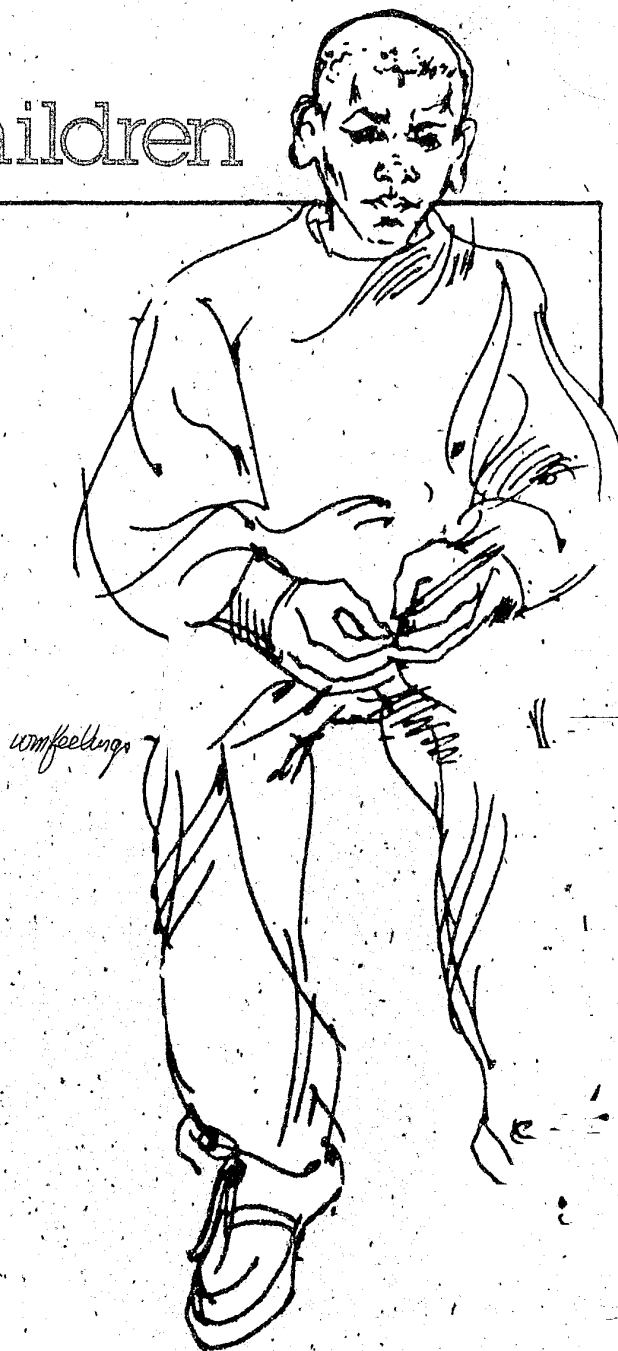


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# All About The Children



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## Mayor's Message

My administration has been dedicated to the children of New York City—all of our children. From the most affluent to the most needy, from those clearly headed for successful lives to those who appear to be at risk of failure, the children of New York City are the future of New York City.

The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) provides custody and care for children in detention, and runs aftercare, prevention and diversion programs. DJJ works with many of the city's most troubled children, and it is the agency's deeply-held belief that all children can be empowered to make positive change in their lives. By providing them with education, health care and other important services, DJJ is placing children on the road toward productive adulthood. By teaching children that they are responsible and will be held accountable for their actions, the agency is helping to make our city a safer place.

DJJ continues to come up with new ways to serve children and prevent juvenile crime. I am proud to note that the innovative spirit and hard work of the department's staff has made DJJ a model juvenile justice agency in the United States and around the world. I commend all DJJ employees on their caring and commitment.

To help and serve our children, particularly those most troubled, is to work to bring about our own hopes and dreams for the future. Like my administration and the work of the Department of Juvenile Justice, the future is **All About The Children.**



**Mayor David N. Dinkins**

# Understanding DJJ

Though perhaps best known for providing custody and care for children in detention, the ultimate goal of the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is the prevention of juvenile crime. We work to achieve that goal through all that we do, from the many services DJJ provides for children in detention to innovative family- and community-based prevention programs.

Instead of letting detention become "dead time", we use detention as a time of opportunity and a chance to help children make positive changes in their lives. Yet children are also taught that they are responsible and will be held accountable for their actions.

Even as we acknowledge and accept that certain individuals do need to be incarcerated to protect the safety of the community, we have pioneered prevention, alternative-to-detention and alternative-to-placement programs and demonstrated their societal and fiscal benefits.

## DJJ—All About the Children

There is a single concept that guides the work that all of us at DJJ do every day: What we do is **All About the Children**.

Like Mayor Dinkins and the many others in our city who serve children and families, it is DJJ's goal that every child in New York City be given the opportunity not simply to survive, but to thrive. We believe that society must help every child grow into a productive and law-abiding adult in order to foster long term social and economic well-being for all, including the next generation of children.

With money scarce and job opportunities severely limited, many children and families struggle to survive. Educational opportunities are also limited, as urban school systems scramble for resources. Basic health care and decent housing may be unavailable or unaffordable.

For the children, it is also a struggle to envision a future of personal success and security. Many succeed, despite the enticements and dangers. Others, concluding that they are not valued by society, succumb to fear and hopelessness.

The services that DJJ provides for children in detention address the many areas in which they may have been shortchanged: They attend school, and receive medical and dental care and mental health services. We have learned that when we provide children with structure, discipline and nurturance, their hard-edged facade dissolves. By helping them examine their actions, their goals and their heritage, we have seen that children can learn to respect themselves—and others.

At DJJ, we recognize that the problems of the children reflect the problems of the family and of the community. So, we reach out to families and communities to help shape creative interventions that will get children on track toward successful lives, or keep them out of the juvenile justice system entirely.

