and all services are looked at. Whoever has the greatest resources and service that fills the need is responsible.
- Many people ask for runaway children to be detained. Judges cannot keep them in detention. It is statutorily mandated that they cannot hold a child. They cannot use GPS (ankle bracelets) to monitor runaways. They are provided under a federal grant for delinquent children
- Will not go to trial without a parent present. Legally he can but lack of parent involvement and denial are major problems and this is one way to ensure parent involvement. Judge Prescott will put parents in jail if not compliant with court ordered services.
- Children must be placed in least restrictive placement first- you have to “walk up the ladder”.
- A good idea is to monitor kids through the student portal. You have access to the parent portal. If you need help with this go to the school office on the 4th floor.