

LEWIS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT



Community Newsletter

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Since August 2021, the Juvenile Court had been operating in three separate locations. The court is currently in two locations while the youth are being housed in the Cowlitz County Juvenile Detention facility. It has been a tremendous undertaking to keep the system operating smoothly and without potentially drastic mistakes; however, the staff at the Juvenile Court have risen above and beyond time and time again.

One of the many processes and tasks our Juvenile Court staff coordinate is bookings. During this period when the facility is being renovated, when law enforcement takes a youth into custody dispatch notifies the staff at the Lewis County Juvenile Detention that a transport is needed. Staff arrange to meet the arresting officer and juvenile at a designated location in order to transport the youth to Cowlitz County for holding. During the transport, the staff work to build rapport with the youth and to collect essential background information. The information that is collected is provided to Cowlitz County Detention, as well as the Probation Officers. Once Probation Officer Seth Foster is informed of a new intake, he starts coordinating the court process by notifying the Prosecutor's Office and the Superior Court that a youth has been arrested. Legal assistants organize the case into a file and make sure everything is correct and ready to go while Seth and others POs work to gather additional information, speak with parents, schools, or others who may be involved... Imagine a busy bee hive with bees working in sync with each other and that is the Juvenile Court. Without even being in the same buildings, the ebb and flow of daily duties moves rhythmically between each staff.

The ability to work independently and still be apart of a hive



Mission Statement

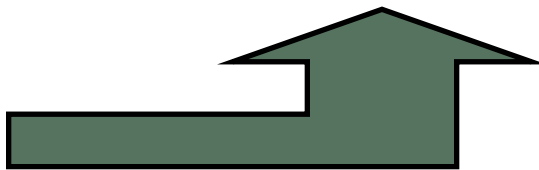
The Mission of the Lewis County Juvenile Court is to hold youth accountable, provide for community safety consistent with statutory mandates and to provide caring professional services to juveniles and their families, equipping them to become responsible citizens.

Renovation Underway



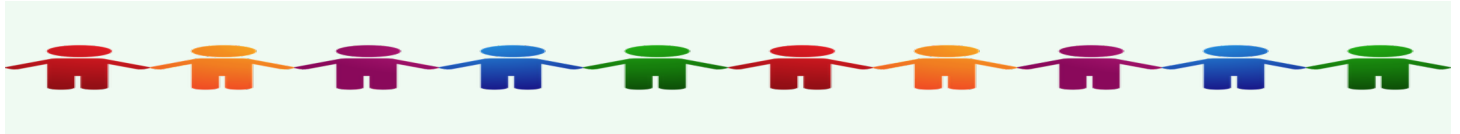
The Juvenile Court Renovation project is well underway and there are big changes that cannot be seen from the roadway. What was once a cement parking lot, landscaped with trees and green grass has now become the groundwork for the front of the Juvenile Court.

The center right is the groundwork for where the new courtroom will be built along with staff offices.



It is almost unrecognizable inside the building. The picture on the left is what the lobby used to structurally look like. The picture above is what that area currently looks like.

The current plan is to have Detention back up and running this summer!



The Mary Ellen Wilson Case



Her name was Mary Ellen Wilson and her case changed how abused and neglected children were protected in the United States. At first glance, you might see a frail toddler who was around the age of five but records reveal that Mary Ellen Wilson was actually nine years of age but due to the abuse and malnourishment, she was half the size she should have been. In the mid 1800s, children were considered chattel (a personal property) and could be handled however the owner decided fit. Unfortunately for many children, this meant being abused and neglected. According to stmuscholars.org, a missionary named Etta Wheeler had heard about Mary's plight and attempted to intervene but gained little to no movement. It wasn't until Henry Burgh, a well-known diplomat famous for being the founder of *The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, got involved that the case drew attention and she was removed from the case of her guardians. Mary Ellen Wilson's case made it all the way into court where she testified:

"My name is Mary Ellen...I have no recollection of ever having been kissed and I have never been kissed by momma. I have never been taken on mommas lap...I never dared speak to anybody, because if I did I would get whipped; I have never had any more clothing than I have on at present; I have seen stockings and other clothes in our room, but I am not allowed to put them on; whenever momma went out, I was locked up in the bed-room;...I don't know for what I was whipped; momma never said anything when she whipped me; I do not want to go back to live with momma because she beats me so."



After the legal battle, Henry Burgh founded the *The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPPC)* which eventually led to the development of Child Protective Services (CPS).

In an overburdened social welfare system, abused and neglected children often slip through the cracks. That's where GAL volunteers like you can help make a difference. Appointed by a Family Court Commissioner/Judge, GAL volunteers typically handle one case at a time until the child is placed in a safe, permanent home. Other people come and go in the child's life, but their GAL volunteer provides a constant presence the child needs to thrive and move on with their life. Volunteers start by getting to know everyone in that child's life: parents and relatives, foster parents, teachers, medical professionals, attorneys, social workers and others. They use the information they gather to inform judges and others of what the child needs are and recommend what will be the best permanent home for them.

