

## **ANNUAL REPORT TEEN COURT FY 2000-2001**

Since assuming the responsibility for statewide coordination during FY 1999-2000, the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP) Teen Court Programs have expanded from 19 to 32. Over 1,600 first time juvenile offenders were required to perform thousands of hours community service, engage hundreds of student peer-volunteers and account for significant monetary restitution to victims. This report will update the progress of the Teen Court initiative in North Carolina and present statistical documentation of services focusing primarily on the 2000-2001 fiscal year.

### **Historical Overview**

Legislative support for Teen Court began during the 1993 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly (Session Laws, Chapter 561, Section 89). Pursuant to this legislation, the Cumberland County Depute Resolution Center received funding through the Administrative Office of the Courts to implement a Teen Court Program for the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. Funding was expanded during the special legislative session the following spring (1993 Session Laws, Extra Session 1994, Chapter 24, Section 40). The \$75,000 appropriation that the AOC received at that time allowed for the continued funding of the program in Cumberland County, as well as the establishment of new programs in Buncombe and Durham Counties.

In the 1996-1997, funding for a program in Rockingham County was added to the AOC's budget. In the 1997 Session (Chapter 443, Section 18.24) the General Assembly provided funding to establish new Teen Court Programs in: Orange, Columbus, Brunswick, Forsyth, Cabarrus, and Wake Counties. The 1998 Session (Chapter 212, Section 16.4) provided additional funds to expand Teen Courts into Duplin, Onslow, and Guilford Counties.

As a part of the comprehensive Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1999 the General Assembly (House Bill 168) authorized the establishment of the position of Statewide Teen Court Coordinator within the newly formed Office of Juvenile Justice to provide technical assistance to support and expand the Teen Court Program.

### **The Teen Court Model**

Teen Court is a juvenile justice diversion program established to meet one of two objectives. 1) Teen Courts can be a community resource to be used for juveniles who commit offenses that are within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. Each program receiving State support must, in coordination with the Chief District Court Judge and Chief Court Counselor, identify the types of offenses that are appropriate for referral to the Teen Court Program. Juveniles may be referred to the Teen Court by a law enforcement officer, a juvenile court intake counselor, judge, or by the District Attorney's Office. 2) Teen Courts may also serve as disciplinary alternatives for problems arising within public school. In this role they can serve as a diversion to reduce the number of minor school discipline cases from being brought to the courts attention.

In the typical Teen Court mode, cases are heard and sentences are imposed on juvenile offenders by a jury of their peers. Usually the juveniles referred are first offenders charged with misdemeanor offenses to which they have already admitted guilt. Although most juveniles referred to Teen Court are under the age of 16 when they commit their offense, some cases are heard on referral from Adult District Court. At the Teen Court session, student volunteers play the roles, i.e. defense attorney, prosecuting attorney, bailiff, clerk, and jurors. During the actual sessions only the Judge is an adult, usually a sitting or retired judge or an attorney who has been trained as a Teen Court judge.

Once a jury has listened to the defendant's story and heard arguments by both attorneys, jury members retire to consider the appropriate constructive sentence. Sentences imposed by teen juries must fall within the guidelines that have been established with the concurrence of the court and the District Attorney's Office. Sentences may include community service work, the requirement to serve on a number of future Teen Court juries, attendance at educational seminars, attendance at behavioral counseling sessions or payment of monetary restitution (up to established limits). Defendants may also be subject to curfews, required to write letters of apology or other rehabilitative measures as deemed appropriate by the jury or imposed by the judge.

Each Teen Court Program must have the endorsement of the Chief District Court Judge, Chief Court Counselor, and District Attorney's Office within the judicial district to be served by the program. Teen Court Programs are required to report annually to the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention on the expenditure of funds, the operations of the programs, and on relevant statistical data.