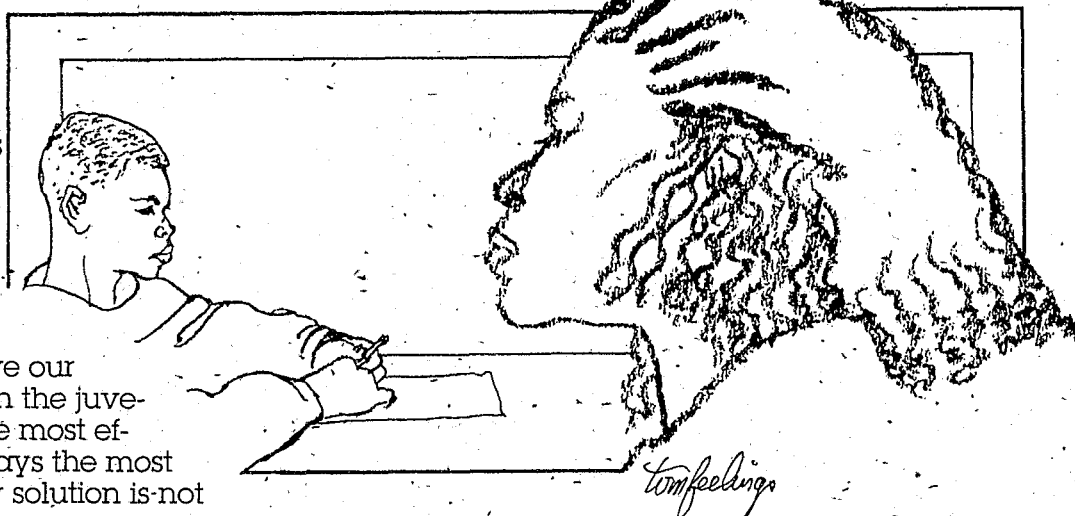
We are deeply committed to our role in protecting the safety of our city. However, DJJ has instituted and continues to develop community-based prevention programs of supervision and support for those children who can be maintained safely in the community while living at home. We

believe such programs are particularly effective at preventing juvenile crime because they give individuals important skills for living and interacting effectively with society while drawing on the strengths of families and neighborhoods. Furthermore, community-based alternative programs are far less costly than incarceration.

Like most areas of government today, DJJ faces budget constraints, but we remain committed to excellence in the work we do with children at risk. We reject the notion that dollars alone determine our ability to achieve our goals. We have learned in the juvenile justice system that the most effective solution is not always the most costly and the most costly solution is not always the most effective.

DJJ works diligently to help our employees understand how each of their jobs relate to the children we care for. We focus on training, staff development and acknowledgment of outstanding service. Our employee recognition program is considered to be a model.

When DJJ was created in 1979, New York City's juvenile justice system was in chaos and offered little help for children. Today, our detention, aftercare, diversion and prevention programs stand as national and international models. We are still changing, still improving, still coming up with new ways to help troubled children and families.



### About This Publication

To understand DJJ's children, one must look at their emotions and inner lives—not simply the acts with which they have been charged. Fourth century religious scholar St. Jerome said "the face is the mirror of the mind", but DJJ is required by law to protect the confidentiality of the children in our care. Unable to photograph the children's faces, we found it challenging to communicate their emotions.

About a year ago, DJJ Commissioner Rose W. Washington pondered a book about children illustrated by renowned artist Tom Feelings. Commissioner Washington was drawn to the evocative style of the artist's images of children's hopes, struggles and successes, and invited him to visit DJJ. Mr. Feelings worked with the children as an artist-in-residence. He was touched and inspired by his contact with them, and his interpretations of their emotions and aspirations are communicated in the illustrations presented in this publication.

# Mission Statement

## Our Responsibilities

**W**e, the staff of the Department of Juvenile Justice, are charged by law with responsibility for the temporary care and custody of children accused of committing delinquent or criminal acts and detained by police arrest or court order, and for providing programs to prevent juvenile delinquency and juvenile crime.

While we recognize that the law casts us in several roles—to provide child custody, child care and delinquency prevention—our work in delinquency prevention guides all of our responsibilities. As child care custodians, we must maintain controlled, structured settings for the safety and well-being of children and staff, and for the protection of the community. In fulfilling this role, our foremost goal is to provide children with new skills and opportunities so that their first contact with the juvenile justice system can also be their last.

As preventive service workers, we must seek to reduce the occurrence of juvenile delinquency through active intervention with children, their families and communities.

## Our Values

▼ We believe that a primary goal of the juvenile justice system is to insure the safety of the community and to provide children with opportunities for positive growth and socially responsible, self-enhancing behavior which will increase their understanding of their responsibilities as citizens and the need to be accountable for their behavior.

▼ We believe that each contact with a child, whether through Secure or Non-Secure Detention, Aftercare, Family Ties or other community-based services, represents an opportunity for prevention through caring and planned action.

▼ We believe that children come to us in varying states of need that may reflect individual, family and community deficits. We appreciate their unique strengths, understand their individual weaknesses and believe that every child and family has the potential for a productive life.

▼ We believe that each child in our custody, while accused of committing delinquent or criminal acts, remains innocent until proven otherwise. We leave such determination to the courts.

▼ We believe that the well-being of the child and family are our primary concern and our foremost goal.

▼ We believe that our staff are the carriers of our mission. Through them, our goals will be achieved.

