

The First Report to the Nation on Youth Courts and Teen Courts

**The 15 Year Update
1993 to 2008**



**Written, compiled
and researched by**

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and

Jill Beres



We don't have to share beliefs – just a planet.



Cover by Amanda Parker

**REPORT TO THE NATION
1993 to 2008**

The Global Youth Justice Movement

**15 Year Update on
Youth Courts and Teen Courts**

**Written and Researched by
Scott B. Peterson & Jill Beres**

Edited by Jennifer Batton & Ed Krauss

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“The Global Youth Justice Movement”

1993 to 2008

This international report covers youth courts, also referred to as teen courts, peer courts, student courts and peer panels.

The authors would like to thank the following individuals for their contribution to the field:

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What Are Youth Courts?

Youth courts, also known as teen courts, peer courts, or student courts, are juvenile justice programs in which young people are sentenced by their peers. Youth courts are established and administered in a wide variety of ways, but most youth courts are used as a sentencing option for first time offenders aged eleven to seventeen who are charged with misdemeanor nonviolent offenses. In the majority of youth courts, the offender has acknowledged his or her guilt and participates in a youth court voluntarily, rather than going through the more formal, traditional juvenile justice procedures.

Youth courts differ from other juvenile justice programs because they involve other young people in the process, especially in determining the offender's sanction. For example, a peer jury may assign an offender to a combination of community service, conflict resolution training, restitution, jury duty, and/or educational workshops. Depending on the model used, young people may serve as jurors, prosecuting attorneys, defense attorneys, bailiffs, clerks, and even judges.

Since youth courts are developed in local communities, and by local communities, there is no cookie-cutter approach to the structure of youth court programs. However, here are some common models that youth courts employ.

The **Adult Judge Model** employs an adult judge to rule on courtroom procedure and clarify legal terminology. Youth volunteers serve as defense and prosecuting attorneys and as jurors. Young people may also serve as bailiff and clerk. This is the most common model.

The **Youth Judge Model** is similar to the Adult Judge Model, except that a juvenile serves as judge, usually after a length of service as a youth court attorney.

The **Peer Jury Model** employs a panel of teen jurors who question the youth offender directly. No defense or prosecuting attorney is employed. The judge is usually an adult volunteer.

The **Tribunal Model** has no peer jury. Instead, the prosecuting and defense attorneys present cases to a juvenile judge who determines the sentence.

Regardless of the model employed, most youth courts are based in the juvenile justice system or in a community setting. The most common agencies operating or administering youth court programs are juvenile courts and private nonprofit organizations (29% each). The next most common agencies are law enforcement agencies and juvenile probation departments (17 % each). Schools are the operating agencies for about 10 percent of youth courts while a variety of other agencies (e.g. city government, the administrative office of the court) are less commonly the operating agency.

Why Do We Need Youth Courts?

Over the past two decades, hundreds of communities chose to establish a youth court because they offer a positive alternative to traditional juvenile justice and school disciplinary procedures. Additionally, youth courts:

- Serve as a prevention and early intervention program;
- Hold juvenile offenders accountable for their actions;
- Provide another option on the continuum of services available to youth;
- Promote restorative justice principles;
- Educate youth about the legal system;
- Offer an opportunity for young people to connect positively with adults and youth from their community; and
- Encourage and teach civic responsibility.

Youth courts empower youth to be active participants in community problem solving, and they foster important values, attitudes, and beliefs related to the implementation and execution of the justice system.

The 1970's: Communities Search For A New Approach To Address Juvenile Delinquency

The modern youth court concept began in the early 1970's, when a small number of local communities began to experiment with a formalized structure of peer justice. In an effort to provide a more effective response to juveniles who exhibited delinquent behavior, many communities began to establish courts designed to hold juvenile offenders accountable as well as to educate them on the impact of their behavior on themselves and their communities.

It is difficult to verify the date of the establishment of the first youth court due to conflicting accounts from communities across the United States. There is, however, evidence that one of the earliest known youth courts was the Grand Prairie Teen Court in Grand Prairie, Texas, established in 1976.

Sharing the same longevity is the Grand Prairie Teen Court in Texas, the Town of Horseheads Youth Court in New York, was established in July 1976 and was based on the model in use in Ithaca New York. The court in Ithaca ended operation years ago, making the Horseheads court the oldest in the state. The Town of Horseheads Youth Court Program is a delinquency prevention and alternative sanction program, patterned after the family court process. The program's primary goal is to prevent juvenile offenders ages 7-15 from being sent to family court.

In February 2001, the Illinois Youth Court Association conducted a survey of all the youth courts in the state. Results revealed that the oldest reported youth court in Illinois is the Naperville Peer Jury, which began in 1972.