### **Program Support and Technical Assistance**

Before the establishment of the DJJDP's Statewide Coordinator position Teen Court administrators formed a professional association. The North Carolina Teen Court Association was formed to provide ongoing support for programs around the State and to sustain professional growth of the program directors and to strengthen and expand the Teen Court Model. The mission of the association is to:

“Work together to promote, encourage, and support the development and improvement of Teen Court programs across North Carolina...and to reduce the number of delinquent Youth, provide law-related education, allow the juvenile court system to concentrate their efforts on more serious offenders, and demonstrate the effectiveness of Teen Court as a crime prevention and intervention strategy.”

A major event sponsored by the association is the statewide Teen Court Summit. This event involves more than 300 adult leaders and teen volunteers who are involved in training workshops, special speakers, mock trial competitions and the opportunity to socialize and have a wholesome weekend with teens from across the state sharing their special interest in the law and courts. Discretionary funding and technical assistance by DJJDP contribute to the success this annual event.

The Statewide Teen Court Coordinator provides additional technical assistance and program support by visiting local programs, developing standard operating procedures and by promoting program expansion.

### **Statistical Comparison**

Last years annual report documented the program activities for state fiscal year 1999-2000 on certain critical measures of activity and program impact. Table I examines the growth of the Teen Court Program by comparing the measures from last years report with the documentation for fiscal year 2000-2001.

### **TEEN COURT ASSOCIATION**

In an effort to provide ongoing support for Teen Court programs and to maintain a vehicle for the continued professional growth of Teen Court Coordinators and quality programs, a statewide Teen Court Association was formed in 1999 and their mission statement is: “As members of the North Carolina Teen Court Association, we will work together to promote, encourage, and support the development and improvement of Teen Court programs across North Carolina. Our goals are to

reduce the number of delinquent youth, provide law-related education, allow the Juvenile Court system to concentrate their efforts on more serious offenders, and demonstrate the effectiveness of Teen Court as a crime prevention and intervention strategy.”

This year the Summit was held in March 2001 at Fort Caswell Conference Center with technical and financial support of the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Approximately 300 youth and Teen Court adult volunteers came together to conduct workshops for youth and conduct mock trial competitions for middle and high school students. Workshops included: jury and attorney preparation, law enforcement and youth relationships, and youth rights and responsibilities.

## **PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Bladen County Teen Court**

The Bladen County Teen Court is housed in the Bladen County Cooperative Extension Office under the umbrella of the 4-H Youth Development Program and is supervised by the Extension Agent. The Teen Court coordinator is responsible for the development of the program. Recruitment and training of the volunteers are recruited through visits at the local middle and high schools. Other recruitment efforts include presentations to various groups and word of mouth contacts by teens involved in the Program. Bladen Teen Court has recruited and trained 54 youths, 15 adults for a total of 862 volunteer hours in less than a year. Since Teen Court is an alternative to Juvenile court, this program has already saved the taxpayers over \$8,620.00. Bladen Teen Court processes an average of 2 cases per session. Performing community service is required for each Teen Court defendant. The Coordinator locates a site for them to work, such as local non-profit agencies, schools, and local county agencies. In addition to their community service hours they are also required to attend 6 hours of educational seminars. Professionals lead these workshops from local agencies such as Mental Health, Law Enforcement, Youth Correctional Facilities, Juvenile Court, Cooperative Extension, and Peer Mentors. Before each Teen Court session the youth and adult volunteers are served meals provided by community clubs and businesses in the community.

Approximately \$800.00 of in-kind services have been provided to the program. This is a great way of giving the community an opportunity to be involved in the Program.

### **Durham County Teen Court**

Teen Court and Restitution Program share community service sites, and these include 35 non-profit or county agencies. In addition to service, jury duty, and apologies to victims, jury sentences also include referrals to appropriate educational workshops that are sponsored by Durham County Teen Court and Restitution Program. These include: Earn-It (a stop shoplifting clinic), Fighting Fair (conflict resolution and anger management workshops), S.O.A.S.A. (Speaking Out About Substance Abuse), and jail tours than include a rap session with inmates and community service at the county jail. Earn-It and S.O.A.S.A. require the active participation of a parent/guardian in the workshops, and this family involvement is proving increasingly critical in assisting the youth in our program.