## Our Commitments

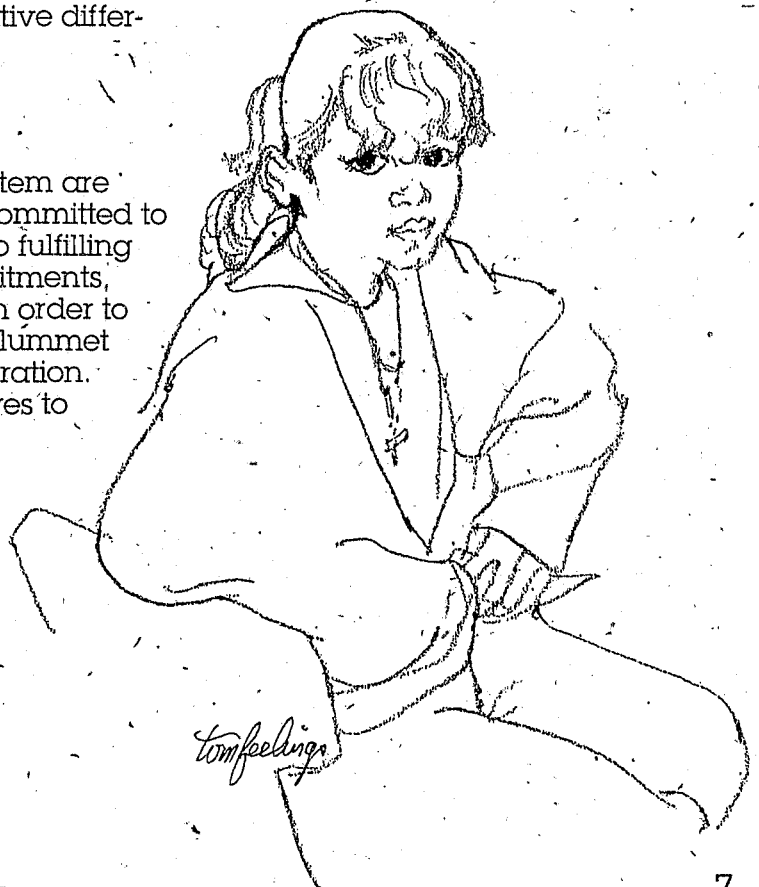
- ▼ We will detain children safely and securely in environments free of fear, trauma, intimidation or abuse and in the most cost-effective and least restrictive setting consistent with public safety.
- ▼ We will facilitate the movement of children in our custody through the court system in a way that is timely and responsive to court orders.
- ▼ We will provide varied and responsive programs tailored to the diverse needs of the children in our care, building on the strengths of individual children, their families and communities.
- ▼ We will work with children, families, communities, other agencies and service providers to prevent delinquency.
- ▼ We will work with children and their families to improve their skills, increase their confidence and therefore empower them by providing greater options for them to lead productive lives.
- ▼ We will continue to search out innovative means through which we can make positive differences in the lives of the children in our custody.
- ▼ We are committed to our staff and will provide them with the support and training they need to make positive differences in the lives of the children they serve.

## Conclusion

Many of the children in the juvenile justice system are caught just inside the neck of a funnel. We are committed to providing excellent services and opportunities, to fulfilling our duties, to upholding these values and commitments, and working with a sense of pride and success in order to pull these children from the funnel before they plummet toward a life of crime, despair and adult incarceration.

Each of us represents the Department and strives to fulfill the public responsibility with which we are charged. Each of us is also a role model for the children in our care and therefore we must each strive to be an adult with powerful and clear values who represents success and who the children know and come to trust.

Each of us has the responsibility to foster the values of this declaration and to infuse our work with their meaning.



# Secure Detention

**F**or children in the custody of DJJ, arrest and detention are stopping points in a journey that may well have begun years before. That journey is likely to leave them filled with anger and hopelessness.

Spofford, New York City's sole secure detention facility for juveniles, is located in the Hunts Point section of the Bronx. About two-thirds of the children who enter Spofford leave in ten days or less. However, some children whose court cases are protracted remain as long as one or two years. Services for children start the moment they enter the facility. In-depth assessments are conducted of educational skills and medical, dental and mental health. An orientation program introduces children to all aspects of life at Spofford.

Through DJJ's innovative and award-winning case management system, services are coordinated to address the wide range of needs found in these children. Case managers act as liaisons with each child's family and monitor progress at Spofford, from the day a child enters until the day he or she leaves.

The Carter G. Woodson Academy, Spofford's state-approved school, looks in many ways like any other school. In one classroom, children review a science assignment with the teacher. Down the hall, students watch their computer screens intently as they complete individualized lessons to increase reading skills. Colorful bulletin boards celebrate historical figures or feature thoughtful messages aimed at the students.

Boys and girls—both are detained at Spofford—are grouped by academic level and attend classes for a full five-and-a-half-hour day. They complete classwork in major academic subjects as well as library skills, home and career skills, art, music and physical education. HIV and substance abuse prevention education is also provided. A comprehensive special education program is provided, including speech and language services and psychological counseling.

Carter G. Woodson Academy students take part in such traditional school-related activities as spelling bees, science fairs, and student government. A monthly publication, Spofford Voices, showcases student writing. Each June, student academic excellence is honored at the Academy's End of Year Ceremony.

Children who come into detention often have skills and talents that can be a valuable resource when channeled appropriately. With this in mind, some children at Spofford participate in a leadership program co-sponsored by Youth Force, an organization funded by the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York and the office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety. Children in the program help plan events and activities for all children at Spofford. In addition, when participants leave detention and return home, Youth Force works to link them with related leadership development programs in the community.

Spofford's chaplain coordinates a program of weekly religious services and related activities for children of many different religions. There is even a multi-denominational choir, the Restoration Ensemble. Participation in religious programs is optional, and is open to all children.

Some activities for children are strictly recreational, such as basketball or creative arts. Others, such as Spofford's annual Halloween dormitory decorating contest, simply give

children a chance to be children.

