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WORLD CONGRESS ON JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

28-30 MAY 2018



STRENGTHENING JUSTICE SYSTEMS FOR CHILDREN

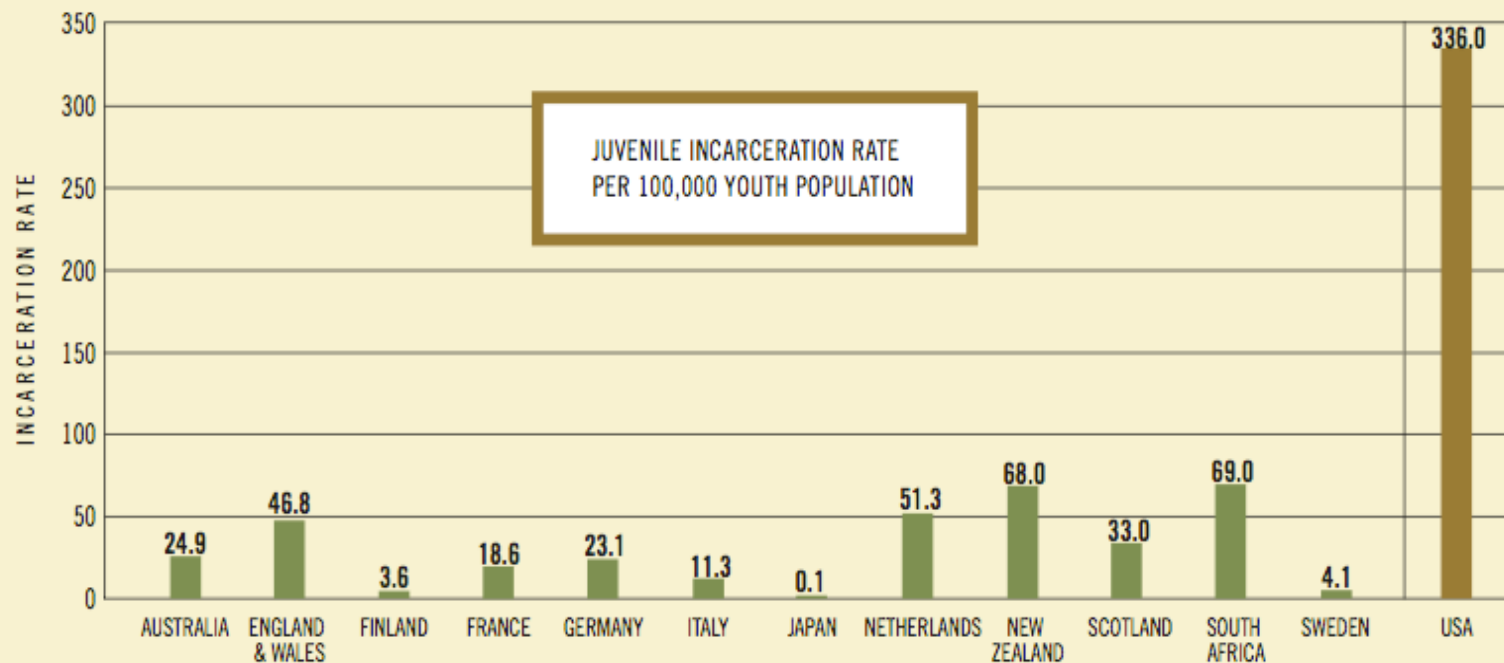
BEYOND FAMILY COURT ADVOCACY: EMPOWERING YOUTH AND ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS FOR YOUTH SERVICES

**Richland County Public Defenders Office
Youth Reentry Program**

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YOUTH INCARCERATION RATES

YOUTH INCARCERATION RATE: UNITED STATES VS. OTHER NATIONS



Source: Hazel, Neal, *Cross-National Comparison of Youth Justice*, London: Youth Justice Board, 2008.

FACTS ABOUT REENTRY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
Annual Statistical Report FY 2015/2016:

- ▣ DJJ processed 15,429 new juvenile cases.
- ▣ DJJ received 1,051 court commitments into its regional centers for evaluation purposes (30-45 days).
- ▣ DJJ received 1,174 juveniles into custody for placement in its long-term facilities or alternative programs.
- ▣ 1,171 youth released to the community.

