

Crime causation

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Crime Causation and Diversion CJA/374 September 16, 2012 Crime Causation and Diversion Juvenile diversion programs are geared toward helping first time offenders get on the right path and avoid prosecution. The focus of juvenile diversion programs is to fix the problem rather than the juvenile having a criminal record and is aimed at juveniles 12 to 17 years (Juvenile Diversion). The process gives juveniles the opportunity to stay out of the juvenile justice system, providing the juvenile stays with the program and all the steps required for completion.

This paper will discuss the juvenile intervention contract program and SAGA camp. There will also be a brief summary of a new program offering teen drivers a chance to correct a first time traffic citation. These programs have proven to be effective and beneficial to the area. Juvenile diversion program has services for juveniles who show behavior associated with being a delinquent and may result with the juvenile justice system taking action. These programs are an alternative to a criminal history, but also save the government money through prevention of housing a juvenile for a crime.

The juvenile diversion programs offer the juveniles a way to making a change before prosecution. These programs have worked to reduce juvenile crime and assist the juveniles' individually specifically by need. The juvenile intervention contract program with the San Diego Sheriff's Department in California offers juveniles a course of action instead of prosecution. This program is offered by each Detective assigned to a station prior to or in place of prosecution. The contract gives the juvenile specific guidelines to follow to stay on track.

The contract consists of the minor having no police contact in a negative way, stay away from illegal activity, follow parents and school rules, attendance at school, minimum of a C average in every class, 20 hours of community service, an essay of at least 500 words, report card, and drug or alcohol testing. The juvenile intervention contract gives the juvenile a date to complete the listed goals and failure to obey and obtain the rules can result in prosecution and the juvenile will no longer be eligible for the program. Sheriff's Adolescent Group Adventure (SAGA), provided camps for juveniles to build confidence and self-esteem. This camp has recently been discontinued because of budget cuts; however, is one of the best known diversions in the area. The one day camp was an outdoor challenge for juveniles to stimulate the juvenile mentally and physically. The camp offered group activities to develop teamwork and leadership while also offering individual activities. The individual activities offered personal growth for the juveniles at each juvenile's level of need. The goals of the camp were provide the opportunity for juveniles to succeed individually and as a part of a team.

SAGA's goals were leadership, self-esteem, trust, teamwork, courage, and communication. All of the goals were factors in every activity; activities included obstacle courses that assisted juveniles in getting over fear, trust, and to build courage. The course known as the Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience (COPE) was located at Camp Mataguay and ran once a month (Sheriff's Department Re-Opens Day Camp for At-Risk Youth, 2008). This course helped juveniles face their fears through communication and hard

work, which allowed juveniles to look within for the courage to conquer the course.

The camp was set up with the belief that if a juvenile faces these challenges it would help in proper decision making later. This camp was also part of a three day camp cancelled by funding called the Sheriff's Diversion Camp. The two camps had the same goal in mind. A recent program being offered in San Diego County in California is a chance for first time drivers with a minor traffic violation to work with a juvenile detective and avoiding a violation on the juvenile's record. When a juvenile is written a citation the local detective has the option to review the citation and contact the driver.

With the parents, juvenile, and detective working together a juvenile intervention contract is signed. After an agreement and signed contract the juvenile must follow the contract. The juvenile must also attend a course called smart start put on by law enforcement which teaches juveniles the truth on the dangers of driving. Once the agreement is fulfilled the citation is dismissed which clears the juvenile's traffic record. This is a onetime deal offered for first time drivers only for the juvenile's first traffic offense.

The juvenile intervention contract and camp program have both been effective, but with the cut on funding the camp is no longer offered and the juvenile intervention contract is the only one still in effect. It is effective in changes juveniles who choose to change and give the program a chance. The juvenile intervention contract assists parents and their child in finding the right steps to take to avoid prosecution. The contract gives the juvenile another chance to make the right choice and continue on without a criminal record.

SAGA and the juvenile intervention contract are vital in reducing juvenile crime. These programs give juveniles the skills to move on from the criminal behavior. These programs provide self-confidence, trust, and a new outlook for some. The diversion programs teach juveniles that crime is not the way while building trust with law enforcement officers. It doesn't work for every juvenile involved as some just do not want to change, but the reduction in juvenile crimes says it all, it is working to reduce crime. Programs designed to prevent delinquency have shown to be beneficial.

The programs rehabilitate and educate the juvenile to avoid prosecution on a first time offense. Without juvenile diversion programs most juveniles would not want to change or have an alternate way out of criminal activity. Law enforcement seeks to help teens who sometimes just need a little extra help finding his or her way in life without crime. If these juvenile diversion programs were not available the courts, law enforcement, and probation systems may see an increase in juvenile related crimes. This would amount to more costs for the court and local governments.

The programs objective is to prevent future crimes and juvenile crime rates. A good relationship between juveniles and law enforcement helps the juveniles trust law enforcement to reduce crime.

References Sheriff's Department Re-Opens Day Camp for At-Risk Youth. (2008, January). Retrieved from County News: <http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/dmpr/docs/newsletters/news0108.pdf> Juvenile Diversion. (n. d.). Retrieved from County of San Diego Community Action Partnership: <http://www.sdcounty.ca>

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