DJJ encourages parents to visit their children at Spofford frequently, and to support the children as they work to make positive change in their lives. Regularly scheduled visiting hours and phone calls encourage parent-child interaction. On semi-annual Family Days, parents, siblings and other loved ones spend an entire afternoon visiting at Spofford. Parents are also invited to open house at the Carter G. Woodson Academy, where they may review their children's school work and attend special educational seminars.

The Youth Advocacy Program of the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (NCIA) was launched in 1989 with a grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. Following a thorough screening, NCIA develops and presents to the court a plan for release of children into a structured, community-based alternative. Once released, an NCIA case manager works with the child on a daily basis in the community for up to one year.

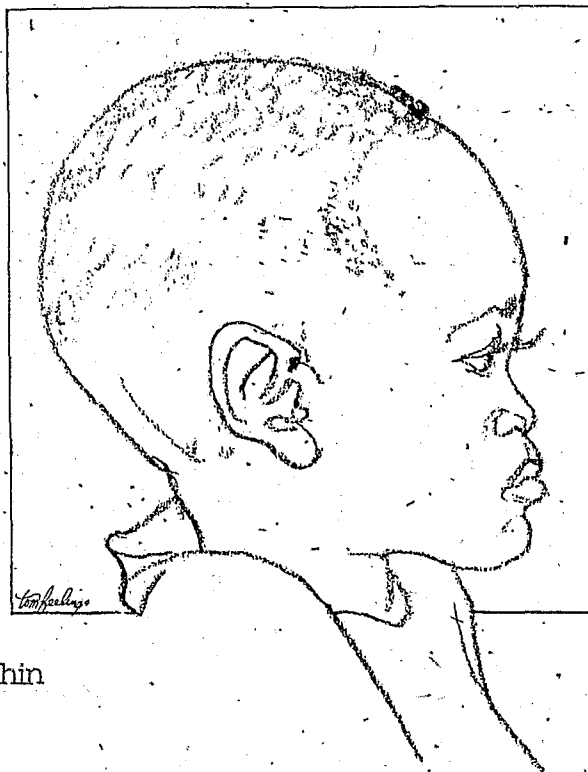
The Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES) also serves DJJ children, as does our own Detention Alternative Program (DAP), which was piloted with funds from Mayor David Dinkins' Safe Streets, Safe City initiative. (A description of DAP can be found on page 16). Like NCIA, CASES and DAP aim to move carefully screened youths from detention into community-based intensive supervision programs.

During Fiscal Year 1993, with support from a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, DJJ—along with other city and state agencies and representatives from the legal and court systems and the community—will collaborate on a strategic plan for reform of the city's juvenile justice system. The plan will identify key opportunities for change in how, when and by whom the decision to place a child in secure detention is made, and propose new community-based alternative programs.

Some years ago, Spofford was a symbol of failure, a place that did little to serve children or protect the public. Today, Spofford is regarded as a model program for secure detention. Visitors to the facility have included child care and juvenile justice professionals from across the United States and around the world. Special guests also visit Spofford, and this year we were deeply honored to welcome Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

DJJ's ability to provide positive intervention in children's lives will be increased considerably when Spofford is replaced by two smaller secure detention facilities, one in the Bronx and one in Brooklyn. Construction activity for both facilities is currently underway. We look forward to providing secure detention in a setting that incorporates and enhances DJJ's programmatic goals and supports the agency's agenda of preventing juvenile delinquency.

In Fiscal Year 1992, 4,777 children were admitted to secure detention. Although the average length of stay was 20 days, 49% left within three days and 66% left within ten days.



# Non-Secure Detention

**A**t DJJ, we believe that children should be detained in the least restrictive appropriate environment, without compromising the safety of the community. Serving children in a neighborhood-based setting allows us to use community resources to develop programs that foster positive change in children—and community-based detention is less costly than secure detention.

DJJ provides Non-Secure Detention (NSD) in a network of group homes and family boarding homes throughout the city. Staff provides structure, discipline and support, and children are encouraged to use detention as a chance to make positive changes in their lives. They attend school and receive medical, dental and mental health services. If necessary, substance abuse counseling and related services are available through DJJ's Adolescent Substance Abuse Program. Children are supervised by NSD houseparents at all times, and may not leave the facility except when accompanied by staff. Each child's daily routine includes household chores such as doing laundry or setting the dinner table, as well as other activities they would do at home, such as homework, reading or watching television.

Children in NSD may visit a local church for religious services or tutoring sessions with volunteers, enjoy a picnic in a city park or attend a sporting event. NSD staff use the resources of the city and its neighborhoods to expand program options, so children can be exposed to new and broadening experiences. For the children, a cultural event or weekend camping trip can open new doors of interest and understanding.

Once a child is assigned to NSD, he or she is brought to a DJJ Intake House—one in the Bronx for boys, another in Manhattan for girls. Case management begins at intake, where most children spend their first 24 to 48 hours. Educational, medical and mental health assessments of each child are completed, an initial needs assessment is developed, and case managers structure a service plan for the child.

All children in NSD attend school, most of them at Youth Options Unlimited (YOU), a school run exclusively for children in NSD by the New York City Board of Education's Alternative High Schools division in collaboration with DJJ. The school provides a full day of small group instruction and individualized tutoring in academic subjects. Children are transported to and from school by NSD staff. Two NSD group homes provide on-site classes, also operated by the Board of Education.

Recognizing the enriched program opportunities that community-based detention offers for children, DJJ has expanded its Non-Secure Detention system over the past years. The system now includes 11 group homes and with a capacity of 112 children, as well as two family boarding home beds. The appointment of an Assistant Commissioner for Non-Secure Detention in August, 1992, is an important step toward strengthening NSD's management structure so even more program options can be provided for the children.

In Fiscal Year 1992, 1,595 children were admitted to Non-Secure Detention, and the average length of stay was 19 days.



