

LEWIS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT



Community Newsletter

Volume 2, Number 3



September 2022

400 Days.....

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December 2022

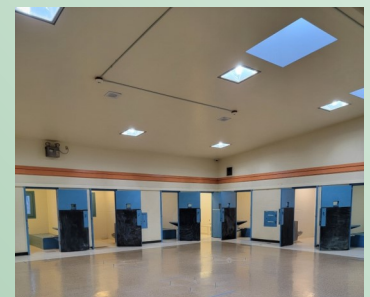
On August 3, 2021 the Lewis County Juvenile Detention center was temporarily vacated due to renovations. After 400 days of being closed, the detention facility is set to reopen tentatively on September 7, 2022.

The staff at the Lewis County Juvenile Detention Center spent the last year transporting youth to and from the Cowlitz County Juvenile Detention Center where the youth were housed. This was often a tedious job of trying to coordinate various transports when short staffed but they always managed.

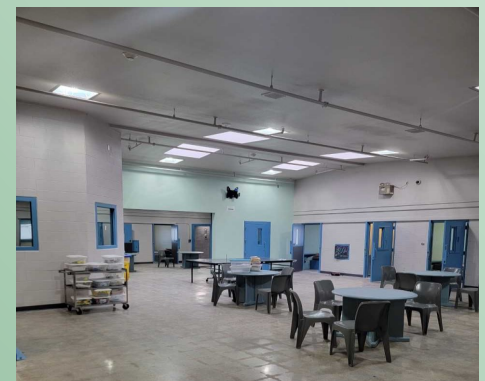
After a long process and a few delays, we are finally beginning our move back into our newly renovated facility! We have begun moving in some of our items and training staff on new systems in our new facility! We have been focusing on getting everything moved back in and organized. We will move our youth back in and begin implementing some of our new programming! Our staff have come up with some new exciting programming for our youth, including: cooking, life skills, crafts as well as restarting our painting program!

Our staff are excited to have a new facility and being able to offer our youth updated areas not just for housing but for recreation, school and programming. We are looking at new ways to work with our youth while being proactive in the rehabilitation process. We are excited to be able to interact with our youth again on a more regular basis.

- Vanessa Conwell, Lewis County Juvenile Detention Manager



Day Room area and B- Section prior to renovation



Day Room area and B- Section after renovation

Court Appointed Special Advocates

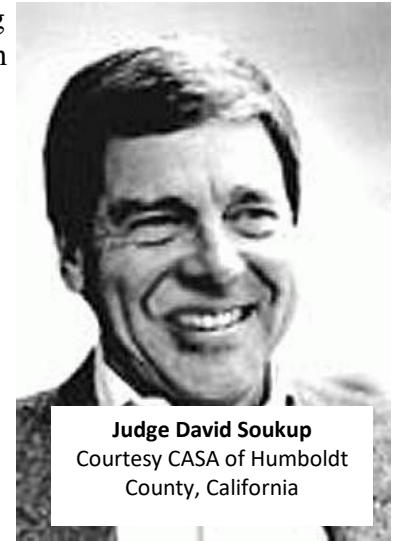
Where It All Started

The year was 1977 and Seattle, Washington was on the cusps of exciting changes. The Seattle Mariner's Baseball team joined the American League as an expansion team playing home games at the Kingdome. In the summer of 1977, Led Zeppelin entertained over 62,000 roaring fans with their hit "Stairway to Heaven." As exciting as that was, something else was brewing that would impact the entire country and generations to come.