All of these early youth court programs represented a new approach to dealing with young delinquent offenders. It is not so important which community established the first youth court or teen court program. It is important they continue to evolve if and when new program elements are determined to be more effective in reducing juvenile delinquency and preventing it in the first place.

The 1980's: Grassroots Efforts Lead To the Early Establishment of Several Dozen Local Youth Court Programs

During the 1980's, support for youth courts began to grow and the number began to increase. Also, juvenile justice professionals and youth court advocates began to promote the youth court concept as a positive alternative to traditional juvenile justice and school disciplinary procedures. These efforts to establish youth courts at the local level represented a grassroots movement and led to important advances in the movement. Still, at this point, there was no single central linking organization helping to connect local youth court programs to one another, or to help advance the movement.

In 1985 a federal desegregation order led to the creation of a magnet school in Kansas City, Missouri. This magnet school became one of the earliest school-based youth court programs. In 1987, the school began collaborating with bar associations and two local law schools. The result of this collaboration was a curriculum in law, which included a variety of law courses, and a teacher with a law degree who created the School Court Program. This program was offered as an elective course for students in grades 10-12. School Court classes were designed to train students to fill the court officer roles in a school-based youth court program while also being introduced to concepts, ideals, and philosophies of

the criminal justice system. After 11 weeks of training, the School Court accepted referrals of students who had committed violations of the school's Student Code of Conduct. Respondents voluntarily accepted School Court referral as an alternative to traditional disciplinary action. Respondents received bench trials (no jury) in closed hearings that preserved confidentiality. School Court had many benefits. Students enrolled in the course learned about the justice system through hands-on experience while acquiring analytical and speaking skills. Respondents reported that they felt that they had been truly heard by their peers and had been treated fairly. This attitude was supported by the fact that after the School Court's first year, approximately 40 percent of students enrolled in the class had appeared before the School Court as a defendant the previous year.

Also in 1987, the Young Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association promoted youth courts in a document entitled *Teen Court: Preventing Recidivism of Teenage Crime and Drug Abuse*.

The Early 1990's: Local Youth Court Programs Proliferate And Grassroots Efforts Spread Across State Lines

By the very early 1990's there were approximately 50 local youth courts, and local, regional, and state efforts to establish more were continuing to increase in almost every geographic area of the United States. The national youth court movement was beginning to gain momentum. Following are some of the most important events during the early 1990's:

1990

Texas Becomes First State to Establish a Statewide Youth Court Association

The Teen Court Association of Texas (TCAT) was created when the coordinators of eighteen teen court programs from around the State of Texas met and voted unanimously to establish a statewide organization for youth courts. Today there are approximately 70 teen courts in Texas, and TCAT membership has expanded to include more than sixty teen court programs. For more information about teen courts in the State of Texas and/or the Teen Court Association of Texas, visit the web site at www.texasteencourt.com.

1991

Groundbreaking Article on Youth Courts Appears in Popular Criminal Justice Journal

This article entitled "*Teen Court – Is It an Effective Alternative to Traditional Sanctions?*" was published in the *Journal for Juvenile Justice and Detention Services* and was one of the very first articles about youth courts ever published. The article provides an analysis of an evaluation of the teen court program in Arlington, Texas. The hypothesis tested in this evaluation was that young offenders respond more positively when judged by their peers and required to serve the community constructively than when judged and sentenced in the traditional fashion. The results of the evaluation revealed that teen court was more effective than the traditional processing of juveniles for 16-year-old white boys. It was not as effective for girls. These findings were significant because 16-year-old white boys were the

largest group of teen court clients. Despite many qualifications, the evaluation revealed that for its core clientele the teen court program in Arlington was superior at deterring teens from further criminal activities. This article is available through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) at www.ncjrs.gov. Search for NCJ Number 166154.

1992

Youth Courts Promoted as a Law-Related Education Program

Recognizing the educational value of youth courts, the National Law-Related Education Resource Center at the American Bar Association (ABA) began to promote youth court as a law-related education (LRE) program in 1992. The ABA also created a national youth court directory and provided networking resources to anyone interested in developing a youth court program. This directory served as a much needed resource in the youth services community.

Kentucky Leads the Way in Establishing Youth Courts as a Law-Related Education Program

In 1992, Kentucky Supreme Court Justice Robert F. Stephens helped to establish youth courts in his state through the Administrative Office of the Courts' law-related education program. The foundation for law-related education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky was laid when the Kentucky Court of Justice began its Law-Related Education Initiative in 1990. As a result, the Administrative Office of the Courts formed the Division of Law Related Education under the Department of Juvenile Services to provide training programs on the court system to educators, judges, attorneys, police officers, and juvenile justice professionals statewide.

