

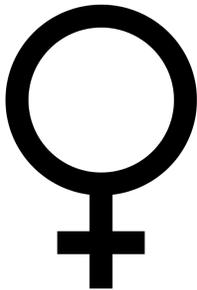
# CSSD Chronicle

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch  
Court Support Services Division  
Friday, March 13, 2015



## Bridgeport Juvenile Detention Center Girls Services Committee

*Editor's Note: This edition of the CSSD Chronicle was contributed by Patricia Nunez, Program Manager I*



The purpose of the Girls Services Committee is to ensure staff at the Bridgeport Juvenile Detention Center (BJDC) are given the necessary resources, materials, and support to develop and implement successful gender responsive services for the girls residing at the facility.

The pilot for the Girls Services Unit at BJDC began in October 2012.

(See [January 2013 CSSD Chronicle](#).) Since the first class of 12 graduated from the training, an additional 74 Bridgeport staff have completed the program as well as nine Bridgeport Board of Education teachers/administrators, and two interns. The pilot has been so successful that it has been replicated at the Hartford Detention Center (HDC).

A female juvenile is invited to attend every Girls Services Committee meeting, which is held in the BJDC cafeteria. The committee felt that it was important to have a female juvenile present at each meeting to receive feedback from a girl's perspective on services and activities within the detention center. Since juveniles are held in detention for a short amount of time (average length of stay is currently 12 days), the committee is able to meet with a variety of girls to obtain different viewpoints. The inclusion of a female juvenile has served the committee well and provided them with a number of excellent ideas!

One idea came from juvenile M.A. who suggested a *Girls Welcome Group*. Even though all juveniles who enter the center are given an initial orientation upon intake, followed by a formal orientation, M.A. suggested an orientation group just for girls. This group is facilitated by both staff and the girls in the

facility. The process gives the new girl an opportunity to get to know staff and other girls better, while empowering the current girls in the facility to take on leadership roles and responsibility.



Committee member Otilia Jorge and Food Services Assistant Ruth Rodriguez have played instrumental roles by creating several cooking workshops for the girls. First, the girls learned how to make chocolate chip cookies, and then they participated in a cupcake decorating class. These workshops brought all of the girls together in a positive, goal-oriented activity that allowed them to acquire new skills, including measuring, following directions, cooperating with



other girls in the group, as well as learning about the education required for a culinary degree. Jorge noted, "There was one particular moment during a cooking class where we wanted to make sure another girl who was not present had an opportunity to make a cupcake. So, we told the girls to save some ingredients for her. The girls carefully made sure they did not use up everything and put aside enough for the other girl. It was a very nice gesture."

The 31st Annual Governor's Care and Share Food Drive motivated the Girls Services Committee to orchestrate a food drive at BJDC. The girls made posters, reminded staff in the facility to donate, and decorated donation boxes which were throughout the facility. All the donations collected were given to the Daughters of Charity in Bridgeport who are experiencing a shortage of groceries that they provide to families. This community service project allowed the girls to give back to individuals who are less fortunate. The girls also learned to take pride in their community and be part of a positive solution.



March is Women's History Month and the Girls Services Committee is busy preparing activities and inviting guest speakers to celebrate and honor women in history, as well as in their own lives.

According to Keisha Henry, Deputy Superintendent, "Since the implementation of the Girls Services Unit, Bridgeport Detention has seen an increase in the girls uniting to work together. There have been fewer incidents between the girls and more collaboration. We have implemented new programs for the girls to teach them life skills that will help them grow and develop as young women."



**Girls Services Committee**

*(From L to R)*

- Dino Guerra, Deputy Superintendent
- Patricia Nunez, Program Manager
- John Petersen, Program & Services Supervisor
- Keisha Henry, Deputy Superintendent
- Shannon Patterson, Juvenile Detention Officer
- Kercy Charles, Juvenile Detention Officer
- Aida Rosario, Classification & Program Officer
- Otilia Jorge, Food Services Coordinator
- Kenneth Bush, Juvenile Detention Officer.

*Missing from photo:*

- Jesse Diaz, Juvenile Detention Officer
- Karl Alston, Deputy Dir./Interim Superintendent
- Jason Criscio, Deputy Superintendent

For more information on this program, please contact CSSD Program Manager I Patricia Nunez at [Patricia.Nunez@jud.ct.gov](mailto:Patricia.Nunez@jud.ct.gov)

*The CSSD Chronicle is a regular publication of information and news about the Court Support Services Division. Questions or comments on this edition, or suggestions for future articles, can be directed to [Linda.Grzeika@jud.ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Grzeika@jud.ct.gov)*