



# CSSD Chronicle



A regular publication of information and news about Court Support Services Division

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Thursday, June 5, 2008 Please share this with a colleague!

## **WATERBURY PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD TASK FORCE RECEIVED OUTSTANDING YOUTH PROGRAM AWARD FROM US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**BACKGROUND:** In 2003 Waterbury became a participant in the federally funded Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). The initiative seeks to build collaborative relationships with local law enforcement, probation and criminal justice agencies to work with offenders who have been convicted of violent crimes and those involving the use of firearms. The goal is to prevent the cycle of guns and violence from reoccurring in a community. PSN projects are currently located in New Haven, Waterbury, Bridgeport and Hartford. (*For background on PSN see 6/12/02 CSSD Chronicle*) In 2006, CSSD Executive Director Bill Carbone and other CSSD staff from Project Safe Neighborhood (PSN) Task Forces attended a national conference in Denver. Following that conference, the Waterbury PSN Task Force identified a goal of wanting to address juveniles, specifically 16/17 year olds, in a more proactive way.

**YOUTH OFFENDER INITIATIVE LAUNCHED:** The following year (2007) the Waterbury PSN Task Force began working closely with the States' Child Advocate, the Waterbury Adult Probation Office, the States Attorney office, the U.S. Attorneys Office, the Waterbury Police Department Youth Division, the Board of Education, and local community service providers. The group created a pilot program called the *Youth Offender Meeting Project* and Waterbury Probation identified 16-17 year old probation clients to participate in this new initiative. Waterbury Chief Probation Officer II John Criscuolo asked Adult Probation Officer Traci Lederer to supervise this special caseload as well as oversee the project. Traci was a strong supporter of the Project Safe Neighborhood. She brought 8 years of probation experience and a tremendous amount of enthusiasm to the job. Waterbury Probation Officers Keith Bullock and Aisha Elm also worked on the project and were instrumental in the success of this program.

**US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RECOGNITION:** In September 2007, Traci and other members of the Waterbury Project Safe Neighborhood Task Force received the Outstanding Youth Program award from the U.S. Department of Justice recognizing their work in creating the Youth Offender Meeting program.



*From left to right are Lt. Pat Deeley, Sr. Asst State Attorney Patrick Griffin, Waterbury Chief of Police Neil O'Leary, Craig Morford Acting Deputy Attorney General, Adult Probation Officer Traci Lederer, and Sgt. Frank Capozzi Waterbury Youth Squad receiving the Outstanding Youth Program Award in September 2007 from US Department of Justice.*

**YOUTH OFFENDER MEETING PROGRAM:** The program that was created is designed for 16 and 17 year old adjudicated youthful offenders and those students that have received long-term suspensions or are chronic discipline problems in school. It is a part of the larger Waterbury PSN initiative. The program has two parts. The first is a general meeting that stresses the ramifications of engaging in further offensive or criminal conduct. The second part of the program is a Resource Fair event. The goal is to bring community based services that work with youthful offenders and the YOs themselves together in one place and highlight these resources that can help to keep youth away from gangs, drugs and guns by offering other options.

**SUGGESTIONS? QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? CONCERNS? CONTACT US!**

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Treatment, educational, vocational and leisure resources in the greater Waterbury area are featured at the Resource Fair. Ex offenders also participate in these events by presenting talks on their experiences. The first Fair was held in April 2007. The third Fair was held in just last month at CT Junior Republic in Waterbury. (See pictures, side) Participants included The Department of Labor, Job Corp, Police Activities League (PAL), Boys/Girls Club, Catholic Family Charities, Naugatuck Valley Community College, Morris Foundation, the Waterbury YMCA, the Waterbury Department of Public Health and local Youth Services Board. Bridgeport Detention Center assisted by providing food for the event.

(Following are some pictures from the most recent YO Meeting Program Resource Fair held in Waterbury in April. #1: Sr. Asst State Attorney Patrick Griffin addresses participants; #2 Army National Guard offers a different kind of future; #3 A speaker who has been through the system talks with youngsters who are trying to stay out of it.)

#1



#2



#3



**NEW HAVEN “PROJECT SENTRY”: ANOTHER PSN YOUTH INITIATIVE** In a parallel effort to address youth and gun violence, New Haven, another Project Safe Neighborhood site, has also developed a youth diversionary meeting program called *Project Sentry*. As with the Waterbury effort, these meetings are designed to be less confrontational and build on the relationships between youth and probation in order to influence them to make better choices. The New Haven program began in early 2008 with a planning committee consisting of representatives from New Haven Adult and Juvenile Probation, U.S. Attorney Office, New Haven Police, and New Haven Board of Education.

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An Adult Parole Officer and Juvenile Parole Supervisor have recently joined the executive committee as well. New Haven Chief Probation Officer Leonard Jahad is one of the leaders of this effort.

*Project Sentry* meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Superior Court GA#23- New Haven. As in Waterbury, presentations are made by U.S. and State's Attorneys, probation, former offenders and service providers. Parents and law enforcement representatives are also invited to the meeting and have lent their support to the initiative. A 15 minute film produced by a Massachusetts group, 4peace, is shown to participants. This film chronicles a youth who makes a bad decision by possessing a firearm and is charged federally. Through this film, participants not only see the impact of carrying weapon through a lengthy jail sentence but also how this sentence impacts the family.

The *Project Sentry* effort has also been a resource for some additional assistance to probation in dealing with youthful offenders. The New Haven Board of Education, which participates in the *Project*, has identified a representative who assists probation officers with issues such as truancy, discipline and grades. In addition, linkages are being explored with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, an organization that specializes in matching and training volunteer professionals who work with young people.

**For further information on Waterbury's Youth Offender Program, contact Traci Leder at [traci.leder@jud.ct.gov](mailto:traci.leder@jud.ct.gov); contact Leonard Jahad for information on the New Haven initiative at [leonard.jahad@jud.ct.gov](mailto:leonard.jahad@jud.ct.gov).**

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