Law-related education (LRE) is designed to equip non-lawyers with knowledge and skills pertaining to the law, the legal process, the legal system, and the fundamental principles and values on which these are based. Youth courts and law-related education share many goals. Each youth court case teaches both the youth volunteers and the youth respondents about the rules or laws that were broken, the consequences of the offenses, and how due process is observed by court procedure. In addition, the volunteers and respondents learn about key LRE concepts of justice, power, equality, property, and liberty. In short, youth courts offer a uniquely experiential approach to LRE.

1993

North Carolina Passes Youth Court Legislation

This legislation established three pilot youth court programs. For more information about state youth and teen court legislation see *An Update on Teen Court Legislation* by Michelle E. Heward. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

1994

First Ever National Survey of Youth Courts Conducted

This survey funded by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration and conducted by the Council of State Governments and the American Probation and Parole Association was designed to assess the location of youth court programs and to identify their operational models. The survey found that 78 programs were operating across the United States in 1994. The information gathered from this survey served as the foundation for the seminal publication on youth courts entitled *Peer Justice and Youth Empowerment: An Implementation Guide for Teen Court Programs*. For more information on this document see below “1996 – Guide for Youth Court Practitioners is Published”.

1995

The Young Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association Passes Resolution in Support of Youth Courts

The Young Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association (ABA) was instrumental in encouraging the ABA to support youth courts. On August 9, 1995 the ABA House of Delegates adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the ABA encourages state and territorial legislatures, court systems, and bar associations to support and assist in the formation and expansion of diversionary programs, known as Youth Courts, where juvenile participants, under supervision of volunteer attorneys and advisory staff, act as judges, jurors, clerks, bailiffs, and counsel for first time juvenile offenders who are charged with misdemeanors and consent to the program.” Since then, bar associations, bar foundations, and young lawyer affiliates have been instrumental in establishing, supporting, and promoting youth courts.

1996

Guide for Youth Court Practitioners is Published

The American Probation and Parole Association developed and published *Peer Justice and Youth Empowerment: An Implementation Guide for Teen Court Programs* to provide program organizers with baseline information on developing, implementing, and enhancing teen court programs within their jurisdictions. Rather than endorsing one particular model of teen court, this manual provides program organizers and potential stakeholders with a general overview of issues to consider and guides them through a decision making process for the implementation of a teen court program that fits local needs. Sample forms and other helpful resources also are included as supplemental materials. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

Colonie Youth Court Program Featured in the National *Journal for Juvenile Justice and Detention Services*

This article, entitled “*Youth Court: The Colonie, New York Experience*”, outlines the rationale for a youth court program and describes the successful experience of the Colonie Youth Court Program in Colonie, New York. This article is available through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) at www.ncjrs.gov. Search for NCJ Number 164675. Scott Peterson, who was the founding director of the Colonie Youth Court in New York in 1993 would later go on to leading a national and international movement from 1997 to 2008 that included more than One Hundred (100) Youth Court and Teen Court projects and programs that solidified the status of this program as a viable Juvenile Justice Program to include being the author of this ground breaking report.

1997 – 2008: A Decade of Growth That Led to the Emergence of a National Youth Court Movement

By the late 1990's it was clear that a national youth court movement had emerged. Since the 1970's, the number of youth courts had proliferated; the federal government began to take note of the promise and success of youth courts; a national web site dedicated to youth courts had been created; youth court training and technical assistance was available; and the number of state youth court associations and networking groups reached 21. Youth courts had evolved from a grassroots response to a juvenile and criminal justice problem to a major national movement dedicated to empowering youth and strengthening families and communities.

The following pages contain major highlights from the youth court movement between 1997–2008. Some of the highlights include major conferences; publications designed to advance the youth court field; resolutions passed in support of youth courts; training and technical assistance events; and community service activities in which youth courts have participated. These highlights do not encompass the entire history of the youth court movement during this decade, however, they do provide significant insight into the creation, development, and institutionalization of youth courts in this nation's juvenile and criminal justice systems.

1997

United States Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Plans Large Scale Youth Court Initiative that thrived over the next decade and resulted in the largest growth period of Youth Courts and Teen Courts in History in America !

Based on the success of the first national survey of youth courts conducted in 1994, the United States Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) announced a plan for a large scale initiative to support state and local youth court efforts. To spearhead this national effort, Deborah J. Daniels, former Assistant Attorney General of the Justice Department's Office of Justice Programs and OJJDP Administrator Shay Bilchik hired Scott Peterson, a local youth court director from Colonie, New York to oversee and develop the federal youth court initiative.

West Virginia Passes Legislation in Support of Youth Courts

For more information about state youth and teen court legislation see *An Update on Teen Court Legislation* by Michelle E. Heward. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

1998

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Becomes Lead Federal Agency on National Youth Court Initiative

Since the federal government announced its plan to support youth courts in 1997, the federal youth court initiative was administered by the Council for State Government (CSG) and the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA), with continuing support from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration. In addition, at various times, other federal agencies provided support to the federal youth court initiative including the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. In 1998 the United States Justice Department's OJJDP became the lead federal agency funding and supporting the federal youth court initiative.