Durham County Teen Court has a threefold target population: first time misdemeanor offenders, student volunteers, and families. A Three-week training session is conducted in the fall for student volunteers. Over 30 attorneys and judges participated in the training of approximately 150 middle and high school students. On-going training occurs throughout the year, and law students from Duke and North Carolina Central University serve as attorney coach mentors. In our office reception area we have a family resource area with handout bi-lingual brochures that describe other community resources and programs that may assist families.

## **Scotland County Teen Court**

The Scotland County Teen Court Program is housed in the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the Scotland County Courthouse. Teen Court is held on the last Monday of each month. There is a minimum of two cases each session and a maximum of three. There is strong support from the Juvenile Court Judges, District Attorney's Office and the Chief Court Counselor's Office, which includes the Court Counselors and volunteers from the schools. Volunteer recruiting efforts at Scotland County High Schools. Volunteer recruiting efforts at Scotland County High School resulted in 266 volunteers. Middle school recruiting efforts resulted in 96 volunteers. With a base of 59 and the addition of new volunteers, the total for this school year is 421.

A local private Attorney, Mr. Chris Wood, conducts attorney training on an ongoing basis. This training is extensive to insure proper representation of the client as well as to provide quality prosecution skills for fair sentencing for the defendant. There is also witnesses or the prosecution, which have included law enforcement officers and assistant school principals. There has been much interest shown by the community, including school personnel, the local community college and parents. Several new volunteers have been added to assist with educational seminars including Sand Hills Youth Center, local school officials, local health department, hospital, city beautification department and local civic clubs. As word spreads throughout the community, new worksites and volunteers are constantly being added which enhances the efforts of the Scotland County Teen Court Program. This collaboration and support of all of the above is what makes this program a success for the youth it serves.

### **TEEN COURT ACTIVITIES**

DDJDP continues to support expressed commitment by providing on-going training opportunities for the local Teen Court Coordinators through workshops addressing Management Information System requirements, grant writing, and among other things, skill development workshops, such as having Tracy Godwin, Teen Courts Project Manager from the American Probation and Parole Association from Lexington, Kentucky come to North Carolina to assist the first annual Teen Court Coordinator Conference. Workshops included topics such as youth rights and responsibilities, recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers, types and benefits of educational seminars and community service, and jury/attorney training.

### **Impact on Juvenile Court**

In addition to the 1709 juvenile defendants admitted for participation in Teen Court last year there were an additional 2713 youth volunteers, as well as 646 adult volunteers who spent time assisting in the implementation of these services. Young people learned about the workings of the court system and were exposed to adult professionals in the judicial system and in law enforcement. The relationships and impressions that were fostered among the defendants as well as the peer volunteers impacted in significant if unmeasured ways the attitudes and behaviors of many of participants in this program.

One measurable impact the program had was on the potential workload of the juvenile courts in the 32 counties that operated a Teen Court Program during 2000-2001. In these counties 1709 juveniles were diverted into Teen Court, which may have otherwise been processed by Intake. Either these juveniles would have been dropped with little attention paid to these minor, first time offenses or the court

would have given less attention to the more serious cases that could not be diverted. In either case the value of the Teen Court Program is clearly evident.

Teen Court allows the system to respond proactively and compassionately to juveniles at the first instance of problem behavior. It undercuts the permissive message that is often inadvertently sent when minor offenses lead to essentially “no response” from a system over-burdened with more serious business. The combined effect of this “first response” that requires accountability, community services and interaction with victims is laying important groundwork that will reduce the escalation of delinquent behaviors for many of the teens being impacted by this program.