## Aftercare

It is not unusual for children who have been in detention with DJJ to be released home, either because their cases have been completed or because the judge has determined that they do not need to remain in detention until disposition of their cases. Either way, children return home to face many of the problems and situations that may have placed them at risk for coming into the juvenile justice system in the first place.

DJJ's Aftercare program is designed to provide support for children as they return to their families and communities. Aftercare case managers work with children for up to six months, providing some services directly and referring the child and family to other services in the community. Some children may require health care or counseling. For others, the biggest need may be a summer job.

Education is a central focus of the Aftercare program, because it is the key to positive change in so many areas of a child's life. Aftercare case managers work to ensure that children are in appropriate school programs, encourage them to attend regularly, and may review children's notebooks, homework assignments, report cards and attendance records. Children also participate in special Aftercare activities, including weekly art workshops, field trips, and discussion groups aimed at building life skills and self-esteem.

Children learn about the voluntary Aftercare program as part of their orientation while in secure or non-secure detention. Once they return home, Aftercare case managers contact their families and urge them to participate. The case manager arranges a home visit to assess the family's living situation and the needs of the child, and develops a service plan to meet those needs. The worker may also obtain information about the child's strengths and needs from the child's Spofford or NSD case manager.

DJJ's Aftercare program was established in 1983 with a grant from the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and was the first program of its kind in the United States. The Aftercare program model—a combination of brokering referrals and providing direct services—has been used as a guide for DJJ community-based prevention programs launched through Mayor Dinkins' Safe Streets, Safe City initiative.

Ninety percent of the children in Aftercare are enrolled in school and attend regularly.



## Family Ties

The problems of children generally reflect problems within their families and communities. At DJJ, our work with troubled children has taught us that if we are to help children succeed, we must view them in the context of their families, and involve families in helping children make positive change. This concept is the basis of DJJ's Family Ties program.

Once a child has been adjudicated delinquent in the Family Court, the judge must decide whether the child will be put on probation and remain at home, or be sent to long term out-of-home placement in a New York State Division for Youth (DFY) facility. DJJ observed that judges sometimes chose the placement option for children when they felt that the child was receiving insufficient or ineffective supervision at home. Family Ties was launched in Brooklyn in 1989 to give judges another option.

Now, prior to making a final determination in cases, Family Court judges can refer juvenile delinquents to Family Ties. After an initial screening, extensively-trained family preservationists work intensively with children and their families in their homes, schools and communities for four to eight weeks.

A Family Ties family preservationist might work with a child on improving attendance at school and learning to identify and control behavior patterns that have led to problems. At the same time, the Family Ties worker might be working with the parents to help them develop effective techniques to review their child's schoolwork or enforce a nightly curfew. Family preservationists examine the dynamics of each family and work to build on strengths and address weaknesses. The workers may make referrals to other services such as substance abuse treatment, and may also provide practical help such as purchasing needed clothing for a child or pitching in to help an overwhelmed parent clean the family's apartment.

The family preservationists work with families for ten to 15 hours each week and are also on call 24 hours a day, every day. The relationship between the worker and the family is usually close and relaxed. Family Ties is patterned on the intensive home-based services model developed by Homebuilders, part of the Behavioral Sciences Institute in Washington state. The program is not meant to be a permanent cure for problems, but rather a stabilizing influence that keeps the family together and helps them move toward long term solutions.

At the conclusion of Family Ties interventions, family preservationists make written reports to Family Court judges, including a recommendation for either probation or continued exploration of placement. Families are linked with community-based organizations for ongoing counseling and other needed services. Judges are not obligated to accept the recommendations of the Family Ties workers, but about two-thirds of all Family Ties cases end with the children on probation rather than placement.

Children from the Family Ties program who are placed on probation enter the New York City Department of Probation's Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program (JISP), which was developed expressly to provide enhanced probation supervision for these children. JISP workers are trained in the Homebuilders techniques used by Family Ties.

DJJ is the first public sector juvenile justice agency in the United States to use the family preservation model solely in the juvenile justice setting. From its initial pilot in 1989, Family Ties has expanded to serve about 60 families a year in Brooklyn, Bronx and Manhattan. Further expansion—to serve children with cases in Queens and Richmond County Family Courts and Bronx Supreme Court—will occur during Fiscal Year 1993.

The advantages of keeping families together and moving children toward law-abiding lives with a program such as Family Ties may be hard to quantify in human terms. However, the program also generates considerable financial savings for both the city and state by diverting children from expensive long term institutional care. As of December 31, 1991, Family Ties has saved the city alone about \$5.5 million.

89.8% of the children admitted to detention in Fiscal Year 1992 were male, and 10.2% were female. 63.7% of those admitted were African-American or African-Caribbean; 30.8% were Latino; 3.4% were Euro-American; 1.3% were Asian-American; and 0.8% were of other ethnicities.



# **Community- Based Alternative Programs**

**F**or some troubled children, targeted services and support provided after they return home from detention or when they are at risk of coming into the juvenile justice system can be the catalyst for keeping them on track toward productive and law-abiding lives. Community-based prevention programs move children away from the juvenile justice system for good because they help them develop skills that are essential for successful lives in their communities. Furthermore, such programs are considerably less expensive than services provided in a residential setting.

The DJJ community-based alternative programs described here were launched with funding from Mayor Dinkins' Safe Streets, Safe City initiative, and represent the newest segment of DJJ's continuum of care. While some may associate Safe Streets, Safe City only with efforts to put more police on the streets of New York, the programs discussed here underline the fact that the initiative actually represents a wide-ranging change in the way all parts of the city's justice system prevent, fight and respond to crime.

## **Court Appearance Program**

If children do not appear for scheduled court appointments, a judge may issue a bench warrant and they may be re-arrested and re-detained. DJJ's Court Appearance Program (CAP) case managers act as escorts for children and their families to and from court. CAP workers provide transportation by car or escort the children and families on public transportation, and provide enhanced notification of court dates.