In 1976, inside the courtroom of King County Judge Soukup sat a distressed mother, her court appointed attorney, a Department of Child Family Services (DSHS) social worker, and an attorney from the Attorney General's Office to represent the social worker. The social worker alleged probable child abuse of a three year old little girl. The information provided to the Judge was that the child had been treated at Harborview Medical Center for injuries sustained from being physically abused and the social worker believed it was necessary to remove the child from the care of her mother. The mother alleged that the child sustained the injuries by falling off of a swing. The mother also made an unsettling statement that she was no longer with her boyfriend and that he would no longer be around the child. Was it possible that the three year old child sustained the injuries by accident? Did the mother harm her own child? Why did the mother make such a statement about her former boyfriend? If the former boyfriend harmed the child, is the child now safe with just the mother? Is it going to be detrimental to remove the child from the only home she has ever know? What is best for the child?

The State of Washington through the representation of the social worker believed the court should side with them. The mother of the child adamantly believed the child was best with her. Judge Soukup would later go on to explain the torment these kind of decisions left him with. He needed someone to speak solely on behalf of the child; someone to advocate for what was best for that three year old little girl and other children like her. "There was nobody in the courtroom telling what were the real facts" (Seattle P-I) "I was consumed by the fact that I didn't have enough information about each child, and I just didn't know if I had done the very best job I could," he later stated (LA Times). Judge Soukup tapped social worker Carmine Ray-Bettineski to put together a program and he put out a call for volunteers. Judge Soukup suspected that four or five people would show up. Instead, 50 to 60 people appeared. "I knew I was onto something," he said (LA Times).

In 1977, Judge Soukup started the very first Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian Ad Litem program in the country. "Today, there are more than 76,000 advocates serving in nearly 1,000 state and local program offices nationwide, including Washington D.C. and the U.S. Virgin Islands. CASA programs across the country are known by several different names, including Guardian ad Litem, Child Advocates, and Voices for Children. Since the inception of CASA advocacy, volunteers have helped child victims of abuse and neglect find safe, permanent homes in which they can thrive" (nncasa.org).



Judge David Soukup
Courtesy CASA of Humboldt
County, California

Prosocial Summer Outings

Thanks to the hard work of Probation Officer Seth Foster and other staff, youth in the community got the opportunity to participate in numerous prosocial summer outings with staff and local community partners.

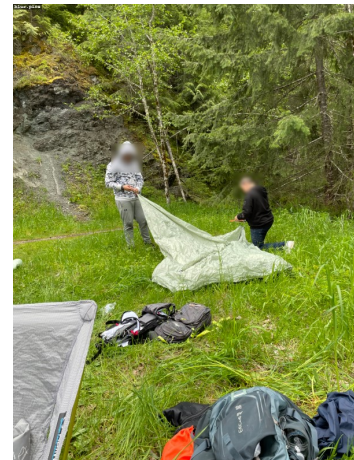


Elyssa Smiley, Seth Foster, Matthew Thuston
And Lee Montgomery

Cathedral Falls Hike

Youth explored a 4.1-mile out-and-back trail near Glenoma, Washington

They learned about forestry, water filtration and how to set up a shelter



Ride the Willapa

Youth and Juvenile Court staff trekked this 28.4-mile out-and-back trail on bicycles donated by a local business. Youth got to participate in this community event that they had never done before and loved it.



Water Safety Outing– Kayaking at Mayfield Lake

Drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional injury-related death for children ages 1 to 19 in the United States, but some children have a significantly higher chance of drowning than others. Teenage boys ages 15 to 19 are 10 times more likely to drown than girls, according to a July report published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. “We know that low socioeconomic neighborhoods have fewer resources,” said Quan, who is also a professor emeritus of pediatrics at the University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle. “These need to be addressed as a community issue.” She added, “About 70% of US drowning deaths in children 15 and under happen between May and August, the report said. This coincides with some of the warmest months of the year when many children are on school break. The time between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. are the most dangerous hours for drownings.”

Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury death for children in Washington. (WA State Dept. Of Health, Center for Health Statistics, 2002 Death Certificate Data). Drowning rates in Washington have steadily declined over the past 20 years. However, rates have historically been higher and are still higher than the national rate. (The Health of Washington State, WA State Dept. of Health, July 2002)

The Lewis County Juvenile Court in partnership with the Lewis County Sheriff’s Office and the Lewis County Drowning Prevention Coalition brought a limited number of youth to local areas of water to participate in water safety outings.

