

# SANTA CLARA COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COURT

## OUR MISSION AND VISION

Presented by Judge Patrick Tondreau  
Supervising Judge  
Juvenile Justice Court

# Why Juvenile Justice Court?

- 2009 Superior Court unanimously changed title from Delinquency to Juvenile Justice
- Recognition that adolescents are not simply small adults but have distinct developmental features
- Children in both dependency and delinquency systems have similar histories

- Children are often moving from being victimized to being victimizers
- We cannot categorize according to one moment in time: must address underlying causes and conditions that bring them to our court
- The term Delinquency has historically carried a narrow and negative connotation reinforcing the view of juvenile court as merely the place to deal with young criminals
- The role of Juvenile Judges has expanded to that of being a therapeutic agent rather than simply relying on the skills and resources of others.

# Unique Role of Juvenile Judges

- W&I 202 and Standards for Judicial Administration:
  1. Primary oversight function of the juvenile system
  2. Required to establish system performance
  3. Investigate and determine availability of prevention, intervention and treatment services
  4. Exercise leadership in the development and maintenance of permanent programs of interagency cooperation

# LOOK UPSTREAM

- Juvenile Justice is about bringing a broad sense of justice to minors and their families
- This broad mission requires us to intervene with families before they get to the Courthouse
- Prevent entry into our system;
- Prevent further penetration into our system
- If they get to the Courthouse: DO IT RIGHT

# MODEL COURTS PROGRAM

- Est. 1997 by the NCJFCJ
- Santa Clara County Dependency one of two in California; began 1997
- Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice one of eight in country; only one in Calif., largest metro county; joined 2009
- Able to join because of funding obtained by Congressman Mike Honda

# AN ASPIRATION, NOT A DESIGNATION

- Agree to continual self-assessment and commitment to adopt best practices
- Model Courts Project does an assessment of your court, brings technical advisors, helps set and implement plans
- Visit other Model Court to steal their ideas and programs: Austin, Texas
- Attend Annual All-sites conference: Louisville, Kentucky

# Four goals for 2010

- 1. Research and discuss the use of “Lead Agency” Model in Santa Clara County
  - a. concurrent jurisdiction between DFCS and Probation on crossover youth
  - b. 11 counties partially or fully adopt
  - c. Currently use “on hold” which terminates DFCS services
  - d. Net widening vs. earlier effective intervention



- 2. Ensure crime victims have meaningful access to all phases of juvenile court process
- 3. Engage school systems in a more robust fashion: JCEP, Special Committee for Children in Juvenile Court, ad hoc etc. not enough
- 4. Gather, use and share data more effectively to evaluate populations of youth and outcomes

# How do we create the best, lasting juvenile justice court?

- Four core principles that create the ability to institutionalize positive change:
  1. We have a shared vision
  2. We are accountable for what we do
  3. We work together collaboratively
  4. Mutual trust leads to mutual influence

# MGPTF: an important collaboration with juvenile court

- Look upstream
- Break the cycle of violence and foster hope
- Court shares the 5 guiding principles of MGPTF:
  - 1) we value our youth
  - 2) we cannot arrest our way out
  - 3) we will address this challenge with a community response
  - 4) we will hold our youth accountable
  - 5) we will not give up on any youth

- INTERAGENCY COLLABORATIVE
- Created two transition centers for youth SARC and MARC
- Serves courts philosophy of serving youth in the least restrictive environment
- Helps process out of custody citations
  - this led to a 2 year study of timelines between date of citation and first court appearance by the JJSC Case Systems Workgroup: justice delayed is justice denied

# The Story of Sarah

- “Minor suffers from notable emotional disturbance with elements of insecurity and immaturity, self-valuation doubts, instability and polarity involving intimate relationships, self-injurious behaviors, mood reactivity which in their combination seem to point in the direction of a borderline personality dysfunction.....”

- ....dating back to 1996, the minor has been referred to CPS 12 times for general neglect, caretaker absence, severe neglect, substantial risk and emotional abuse...exposed to serious acts of violence in the home and threatened to kill her mother and her mother's boyfriend...mother has extensive substance abuse, drug use and sales. suffers from seizures...biological father's whereabouts unknown....minor has been housed in various group homes....

- “APPEARING BEFORE THE COURT TODAY FOR DISPOSITION IS 14 YEAR OLD SARAH .....

- “From the waters of the womb, to the arms of the caregivers, to the walls of the family home, when the shelters in which we harbor our children are inadequate or destructive, the final shelter our society provides will often be the cement walls of a prison cell.”



# Our Shared Vision

- Every child and every family in our community is a national treasure
- And we will never, ever give up on them.