The court system can seem confusing and arbitrary for many of the children and families. CAP case managers help them understand and find their way through the system, and teach them about appropriate courtroom behavior and appearance. The CAP workers also monitor other needs of the children and, if necessary, refer them to DJJ's Aftercare program.

CAP's pilot in Brooklyn Family, Criminal and Supreme Courts was extremely successful. In Fiscal Year 1993, the Brooklyn CAP program will be contracted out to a community-based group and DJJ staff will establish the program to serve Queens County courts.

## **Detention Alternative Program**

A child who has shown exemplary behavior while in detention may have the chance to return home to await resolution of his or her case through the Detention Alternative Program (DAP). DJJ detention staff refer a child to DAP workers, who determine whether the child and his or her family will agree to the rules of the program and work toward a pre-set list of goals for the child. Application is then made to the court for release of the child.

DAP counselors provide intensive supervision, which includes checking on school attendance, monitoring after-school activities and making sure children are home by curfew. The DAP counselors make contact with the children at least five times a week, and hold regular meetings with the families as well.

Now operating in Bronx and Queens Family Courts, DAP gives children the chance to show that they can be trusted in the community, so judges are less likely to send them into long term placement upon adjudication of their cases. Since the cost of a DAP intervention is estimated to be about one-seventh the cost of the average detention, the program also generates fiscal savings for the city.

### **Reading Achievement Program**

Research has shown that children with limited reading skills and other learning deficits are considerably more likely to come into the juvenile justice system. Literacy is the foundation on which many life skills are built.

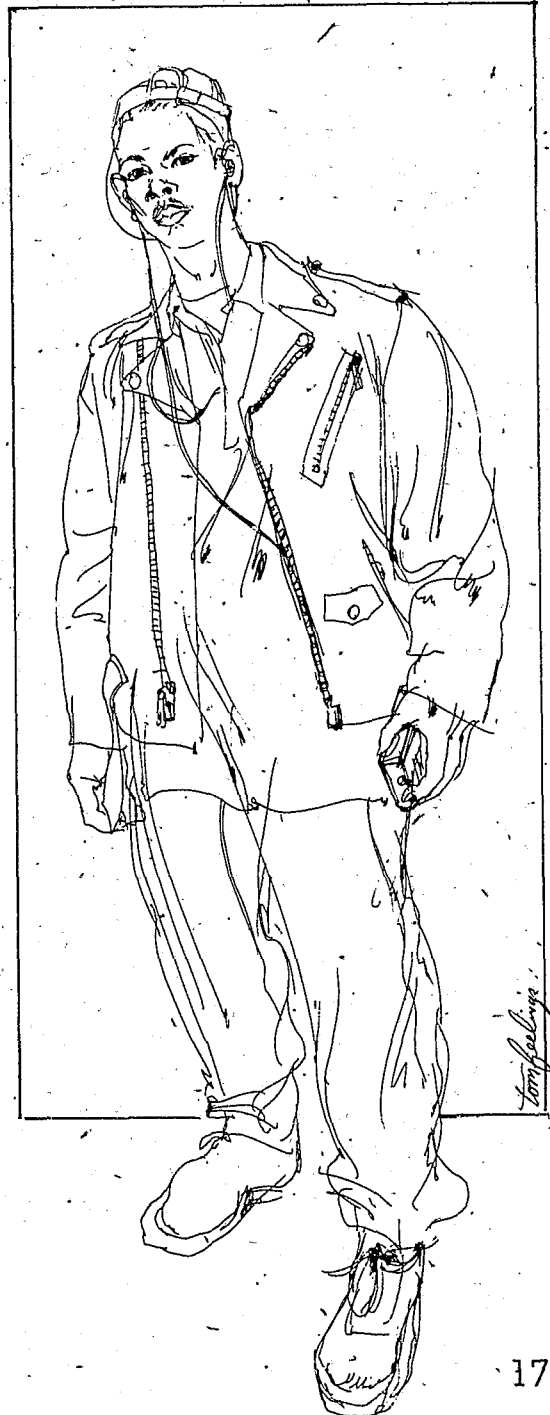
The Reading Achievement Program (RAP) provides intensive individualized instruction for children who read two or more years behind their grade level and have had contact with the justice system. Children are referred to RAP from Aftercare and other DJJ programs. Their siblings with reading difficulties are also eligible to participate. RAP students undergo a comprehensive skills screening and attend 90-minute tutoring sessions twice a week after school.

Beyond simply improving reading skills, RAP strives to stimulate children's interest in learning and to develop their self-esteem. The program also includes group and peer counseling sessions.

### **Neighbors Assisting Prevention**

DJJ believes that neither federal, state nor city government can save troubled children—that it is only families and communities that can do so. The Neighbors Assisting Prevention program is working with community leaders and organizations in the Morrisania section of the Bronx to create a community-based model for a comprehensive effort to prevent juvenile crime. The model can then be used in neighborhoods throughout the city.

In CAP's first year of operation, children in the program attended 89% of their scheduled court appearances. In DAP's first year, all participants completed the program and 93% were not sent into long term placement upon adjudication.