First Satellite Videoconference on Youth Courts Broadcast

This videoconference, entitled "Youth Courts: A National Movement", was produced by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The broadcast informed participants of the advantages of using youth courts in a system of graduated sanctions; identified effective practices for youth court implementation; and shared information about national resources to support youth court programs. This broadcast can be accessed online at www.youthcourt.net by clicking on Online Training on the left side of the homepage.

Federal Youth Court Program is Created

Building on the success of the federal youth court initiative, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), in collaboration with the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, created the Federal Youth Court Program with funding from OJJDP's Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG) Program. As part of the Federal Youth Court Program, the National Youth Court Center (NYCC) was established at the American Probation and Parole Association in Lexington, Kentucky. The primary functions of the NYCC include serving as an information clearinghouse, providing training and technical assistance, and developing resource materials for youth court programs. The NYCC served as a central point of contact for youth court programs and provides training, technical assistance, and resource materials to existing and developing youth courts. Scott Peterson would especially like to thank Tracy Mullins and Carl Wicklund for their work on this project and for supporting the Youth Court and Teen Court Movement here in America and around the Globe.

1998-1999

Urban Institute Conducts National Survey of Youth Court Programs

Since the first national survey funded by the Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and conducted in 1994, youth court practitioners and researchers began to recognize the need for additional research to validate the effectiveness of youth court programs. In addition, the number of youth courts across the country had grown from about 50 in 1993 to over 1,200

in 2007. In order to better support this growing community, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention commissioned the Urban Institute in Washington, DC to conduct a national survey of youth court programs.

The survey, known as the Evaluation of Teen Courts (ETC) Project, studied youth courts in four states: Alaska, Arizona, Maryland, and Missouri. Researchers measured pre-court attitudes and post-court recidivism among more than 500 juveniles referred to youth court for non-violent offenses such as shoplifting and vandalism. The study compared recidivism outcomes for youth court defendants with outcomes for youth handled by the regular juvenile justice system. The first phase of the survey was to identify programs that used a range of court models, represented a cross-section of existent youth court programs, and were willing to participate in an evaluation. In the next phase, the Urban Institute conducted a three-year evaluation of the Anchorage Youth Court in Anchorage, Alaska; the teen courts operated by the Arizona Superior Court; the Montgomery County Teen Court in Rockville, Maryland; and the Independence Youth Court in Independence, Missouri. The results of the survey were published in April 2002 as a research report entitled *The Impact of Teen Court on Young Offenders*. For more information on this research report see page 19. Scott Peterson would especially like to thank Dr. Jeffrey Butts for his work on this project and for supporting the Youth Court and Teen Court Movement here in America and around the Globe.

1999

World's Largest Web Site Dedicated to Youth Courts is Created

www.youthcourt.net was created by the federal government and was the first ever national web site dedicated to youth courts. It is an online repository for a vast array of relevant information and resources. While information on the web site changes daily, the following provides an overview of some of the major features of the web site:

- National Association of Youth Courts, Inc. Information
- Youth Courts across America
- Publications
- Resources
- Special Events
- Newsletter
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Online Training
- New Coordinators
- Youth Volunteer Resources

Additionally, from the navigation bar at the top of the homepage, visitors can find: information on Youth Courts in the News, as well as Youth Court Facts and Stats. Visitors also can subscribe to the National Association of Youth Courts E-update.

This E-update is a monthly communiqué on youth courts and related issues.

National Youth Court Conference is Held in Anchorage, Alaska in 1999

In 1999, the United States Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Bureau of Justice Assistance sponsored a national youth court conference in Anchorage, Alaska. Over 360 youth and adults from Alaska and twenty-two other states attended. Speakers included Sharon Leon, John Wilson and Scott Peterson among many others. Programs included national speakers, a mock trial, informational panels, and a discussion of different youth court models. (*information courtesy of Lisa Konecky, Program Coordinator, Mat-Su Youth Court, Wasilla, Alaska*)

2000

American Bar Association Publishes Technical Assistance Bulletin on Youth Court Issue

In 2000, the American Bar Association, Division for Public Education developed and published Technical Assistance Bulletin #17 entitled "*Youth Court: A National Movement*". This bulletin provides readers with an overview of youth courts; explains their connection and positive contribution to law-related education; profiles the support of the legal profession; and provides resources for the creation and enhancement of youth courts. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