You do not have to be a lawyer or social worker to be a volunteer. We welcome people from all walks of life. We are simply looking for people who care about children and have common sense. As a volunteer, you will be thoroughly trained and well supported by professional staff to help you through each case. You must pass a background check (State, Federal, CPS and Sex Offender History), participate in a 30-hour pre-service training course and agree to stay with a case until it is closed (we ask for a 2 year commitment).

For more information on how you can help abused and neglected children, go to lewiscountygala.org

The Bonnie Project Work Crew

On February 12, 2022, Community Service Officer Jerry Elliott and Probation Officer Lee Montgomery helped lead a work crew for youth out in the town of Pe Ell. Jerry has a special way of making each work crew a unique day, but this one was destined to be one for the books.

Many years ago, Lee Montgomery's own mother used to lead the Juvenile Court work crews. Bonnie Montgomery built up a reputation of expecting nothing but hard work and exceptional attitudes from the youth she worked with. She was also known for her heroic volunteerism through her endless hours of mowing lawns, trimming rose bushes, organizing town clean-ups and more. In 2020, Bonnie passed away but her legacy has lived on through the Bonnie Project.

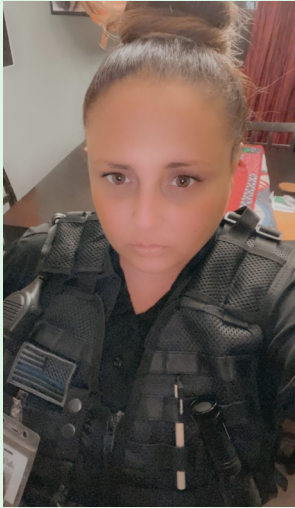
After a day of work, Jerry reported, "This was a work crew that actually had a good response and we had 7 young men show. We had a total of 5 youth who were looking at their final 8 hours of which 4 of them completed them. Now we can start to add a few new faces to work crew. We headed to Pe Ell for this outing. We left Spiffy's parking lot and drove to Pe Ell by going into Winlock and over King Hill into the Boisfort Valley. While coming down King Hill, I pulled into a gate and pointed out a very old stump to the boys. It was this stump that back in 1979 my life was spared by God in a rollover accident in my truck that ended in me hitting that stump and crushing my truck. I should have been killed in reality. Here we had a great talk about life and death and how it impacts all of us. Once in Pe Ell, we came alongside the "Bonnie Project" and did general yard work for a senior citizen. Our own Lee Montgomery leads the "Bonnie Project" as it is formed in honor of his late mother; they do community projects. Lee, two others, and our youth did a great job of making this home look nice. It was fun for the youth to be introduced to the home owner by Lee and for the boys to receive her thanks. We cleaned gutters, picked up branches and raked a ton of leaves, hauling them by wheel barrow and truck to a massive pile. We had a really good conversation about what it would be like to be older and have to rely on others for simple everyday tasks in life. We talked about ways that each of us could help out someone each youth knows that are older. I was really impressed with the guys during this talk as all of them were in the conversation and made good comments. Prior to leaving, Lee shared with the group about various job opportunities that they could do in the field of landscaping and home maintenance. Once we finished, we had lunch up at the town center at the old Army tank. We again had another really good conversation about that tank and wars and those who have fought in them. I was further impressed with these 7 as I feel they actually built some good friendships and showed respect to each other. I once again never heard any of these boys use foul language. I think the youth are really starting to understand from crew to crew that foul language is a sign of shallowness and a lack of smarts. All in all it was a good day."



THE BONNIE PROJECT

If you see something, Do something!

Meet the Team



Kristi Heckelsberg

My name is Kristi. I was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY and have lived in Washington since 2017. In 2007, I joined the U.S. Army as a military police officer and served for 8 years. In 2018, I graduated Purdue Global University with a Bachelor's of Science in Criminal Justice. I have experience as a high school security officer and I'm certified through the National Association of School Resource Officers. More recently I have worked as a behavioral interventionist specialist for a girls group home which gave me experience with Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for troubled youth. With my military and educational background I will deliver confidence, passion and knowledge to enable each juvenile to reach his or her full potential.

Several months ago I started as a casual detention officer for Lewis County Juvenile Detention and recently went to permanent part time. I really enjoy working with youth and being part of a great team of people committed to making a difference in the community. I have now accepted a full time Juvenile Detention Officer position, and I look forward to both personal and professional development as we move forward and get started in our new facility!

Interested in Joining the Team?

Apply online at:
<http://>

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.	

jobs.lewiscounty.gov