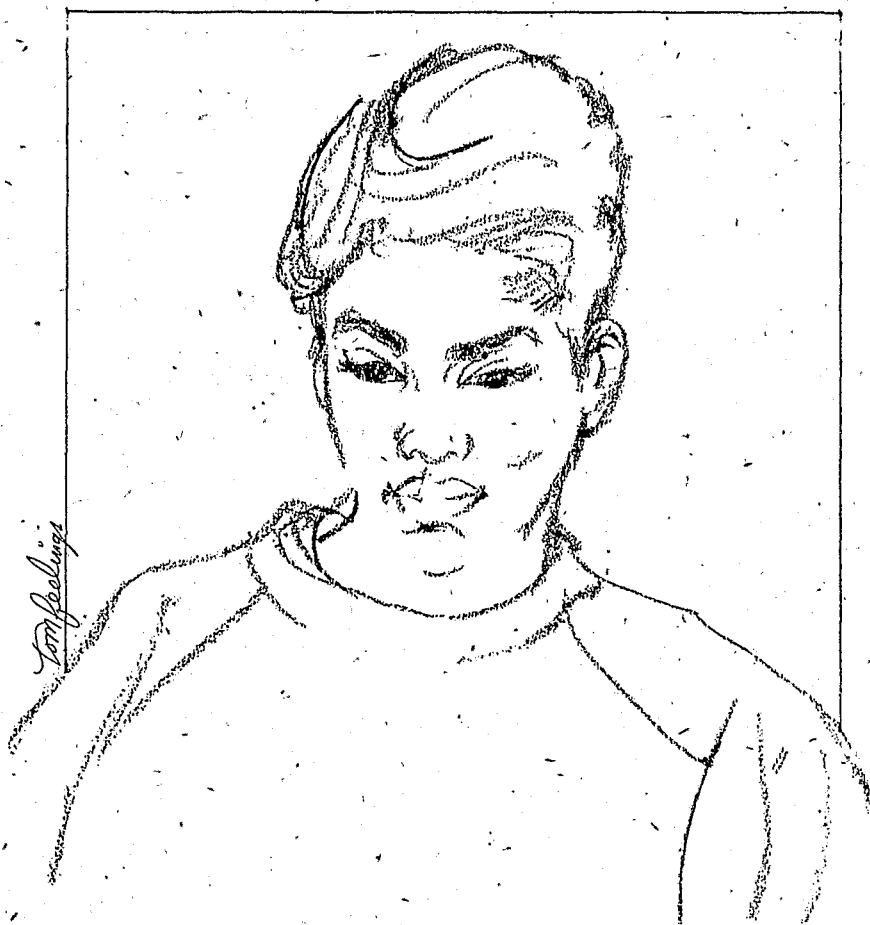


## Court Services

Going to court is a stressful experience for children, and that stress can be exacerbated during a long wait in a Family Court detention room. DJJ's Court Services unit uses this waiting time as a chance to help children overcome feelings of intimidation and maintain their composure when they appear in court.

The Court Services unit transports children in detention to court appearances in Family, Criminal and Supreme Courts in the five boroughs of New York City, and staffs the Family Court detention rooms. Each detention room is supervised by juvenile counselors who provide children with information and support, as well as a court representative who acts as a liaison to the court, communicating with judges, lawyers and probation officers.

Since many children are unfamiliar with the way the court works, DJJ's award-winning video "Finding Your Way" is shown in the detention rooms. The video is a part of DJJ's Operation Smart initiative (see page 19) to educate children about the court system. Arts and crafts activities and games are also available to help children pass the time calmly and constructively.



# Agency- Wide Initiatives

## Adolescent Substance Abuse Program

**B**ased on the belief that drugs and alcohol can keep a child from moving toward productive and law-abiding adulthood, DJJ's Adolescent Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) addresses the many ways in which substance abuse may be a factor in children's lives.

ASAP provides individual counseling, group counseling and education for children and their families. Education is a key component of the program, helping children to think independently regarding choices about the use of drugs or alcohol, and pointing out the legal risks of engaging in the drug trade. Children and families are referred to ASAP staff assigned to all DJJ programs. Staff may, when appropriate, refer the a child or family member to a community-based substance abuse service provider for treatment.

DJJ is participating in a grant from the federal Center for Substance Abuse & Treatment with the Child Welfare Administration, Department of Probation and the Mayor's Office of Drug Abuse Policy. The grant has allowed DJJ to add several ASAP staff positions, while also facilitating treatment referral and placement, training and interagency coordination.

## Operation Smart

DJJ's Operation Smart is an informational outreach designed to educate children and their families about the court system and mitigate their stress and anxiety. Operation Smart aims to teach respect for authority, make children and their families more prepared for the courtroom experience and ensure that the children dress and act appropriately in the courtroom.

Operation Smart has been integrated into all DJJ programs. A "Dos and Don'ts" list tells children what behavior is appropriate in the courtroom. DJJ's video "Finding Your Way" explains the operation of the Family Courts. When necessary, a clothing drive supplies children with suitable courtroom attire. Counseling and guidance are provided by DJJ staff, who show the video, discuss the "Dos and Don'ts", engage the children in role-playing courtroom scenarios and answer questions.

## Cultural Awareness

To foster pride in their own heritage and respect for that of others, children in DJJ programs take part in activities to encourage cultural awareness. Education, recreation and medical and mental health services are all provided in a culturally sensitive manner. Holidays and commemorative celebrations are used as an opportunity to explore cultural issues in depth and heighten understanding.

In what is now a DJJ tradition, Non-Secure Detention (NSD) children and staff gather each spring for a traditional Jewish Passover Seder. Before the Seder, children learn about the story of Passover and the Jewish religion. At the event, children participate in the religious ceremony, as they would at any Seder. A Seder meal is prepared by NSD homemakers with help from Jewish staff and others in the agency, and children literally get a taste of a culture they may have known little or nothing about.