National Youth Court Guidelines Released

This document was designed to give youth courts direction for developing and operating effective programs for the ultimate purpose of increasing program accountability and integrity of the youth court field. Each chapter begins with a brief overview of the guidelines that are recommended for that particular program area. Afterwards, each guideline is discussed in more detail. A rationale for each guideline and tips for implementation are included. At the conclusion of each chapter, there is a section that identifies some outcomes youth court programs might reasonably expect if they adhere to the recommendations made. Guidelines have been developed in the following program areas: program planning and community mobilization; program staffing and funding; legal issues; identified respondent population and referral process; program services and sentencing options; volunteer recruitment and management; volunteer training; youth court operations and case management; and program evaluation. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

United States Chief Justice Visits Teen Court in Indiana

The Honorable William Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, discussed teen court with the grandfather of a Michigan City, Indiana Teen Court volunteer. (*information courtesy of Bonita Schaaf, Coordinator, Michigan City Teen Court, Michigan City, Indiana*)

Bulletin Provides Overview of Teen Courts and Summarizes Evaluation Literature

In October 2000 the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention published a Bulletin entitled *Teen Courts: A Focus on Research*. This Bulletin provides an overview of teen court characteristics

and implementation challenges, based on information obtained from the first national survey of teen courts conducted by the Urban Institute in 1998-1999. The information in this Bulletin summarizes evaluation literature on teen courts, and serves as an interim report on the first phase of the Evaluation of Teen Courts Project. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

First Ever Federally Sponsored National Conference on Youth Courts is Held in Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Federal Youth Court Program, in collaboration with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, hosted the very first national conference for youth courts in Albuquerque, New Mexico from October 22-26, 2000. The conference attracted approximately 600 attendees from 30 states, the District of Columbia, and Italy, with over 240 of the attendees being youth. Youth court coordinators, youth and adult volunteers, juvenile justice professionals, educators, and others who were interested in implementing or enhancing youth court programs were among the attendees. United States Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico was the keynote speaker at this event. Other speakers included Scott Peterson and John Wilson.

2001

Publication Examines Role of Restorative Justice in Teen Court Programs

In March 2000, the American Probation and Parole Association convened a focus group to examine and discuss the role of restorative justice in teen court programs. The panel consisted of persons working in teen courts and persons working actively in more traditional restorative justice based programs.

As a result of this focus group a report entitled **The Role of Restorative Justice in Teen Courts: A Preliminary Look** was published. This document provides a brief overview of restorative justice principles and addresses several key issues the focus group members identified that serve as a promising foundation from which teen courts can begin to move toward integrating more restorative justice-based practices within their programs. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

Publication Promotes Law-Related Education as Sentencing Option for Youth Courts

In 2001, Street Law, Inc., in coordination with the Office for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, published a document entitled **Street Law for Youth Courts: Educational Workshops**. This document was designed as an information resource for youth courts when establishing their educational workshops/programs. The lessons are designed to initiate a law-related education program as a sentencing option for youth court offenders. However, the lessons also may be used to train youth volunteers. These interactive lessons focus on the most frequent offenses for which youth are referred to youth court such as theft; possession of alcohol; vandalism; bullying; assault and sexual harassment. The document also includes instructor guides, lesson plans, and handouts for youth participants. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

Washington State Supports and Promotes Youth Court Programs

The Council on Public Legal Education (CPLE) formed a partnership with the Washington Judges Foundation (WJF) to improve the quantity and quality of youth courts in Washington State. Since 2001, the WJF has been funding the CPLE's ongoing efforts to support the state's youth courts, and to assist teams interested in starting a new youth court in their community. As part of these efforts, the CPLE offers a "Youth Court Start up Conference" every two years. The WJF also increases interest in youth courts by publicizing them among the state's judiciary. (*information courtesy of Pam Inglesby, Council on Public Legal Education, Washington State Bar Association, Seattle, Washington*)

www.youthcourt.net Launches Newsletter Dedicated to Youth Courts

In Session, a quarterly newsletter, was launched on www.youthcourt.net. This quarterly online newsletter features state and local news; youth volunteer news; products and services; youth court spotlights; and legislative news. As of 2007, this newsletter was distributed to over 65,000 people.

Constitutional Rights Foundation and Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago Pass a Resolution in Support of Youth Courts

The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLVED, That the Constitutional Rights Foundation and the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago encourage schools, youth programs, attorneys, judges, and police departments to work together to form and expand diversionary programs, known as youth courts, where juveniles, under the supervision of representatives from the education and legal communities, determine sentencing for first time juvenile offenders who are charged with misdemeanors or minor infractions of school rules and consent to participate in the program, recognizing that an important sentencing option – community service – serves both the offender and the community.