**TABLE 1**

| <b>Measure</b>               | <b>1998-1999</b> | <b>1999-2000</b> | <b>2000-2001</b> | <b>Incr/Decr</b> |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| # of Programs                | 23               | 26               | 32               | 23%              |
| Referrals                    | 1,058            | 2,001            | 2,111            | 5%               |
| Admissions                   | 721              | 1,502            | 1,709            | 14%              |
| % of Referrals Served        | 68%              | 75%              | 81%              | 8%               |
| <b>Most Common Offenses:</b> |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| Affrays (fighting)           | 16%              | 14%              | 16%              |                  |
| Larc./Poss. Stolen Property  | 15%              | 19%              | 21%              |                  |
| Shoplifting                  | 13%              | 12%              | 8%               |                  |
| Assault                      | 13%              | 17%              | 13%              |                  |
| Drugs & Paraphernalia        | 9%               | 9%               | 9%               |                  |
| Property Damage              | 6%               | 5%               | 6%               |                  |
| Weapon (not firearm)         | 5%               | 5%               | 6%               |                  |

|             |     |     |     |
|-------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Misd. B & E | 3%  | 2%  | 2%  |
| All Others  | 20% | 17% | 19% |

Results Arising from Teen Court Disposition:

|                         |         |          |           |      |
|-------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|------|
| Community Service Hours | 11,595  | 28,324   | 27,617    | -2%  |
| Restitution Paid        | \$4,102 | \$ 5,218 | \$ 11,029 | 111% |
| Jury Duties Performed   | 1,716   | 3,303    | 4,068     | 23%  |
| Educational Seminars    | 733     | 1,032    | 1,266     | 23%  |
| Apology Letters         | 264     | 540      | 662       | 23%  |
| Essays Written          | 64      | 265      | 287       | 8%   |

The clear pattern that emerges from the statistical comparisons in Table I above is one of solid program growth. The number of programs grew by 23% between the last two time frames. The dramatic increases in admissions and in programs results in clear indication of the value of the technical assistance and support the programs are receiving from the Statewide Coordinator and from the professional support the programs are providing through their own association.

Another important indicator of program strength is the level of monetary support Teen Court is receiving from local sources. Through FY 2000-2001 the General Assembly, as detailed earlier in this report, had provided direct appropriations to 18 specific counties. The total amount of those direct grants-in-aide last year came to \$488,660. But as reported above 32 total programs were operating last year and that total has grown even more during the current fiscal year. Other sources of funding are shown in detail in Table II that follows, but the primary ones include the local JCPC funds (over \$618,000) and local government (over \$249,000). Total funding support for Teen Court last year came to over \$1.6 million with the average cost to the State for each juvenile served totaling slightly less than \$650.

**TABLE II TEEN COURT ANNUAL SUMMARY**

**Teen Court Statewide Report FY 2000-01**

|  |      |   |      |
|--|------|---|------|
| <b>1. Referrals received</b>   | 2111 | <b>a) Not accepted</b>                    | 115  |
|  |      | <b>b) Not screened</b>                    | 287  |
| 1=1(a) +1(b) + 2   |      |   |      |
| <b>2. Accepted for participation</b>                                       | 1709 |   |      |
| <b>3.Total number of volunteers</b><br>(Report in 4th quarter report only) | 3359 | <b>a) Students</b>                        | 2713 |
|  |      | <b>b) Adults</b>                          | 646  |
| <b>4. Withdrew before hearing</b>  | 66   | <b>5. Hearings conducted (admissions)</b> | 1643 |

|   |      |
|---|------|
| <b>6. Number of completions</b>           | 1435 |
| <b>a) Successful dispositions</b>         | 1270 |
| <b>b) Terminations for non-compliance</b> | 165  |

**7. Dispositions Ordered**

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| <b>a) Community service hours ordered</b> | 30,576  |
| <b>b) Restitution ordered--in dollars</b> | \$8,871 |
| <b>c) Jury duties ordered</b>             | 4,814   |
| <b>d) Educational seminars ordered</b>    | 1,419   |
| <b>e) Apology letters</b>                 | 764     |
| <b>f) Essays</b>                          | 340     |