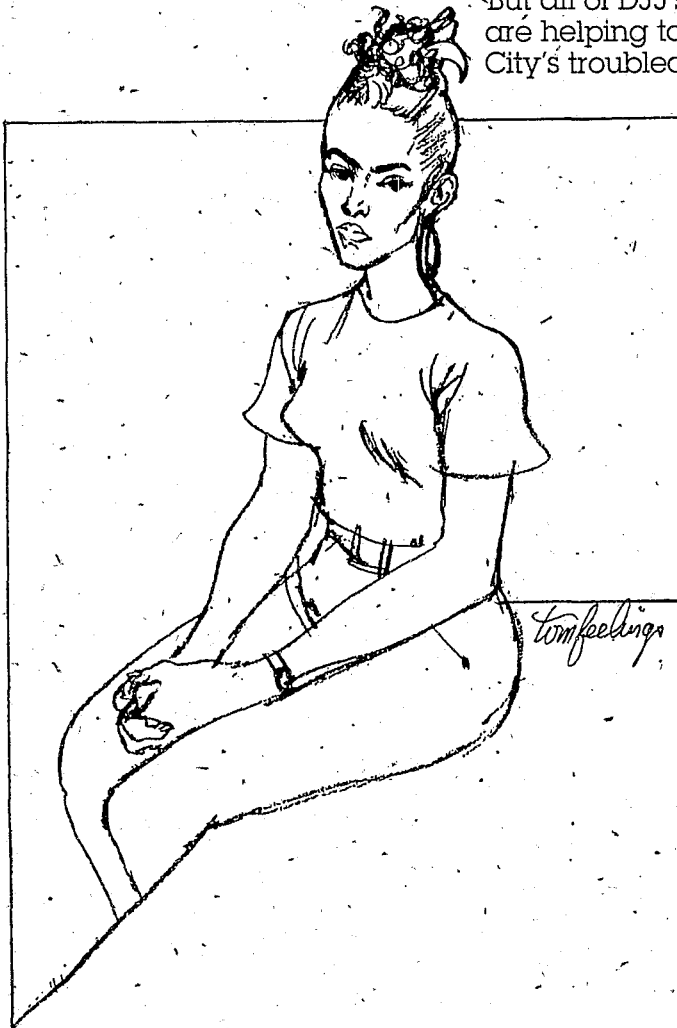
# Volunteers For Youth

All of the adults at DJJ with whom children come into contact are meant to be positive role models and mentors. In addition to staff, these adults include a cadre of devoted and talented volunteers. Through DJJ's Volunteers for Youth program, 300 individuals from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods throughout the city contributed energy, knowledge and more than 10,000 hours of time.

One volunteer works with children in Non-Secure Detention, helping them explore their feelings and examine their actions by engaging them in writing, arts, crafts, and performance improvisation. Another presents seminars in entrepreneurship and self-empowerment. Still others provide tutoring, assist with case management and recreational activities, offer religious programs for interested children and furnish much-needed clerical assistance.

Volunteers complete a nine-hour orientation, where they learn about DJJ's mission and objectives and get an idea of what to expect when working with DJJ's children. The orientation also includes training in conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity and interpersonal skills. Most volunteers work eight to ten hours per week, and some may receive educational credit for their work.

Participants in the Volunteers for Youth program represent a wide range of ages, cultural backgrounds and talents. Some are referred to the agency by educational institutions or the Mayor's Voluntary Action Center. Some simply want to help out at a facility or program in their neighborhood. But all of DJJ's volunteers have one thing in common—they are helping to make a difference in the lives of New York City's troubled children.



## Central Office Staff

**A**lthough most of the children served by DJJ never visit the agency's headquarters in lower Manhattan, every member of the Central Office staff learns that he or she plays a role in helping those children succeed. Central Office includes the Administration, Planning and Training units as well as the offices of the agency Counsel and Public Affairs.

The Administration unit's budget and fiscal staff make sure that DJJ is able to provide the essential needs of children in detention—such as food, school supplies, furniture and recreation supplies—even as the agency copes with budget constraints and cutbacks. The personnel office ably manages the recruitment and hiring of talented and enthusiastic staff for all DJJ units and programs.

The Management Information Systems office continues the huge task of updating the agency's computer systems to handle sophisticated new software programs, while at the same time maintaining the systems used to monitor and manage the services provided for children. The Office Services unit supports all staff by delivering mail, answering telephones and keeping the offices clean and orderly.

The Planning unit works with all DJJ program areas to develop new programs, assess program outcomes, compute statistics and collect and analyze data. The unit takes the lead in applying for the government and foundation grants that give DJJ the chance to test new juvenile crime prevention efforts and enhance existing programs. The Capital and Operational Planning unit manages the construction and operational planning for DJJ's new secure detention facilities and steers the agency through the approval process for other new facilities and program locations.

A well-trained staff is essential to providing effective care for DJJ's children, and it is the Training unit that makes sure that all DJJ employees have the skills they need. The unit provides a comprehensive three-week pre-service training program for juvenile counselors who will work in secure detention. The training focuses on the issues faced by the children in our care, and includes instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and "Handle With Care", DJJ's non-violent technique for restraining children. Other staff also receive pre-service and in-service training, including management training and skills-enhancement workshops.

The Counsel's office is DJJ's in-house legal resource, ensuring that DJJ is in compliance with state and local laws and New York State Division for Youth regulations. The office also monitors legislative and court-related issues, and drafts contracts with those who provide services for the agency.

DJJ is committed to educating the public about our prevention agenda and the many issues related to juvenile delinquency. The Public Affairs unit shapes and manages the agency's communications with the public both with DJJ's own publications and through the news media.

# The DJJ Staff

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Created by the City Charter, DJJ's Advisory Board advises the Commissioner and reports annually to the Mayor.

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The Ombudsman Review Board, a citizen board, hears reports from the full-time ombudsman based at Spofford and makes recommendations to the Commissioner.

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# DJJ Fund Inc.

Created to help support our program agenda, the DJJ Fund Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation. It receives grants and contributions that provide needed assistance in the ongoing implementation of our initiatives. DJJ and the DJJ Fund Inc. would like to thank the following for their generous support:

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