REENTRY

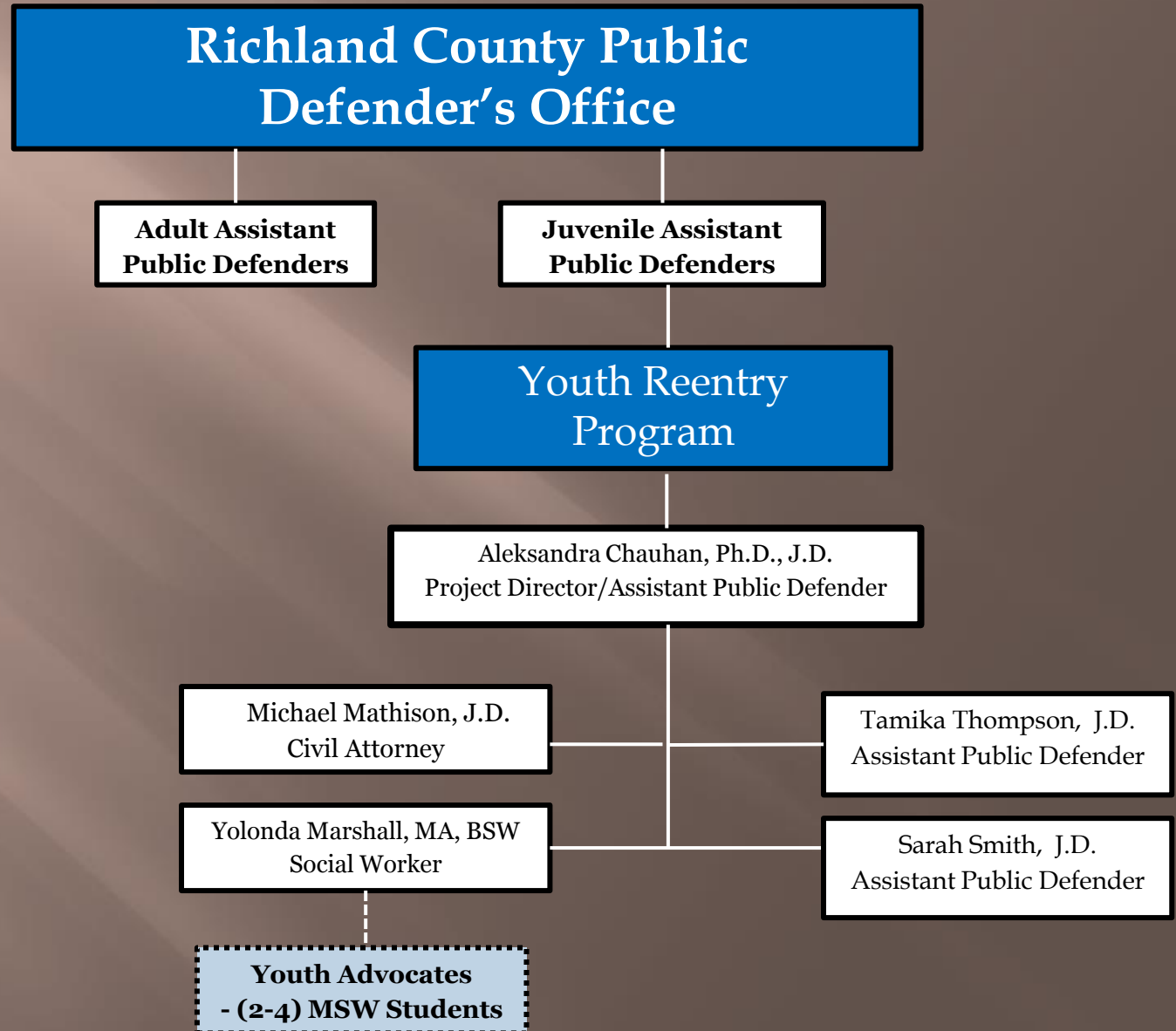
- ▣ Reentry describes this period of time when young people transition back to their families and communities after lengthy out-of-home court-ordered placements.
- ▣ Youth are simultaneously experiencing two types of transitions, one from out-of-home placement and the other from adolescence to adulthood.