November 1, 2001 is Proclaimed Wisconsin Teen Court Day

Wisconsin governor Douglas La Follette proclaimed November 1, 2001 as “Wisconsin Teen Court Day”. (*information courtesy of Nancy Anne Livingston, Associate Professor, Youth Development Agent, Vilas County, Eagle River, WI*)

Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Reads a Statement in Support of the National Youth Court Movement

On December 20, 2001, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Dennis J. Hastert, read the following resolution before the Congress:

“Mr. Speaker, I rise to praise the efforts of the Constitutional Rights Foundation and the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago. Their work encourages schools, youth programs, attorneys, judges, and

police departments to work together to form and expand diversionary programs. These programs, known as youth courts, are where juveniles, under the supervision of representatives from the education and legal communities, determine sentencing for first time juvenile offenders who are charged with misdemeanors or minor infractions of school rules. The program displays that as a sentencing option – community service – can serve both the offender and the community”.

Policy Forum on Youth Courts is Held on Capitol Hill

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), in coordination with the American Bar Association, the National Center for Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the American Probation and Parole Association, the Constitutional Rights Foundation/Chicago, and the Urban Institute, sponsored a forum on youth courts on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. There was standing room only at this event, which was designed to provide policymakers with greater insight into the youth court concept. The forum began with Terrence S. Donahue, Acting Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention providing an update on the federal government’s support of youth courts. Also, William C. Pericak, an assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of New York in Albany, New York, introduced youth from the Colonie Youth Court and the Time Dollar Youth Court in Washington, DC. These youth re-enacted the Youth Judge Model. Following the re-enactment, a panel of youth court experts provided perspectives on the success of the youth court movement. For more information about this forum or for a copy of the Forum Brief, visit the AYPF web site at www.aypf.org.

2002

First National Public Awareness Campaign is Launched For Youth Courts

The Federal Youth Court Program and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) launched a 12-Month Public Awareness Campaign designed to help raise the public’s awareness of youth related issues of national concern. Through this campaign, nearly 150,000 youth court volunteers were encouraged to support a series of public service activities. Local youth courts were encouraged to become involved in at least four of the twelve public service campaigns per year.

In September 2001, a ballot was sent to each active youth court so they could vote on which campaigns they would like to see the 12-Month Public Awareness Campaign focus. Each youth court was encouraged to solicit input from their youth and adult volunteers before casting their ballot. In December 2001, each local youth court received a 12-Month Public Awareness Campaign Package. This package contained information on the public awareness campaigns selected for each month in 2002, and instructions on how local youth courts could become involved in each campaign.

Following is the 12-Month Public Awareness Campaign for 2002:

| | |
|----------|--|
| January | Martin Luther Kind Day of Service |
| February | National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week |
| March | National Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week |
| April | National Crime Victims’ Rights Week |
| May | Law Day |
| June | National Safety Month |
| July | National Parents Day |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| August | National Kids Day |
| September | National Youth Court Month |
| October | Make a Difference Day |
| November | Family Volunteer Day, National |
| December | The One On for Safety Campaign, Red Ribbon |

To recognize each local youth court for their participation in the 12-Month Public Awareness Campaign, the Federal Youth Court Program and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention awarded a special certificate of merit to each youth court that participated in four or more of the monthly public service campaigns by the end of 2002. The Federal Youth Court Program also established a special section on its web site and in its quarterly newsletter for inclusion of pictures and campaign highlights submitted by local youth courts.

The CivicMind Award Goes to www.youthcourt.net

The Civic Mind Award, founded by Wendy Bay Lewis of CivicMind.com in 1997, recognizes and promotes organizations that advance civic engagement, community service, and democracy. The **Federal Youth Court Program received this prestigious award in February 2002 as a result of the excellent work it has done to** provide training and technical assistance to youth courts across the nation. Recipients of [CivicMind™ Awards](http://www.civictimind.com) are selected ten times a year by Wendy Bay Lewis and announced on this web site to recognize organizations that create, promote and strengthen democratic practices, civic engagement, and community service. For more information about the CivicMind Award visit www.civictimind.com.

Results from First National Survey of Youth Courts is Published

In April 2002 the Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center published *The Impact of Teen Court on Young Offenders*. This document is the final report of findings from the Evaluation of Teen Courts (ETC) Project, which was conducted by the Urban Institute and funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention during 1998-1999. For more information on the ETC Project see page 13. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

National Conference on Youth Courts Draws Over 900 Attendees

The energizing effect of the first national gathering of youth courts in October 2000 resulted in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Federal Youth Court Program sponsoring a second national conference in Arlington, Virginia on April 14-16, 2002. This conference attracted over 900 participants, nearly half of whom were youth. More than 63 educational workshops were offered on topics such as finding and retaining volunteers; involving victims with the youth court process; interviewing victims and witnesses; efficacy training for youth judges; ethics for volunteers; and how to implement restorative justice principles into a youth court program.