**8. Dispositions Completed**

**(successful and unsuccessful terminations)**

|   |          |      |
|---|----------|------|
| <b>a) Community service hours performed</b> | 27,617   | 90%  |
| <b>b) Restitution paid--in dollars</b>      | \$11,029 | 124% |
| <b>c) Jury duties performed</b>             | 4,068    | 85%  |
| <b>d) Educational seminars attended</b>     | 1,266    | 89%  |
| <b>e) Apology letters written</b>           | 662      | 87%  |
| <b>f) Essays Turned In</b>                  | 287      | 84%  |

**9. Type of Offense Heard**

**(Most serious offense per defendant)**

|   |      |     |
|---|------|-----|
| <b>Assault</b>                              | 210  | 13% |
| <b>Affray</b>                               | 258  | 16% |
| <b>Poss. of weapon (not firearm)</b>        | 91   | 6%  |
| <b>Misd. breaking or entering</b>           | 38   | 2%  |
| <b>Poss. of drugs/paraphernalia</b>         | 148  | 9%  |
| <b>Larceny/poss. of stolen property</b>     | 348  | 21% |
| <b>Shoplifting/concealment/price switch</b> | 138  | 8%  |
| <b>Property damage</b>                      | 93   | 6%  |
| <b>Poss. of alcohol</b>                     | 44   | 3%  |
| <b>Delay/obstruct law enf. officer</b>      | 27   | 2%  |
| <b>Trespassing</b>                          | 25   | 2%  |
| <b>Communicating threats</b>                | 40   | 3%  |
| <b>False calls</b>                          | 17   | 1%  |
| <b>Disorderly conduct</b>                   | 97   | 6%  |
| <b>Driving offense</b>                      | 26   | 2%  |
| <b>Truancy</b>                              | 8    | *   |
| <b>All others (6 with missing data)</b>     | 34   | 2%  |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                               | 1643 |     |

**10. Referral Source**

|                                  | <b>Number</b>   | <b>Number</b>   | <b>Admns</b> | <b>Success</b>  | <b>Complt.</b> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
|                                  | <b>Referred</b> | <b>Admitted</b> | <b>Rate</b>  | <b>Complete</b> | <b>Rate</b>    |
| <b>School</b>                    | 48              | 48              | 100%         | 30              | 63%            |
| <b>SRO</b>                       | 618             | 486             | 79%          | 404             | 83%            |
| <b>Police</b>                    | 276             | 208             | 75%          | 176             | 85%            |
| <b>Sheriff</b>                   | 28              | 15              | 54%          | 8               | 53%            |
| <b>Juvenile Intake</b>           | 649             | 566             | 87%          | 424             | 75%            |
| <b>District Attorney</b>         | 35              | 25              | 71%          | 9               | 36%            |
| <b>Juvenile Court</b>            | 120             | 111             | 93%          | 117             | 105%           |
| <b>District Court</b>            | 180             | 153             | 85%          | 115             | 75%            |
| <b>Other + 34 (missing data)</b> | 42              | 33              | 100%         | 0               | 0%             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                     | 1996            | 1643            | 83%          | 1283            | 78%            |

**11. Demographics of admitted defendants (1643)**

| <b>RACE</b>  |              |                 |              |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <b>Black</b> | <b>White</b> | <b>Hispanic</b> | <b>Other</b> |
| 718          | 824          | 57              | 44           |
| 44%          | 50%          |                 |              |

| <b>GENDER</b> |          |
|---------------|----------|
| <b>M</b>      | <b>F</b> |
| 1035          | 608      |
| 63%           |          |

| <b>AGE</b>          |                    |                    |                |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| <b>11&amp;under</b> | <b>12 &amp; 13</b> | <b>14 &amp; 15</b> | <b>16 - 18</b> |
| 66                  | 452                | 874                | 251            |
| 4%                  | 27.5%              | 53.2%              | 15.2%          |