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



YOUTH REENTRY PROGRAM

The Youth Reentry Program aims to help adolescents and their family reach their goals and overcome barriers when entering the community after detention.

- VISION: To end the cycle of court involvement for youth while paving pathways to success
- MISSION: To engage and support youth and families in Richland County by facilitating opportunities through creating community connections and service networks in order to help them reach their goals.

YOUTH REENTRY PROGRAM *STRUCTURE*



WHAT WE DO

Mentors

- ▣ Refer to mentoring service

Structured Activities

- ▣ Expose to different activities
- ▣ Community service opportunities
- ▣ Connect to sporting opportunities

School

- ▣ Attend school conferences
- ▣ Available to go to the school during the day to intervene
- ▣ Assist with enrollment and transfers
- ▣ GED referral and resources

Mental Health

- ▣ Refer for treatment
- ▣ Monitor attendance and compliance
- ▣ Available to conference with providers

Physical Health

- ▣ Assistance setting up medical appointments- eye glasses/ dental
- ▣ Advocacy with health professionals

Occupational

- ▣ Referral to Job Readiness Training Center
- ▣ Administer Interest Survey
- ▣ Planning Job Fair or Interest Presentation

WHAT WE DO (Reentry Attorney)

Direct Representation

Education

- School Expulsion Proceedings
- School Records
- Enrollment/Placement
- Special Education
- Credit Transfer/Recovery

Housing

- Evictions
- Landlord/Tenant Issues
- Transitional Housing

Expungement

- Screening
- Advise on Process

Advice, Empowerment & Referral

- On-Site brief legal advice and resources.
- Ready information on a wide variety of topics for clients *and* attorneys.
 - Pamphlets
 - Forms
 - Numbers and Websites

Develop a network of service providers and non-profit organizations

- Keep in Touch with your Community Partners.
- Information on New Resources.
- Can they actually help?

Raise awareness about Collateral Consequences – All Stakeholders

SCENARIO ONE

- ▣ Mary was charged as an adult for a school related fight. She had been excluded from school without educational services for nearly four months despite Special Education eligibility and his mother's repeated efforts to secure homebound instruction. Soon after we got involved in Mary's case, an Individual Education Plan meeting was convened, and Mary was awarded compensatory education to make up for the time lost. We also put the family in contact with Protection & Advocacy for People with Disabilities, who continued to provide long-term legal representation for his special education issues.

SCENARIO TWO

- ▣ Danna was a textbook illustration of a failure Child Find. She was repeatedly excluded from school, assigned to alternative school, expelled and denied special education services in face of glaring evidence of multiple disabilities.
- ▣ When Danna returned from a placement, she couldn't get back into school. She was simply sent home one day, without any disciplinary referral, truancy petition or any follow-up whatsoever from the school district.
 - We managed to get Danna reenrolled within a week.
 - Two months later we got Danna's expulsion reversed.
 - In the fall, Danna secured a special education evaluation and services.
 - We helped Danna apply for and obtain her first job, where she has been successfully employed for over two months.

SCENARIO THREE

- ▣ John's Medicaid was terminated and he was rationing his medications for depressive and anxiety disorders for months before they ran out. During that time he became socially withdrawn and picked up several charges and a truancy referral. John had a very unstable home life with his current guardian and badly needed a change of environment.
 - We were able to get John reenrolled in a new school district living with another relative, and notified the district of his need for accommodations.
 - We appealed the cancellation of John's Medicaid, and got his services reinstated retroactively to the date of cancellation.
 - With the restoration of his full treatment regimen, John reengaged with school, friends and family and has been doing very well.
 - Many of his later charges were dropped or diverted based on his improvement.