Detective Michael Mohr with the Lewis County Sheriff’s Office and staff from the Lewis County Juvenile Court accompanied youth onto the water via kayaks donated by a local business. Detective Michael Mohr is a certified Swift Water Rescue Technician, a certified Boating Officer, and a Search and Rescue Coordinator. All Lewis County Juvenile Court staff are certified in First Aid and CPR.



LCSO Det. Mohr



GAL Coordinator Nichole Davis
Probation Officer Dulce Cabrera



Youth and Staff Kayaking

“My first outing was Wolf Haven. It was pretty fun. I got to say what I enjoy doing. My second outing was the baseball game. I am not the biggest fan of sports but I had a lot of fun. Then I went kayaking which was the best outing so far. I made a few friends, which helped me. Now, my most recent outing was a fishing trip. It was fun but it turned into a mile long hike uphill. Not many fish were caught though, it was fun. With all the outings, I’ve gotten to know my group members better.”

- 13 year old (his/him)



Youth and staff went to the Onalaska HS and learned about their hatchery program and fish returns. Then went to Swafford Pond to catch bass and trout.



If you went to the Southwest Washington Fair this year, chances are that you saw us there!

Thanks to Probation Officer Lee Montgomery and CSO Jerry Elliott, the Juvenile Court had an informational booth set up at the fair under the grandstands. The booth included 2 photo backdrops that the two built. Over the course of the week, we had 419 people take photos at our booth! We gave out literature, magnets; people signed up for the Mentor program and expressed interest in the GAL program and in being a part of the Pro Social Outings Program!

- 2022 Summer Prosocial Outings**
- Cathedral Falls Hike
 - Willapa Trail Bike Ride
 - Wolf Haven
 - Ike Kinswa State Park Kayaking
 - Capital Forrest Mount Bike Ride
 - 2 Tacoma Rainier’s Baseball Games
 - Swafford Pond Fishing

Follow us on Instagram: @lcjcpocialoutings



Detention Officer Kristi Heckelsberg, CSO Jerry Elliott, Probation Manager Rickie Anders and Legal Assistant Elyssa Smiley posed with youth at the “grandfather tree.”



Meet the Team



Richard Sanchez

Hi there! My name is Richard Sanchez. I was born in Fresno, California and I am the youngest of three brothers. Unfortunately, I was only a couple of years old before my parents packed up and left the West Coast sunshine and headed North to settle down in Washington state. It's here that I've spent most of my life growing up. I enjoy the outdoors as much as anyone else, love cars, plinking around, and spend most of my days off fishing as much as I can for anything that will bite! I attended W.F West High School in Chehalis; graduated in 2011 and received an Associates Degree from Centralia College soon after. In 2016, I was hired as an On Call Detention Officer for Lewis County and two years later I made the leap and became a full time employee working for Juvenile Court. It's been four years since I made that decision and it's been well worth it every step of the way. From working alongside our awesome staff, to all the experiences and lessons you absorb building relationships with troubled youth, it's very rewarding to know your work can make a difference in a family's life. As a Detention Supervisor now, I want to keep building off of what I've learned thus far, continue to find new ways to reach our youth, and develop programs that will benefit those involved. I hope you follow us for the journey. Thanks for reading!

Interested in Joining the Team?

Apply online at:
<http://jobs.lewiscounty.gov>

Juvenile Detention Officer (Casual On-Call)		
Department	Superior Court - Juvenile Detention	Documents
Job Type	On Call	Job Description Juvenile Detention Officer Casual Job Posting
Pay Range	\$22.25/hr.	<input type="button" value="Apply Online"/>
Opens / Closes	Open until filled	
Notes	Employment standards are those posted in the job posting.	