**12. Sources of financial support**

**FY – 2000-2001**

| <b>County</b>                    | <b>\$JCPC</b>    | <b>\$OJJ</b>     | <b>\$LOCAL</b>   | <b>\$IN-KIND</b> | <b>OTHER</b>     | <b>TOTAL</b>       |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Alamance                         | \$34,554         |                  | \$7,355          | \$26,950         |                  | \$68,859           |
| Bladen                           | \$36,386         | \$30,000         | \$10,209         | \$16,716         |                  | \$93,311           |
| Brunswick                        | \$10,000         | \$20,000         | \$5,000          | \$16,900         |                  | \$51,900           |
| Buncombe                         | \$19,006         | \$25,000         |                  | \$5,850          |                  | \$49,856           |
| Cabarrus                         | \$25,812         | \$14,330         | \$7,744          |                  | \$1,026          | \$48,912           |
| Caldwell                         |                  |                  |                  |                  | \$40,000         | \$40,000           |
| Carteret                         | \$47,202         |                  | \$150            | \$16,244         |                  | \$63,596           |
| Chatham                          |                  | \$25,000         |                  |                  | \$5,000          | \$30,000           |
| Columbus                         |                  | \$20,000         |                  |                  | \$7,280          | \$27,280           |
| Cumberland                       | \$19,421         | \$30,000         | \$3,885          |                  | \$57,110         | \$110,416          |
| Davidson                         |                  | \$30,000         |                  |                  |                  | \$30,000           |
| Duplin                           |                  | \$20,000         |                  |                  | \$14,063         | \$34,063           |
| Durham                           | \$102,646        | \$70,000         | \$35,625         | \$62,020         | \$39,152         | \$309,443          |
| Forsyth                          | \$21,000         | \$14,330         | \$38,922         |                  |                  | \$74,252           |
| Guilford                         |                  | \$20,000         | \$29,000         |                  | \$18,835         | \$67,835           |
| Hoke                             | \$42,348         |                  | \$10,000         | \$7,824          |                  | \$60,172           |
| Jones                            |                  | \$30,000         |                  | \$18,910         |                  | \$48,910           |
| Mecklenburg                      |                  |                  | \$42,000         |                  |                  | \$42,000           |
| Moore                            | \$34,612         |                  | \$4,744          | \$7,440          |                  | \$12,184           |
| New Hanover                      |                  | \$30,000         | \$16,436         |                  |                  | \$46,436           |
| Onslow                           |                  | \$20,000         |                  |                  | \$11,000         | \$31,000           |
| Orange                           |                  | \$40,000         |                  | \$16,298         |                  | \$56,298           |
| Pender                           |                  |                  |                  |                  | \$46,000         | \$46,000           |
| Pitt                             | \$33,775         |                  | \$12,996         |                  |                  | \$46,771           |
| Randolph                         | \$45,380         |                  | \$2,447          | \$17,305         |                  | \$65,132           |
| Robeson                          | \$10,000         |                  |                  | \$1,663          | \$65,000         | \$76,663           |
| Rockingham                       |                  | \$25,000         | \$674            |                  |                  | \$25,674           |
| Rowan                            | \$30,759         |                  | \$3,891          | \$5,860          |                  | \$40,510           |
| Sampson                          | \$38,444         |                  |                  | \$5,390          |                  | \$43,834           |
| Scotland                         | \$30,185         |                  | \$6,975          | \$4,421          |                  | \$41,581           |
| Wake                             | \$40,696         | \$25,000         | \$12,209         |                  | \$5,000          | \$82,905           |
| Wayne                            | \$30,980         |                  | \$6,624          | \$3,840          |                  | \$41,444           |
| <b>total</b>                     | <b>\$618,652</b> | <b>\$488,660</b> | <b>\$249,531</b> | <b>\$206,681</b> | <b>\$309,466</b> | <b>\$1,838,378</b> |
| <b>State cost per admission:</b> |                  | <b>\$648.00</b>  |                  |                  |                  |                    |