HOW WE DO IT

University of South
Carolina

- College of Social Work
- Department of Criminology
- Department of Psychology
- Department of Education

DJJ: Job Readiness Training
Center

United Way: YIT

School Social Workers

Non-profit Organizations
(i.e., TBOY, Sowing Seeds
into the Midlands, Girls
Rock, Achieve Columbia)



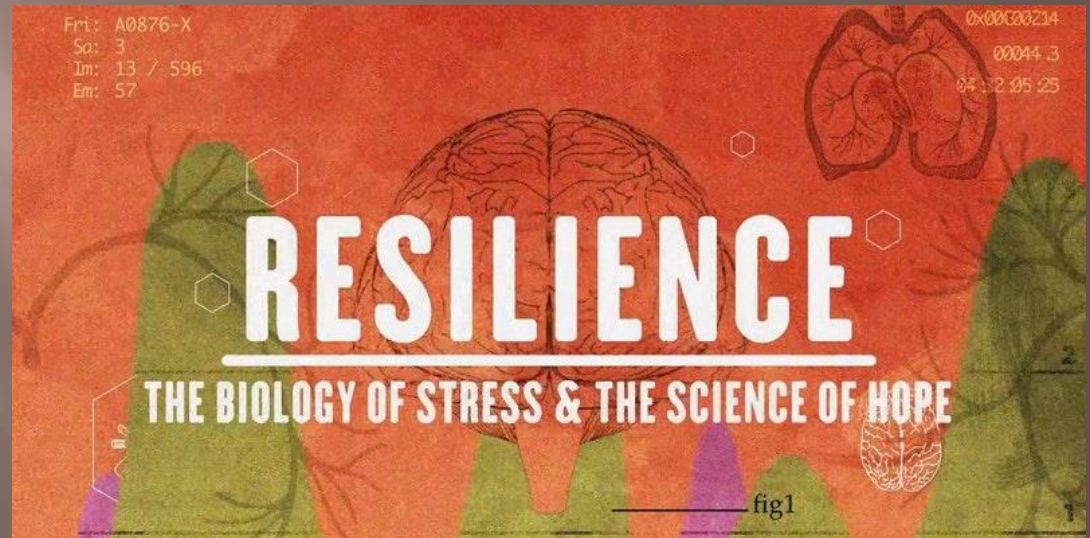
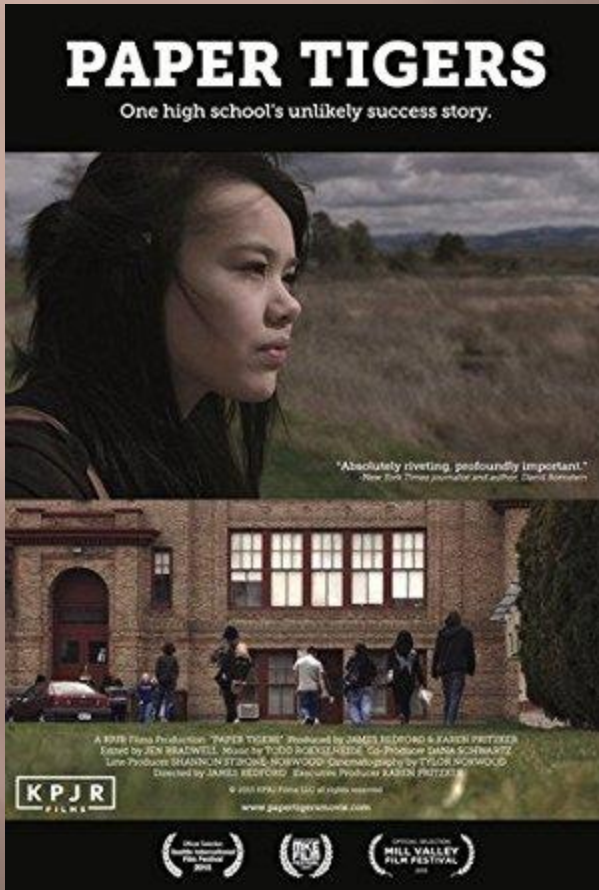
BUILDING RESILIENCY



Invest in Relationships



Raise Awareness



Connect with Others and Speak Up

- ▣ Address the Legislators



South Carolina
Joint Citizens & Legislative Committee on Children

- ▣ Address the Political Leaders

- ▣ Address the Grassroots Organization



- ▣ Create Coalitions

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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