United Nations Special Session Highlights Youth Courts

On May 8, 2002, the United Nations held its Special Session on Children Worldwide Event. The Special Session on Children was an unprecedented meeting on the United Nations General Assembly dedicated to the children and adolescents of the world. It brought together government leaders and Heads of State, children's advocates and young people themselves at the United Nations in New York City. During the Special Session, youth volunteers Robyn Gausman-Barnett (Montgomery County Teen Court, Maryland) and Bryan Selchick (Colonie Youth Court, New York) spoke about how youth courts give young people an arena to take on increased responsibility in their communities and promote youth participation in juvenile justice proceedings. Youth courts were the only juvenile justice program from the United States highlighted at this Special Session.

Youth Court Technical Assistance Guide is Released

This document, entitled *Youth Courts: Young People Delivering Justice*, and published by the American Bar Association with support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, provides an overview of youth courts and describes their structure, funding, effectiveness, and challenges, as well as the collaboration needed among the legal, law enforcement, and education professionals and the community and youth volunteers. In order to demonstrate the wide variety of youth courts, the author profiles ten local youth courts representing juvenile justice, community, and school settings as well as innovative variations. Information about statewide youth court associations and additional youth court resources are provided. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

Youth Court Training Package for Adult and Youth Volunteers Wins Prestigious Award from the Association of Educational Publishers

The Youth Court Youth and Adult Volunteer Training Package won the "Distinguished Achievement Award for Multimedia Instructional Materials, Young Adult Category" from the Association of Educational Publishers. This award was presented at the 2002 Distinguished Achievement Awards Gala, hosted by the National Press Club. The award is considered the most prestigious award in educational publishing. There were more than 1,000 entries and 299 finalists for the six categories of awards.

The training package provides instructional resources for youth court staff, and offers high-quality materials for training youth court volunteers. The materials also provide trainers with the opportunity to model the qualities inherent to effective youth courts and to examine some of the universal moral principals and common codes of behavior that underlie legal systems – honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion. The complete training package includes: 1) a **Guide for Trainers** with lessons for all youth court models on topics such as the American justice system, balanced and restorative justice, conducting a hearing, and deliberating on a disposition; 2) **Youth Volunteer Handbooks** for adult judge, youth judge, tribunal, and peer jury youth court models; 3) **Changing Lives: America's Youth Court**, a short video introducing the concept of youth courts; and 4) a **CD** to tailor materials to local needs. These materials were developed by the American Bar Association, Division for Public Education, with funds from the National Youth Court Center, the American Probation and Parole Association, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the National Highway Traffic

Safety Administration, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Education. For more information, or to order this training package, visit the ABA web site at www.abanet.org.

The American Probation and Parole Association Passes Resolution in Support of Youth Courts

On June 9, 2002, the American Probation and Parole Association adopted the following resolution:

Therefore, be it **RESOLVED**, That the American Probation and Parole Association joins in the celebration of the first National Youth Court Month and hereby recognizes the importance of youth courts to our communities and recommends that probation, parole, and community supervision agencies support and assist in the formation and expansion of diversionary programs, known as youth court.

Japan Establishes Very First Youth Court Program

After several years of planning, Teen Court Yamanashi, the very first youth court in Japan finally became operational on June 21, 2002. This court was formulated to include 13- to 18-year-old students as respondents and 19- to 22-year-old students as jurors. The local court determines the types of cases that Teen Court Yamanashi hears. Cases include petty theft, graffiti, and truancy committed by offenders who are under 20 years old.

Professor Naoya Yamaguchi, who worked diligently to get this program established in Japan, began gathering information about youth court programs in the United States in the 1990's and published a booklet in Japan explaining the youth court concept. He found, however, that a number of obstacles hindered progress toward his goal of establishing a youth court in Japan. The court system in Japan is nationally administered, which does not give the local courts and local judges the authority to introduce the youth court program, even as a form of diversion. It was additionally difficult to gain acceptance of the youth court concept since Japan does not have a jury system. However, the establishment of Teen Court Yamanashi, along with recent reforms to the judicial system, will help youth courts gain broader acceptance in the Japanese justice system.

In 2008 longtime Youth Court advocate Scott Peterson and other individuals from the United Nations visited this youth court program in Japan.

Film Crews from France and Germany Visit the Colonie Youth Court Program in New York

French and German filmmakers wanted to highlight a program in the United States to educate the public on the effectiveness of youth courts, and to promote the creation of more programs in France and Germany. During their visit to the Colonie Youth Court Program in Colonie, New York, four youth and their families agreed to have their cases filmed for the documentary, as well as many of the youth court members who were assigned to represent the cases. In addition, the documentary highlighted many aspects of the criminal and juvenile system in New York. This documentary aired on German and French public television.

First Ever National Youth Court Month Established and Launched by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and Its Public and Private Partners

This special month dedicated to youth courts was established by President George W. Bush in a letter dated September 2002. The Federal Youth Court Program provided posters, action kits, and much more to encourage youth court programs to seek local proclamations, schedule special activities, reach out to the media, and hold statewide conferences to celebrate the month. This annual event not only brings greater attention to the value of youth court to their communities but also inspires a wide variety of additional community service activities by the youth court volunteers.

Important Community Service-Learning Manual for Youth Court Programs Is Released

This manual, entitled *Giving Back: a Community Service-Learning Manual for Youth Courts* was published by the Constitutional Rights Foundation with support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The document gives youth courts and other juvenile justice agencies the tools they need to apply school-based service-learning methods to court-mandated community service.

Giving Back provides skill-building strategies and materials to introduce juvenile offenders to basic concepts of community and community problems and offers three options for planning and implementing community service-learning projects specifically designed to deal with ten offenses that youth courts and other juvenile justice agencies most frequently address.

This document was revised and updated in 2006. The revised edition was published as *Giving Back: Introducing Community Service Learning/Improving Mandated Community Service for Juvenile Offenders*. For more information on this revised document see page 35. Both of these documents are available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

Street Law, Inc. Passes Resolution in Support of Youth Courts

On December 17, 2002, the Board of Street Law, Inc. adopted the following resolution in support of the national youth court initiative:

Whereas youth courts offer:

. . . young first-time, nonviolent offenders who admit their guilt an opportunity to be sentenced by their peers and to receive a consequence that reflects the ideals of and educates the offenders in restorative justice;

. . . police officers, probation officers, and juvenile court judges with a heavy docket an innovative alternative to dismissing less serious cases and sending first-time offenders outside of the formal juvenile justice proceedings;

. . . young volunteers the chance to serve as judges, jurors, bailiffs, and clerks a coordinated effort to hold their peers accountable with balanced sentences that repair harm done to the offenders victim, the community, and to the offender himself or herself.

And whereas youth courts build:

- . . . ties between the justice system, members of the community, and youth;
- . . . an awareness in youth of the law and the consequences of delinquency;
- . . . a type of community where youth can contribute to society and demonstrate democracy in action;

Therefore, be it resolved:

That we commend, support, and assist those involved in youth courts and others in developing youth courts.

2003

Policy Brief Provides Background Information on Youth Courts

In 2003, the American Probation and Parole Association, in coordination with the Council of State Governments, published a policy brief designed to provide youth courts with a succinct tool they could use to educate their policymakers about the benefits and characteristics of youth court programs. The policy brief, entitled *Youth Court: A Path to Civic Engagement*, provides local, state, and federal policymakers with background information on youth courts, as well as highlights current local and state policy in support of youth court. It also describes how youth court helps young people learn the value of actively participating as citizens to help make a difference in their communities. This policy brief is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

The Constitutional Rights Foundation Publishes Article on Youth Courts

This article, entitled “Youth Courts as Service Learning”, was published in the Spring issue of the Constitutional Rights Foundation’s Service-Learning NETWORK. The article explores the notion that youth courts can serve as learning laboratories, not just for youthful offenders but also for the entire student body. By providing an ongoing forum in which students can apply critical-thinking, leadership, and civic-education skills, youth courts--also described as teen or peer courts--can help students and teachers complete the service-learning equation between classroom theory and meaningful school- and community-based practice. This article is available on the Constitutional Rights Foundation’s web site at www.crf-usa.org/network/net9_3.htm.

United States Justice Department Becomes National Partner in 15th Annual National Youth Service Day And Launches Large Scale National Effort To Include Youth Court Programs

National Youth Service Day (NYSD) is the largest service event in the world. This event is organized by Youth Service America, and every year millions of youth participate in projects aimed at raising public awareness and highlighting the contributions that young people make to their communities. The goals of NYSD are 1) to mobilize youth to identify and address the needs of their communities through service; 2) to support youth on a life-long path of service and civic engagement; and 3) to educate the public, the media, and policymakers about the year-round contributions of young people as community

leaders. On NYSD, young people design and lead service-learning projects covering a broad range of issues, including literacy, the environment, healthcare, nutrition, and poverty.

In 2003, for the first time in the history of the event, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) was a national partner in NYSD. As a result, DOJ approved the Federal Youth Court Program to award \$250 mini-grants to fifty youth court programs to plan and conduct events in support of NYSD. Youth courts across America mobilized and participated in a wide variety of projects that had profound effects on their communities.

Focus Group Convened to Discuss Addressing Truancy Cases in Youth Courts

The focus group, held on June 5-6, 2003, was sponsored by the Federal Youth Court Program. The focus group was comprised of national leaders in the area of truancy, and youth court coordinators whose programs address truancy. Some of the topics that the focus group discussed included: reasons youth are truant; effective strategies for addressing truancy in youth courts; strategies that have proven less effective in the past for addressing truancy; advantages to addressing truancy in youth courts; challenges or barriers to addressing truancy in youth courts; and knowledge and skills that youth and adult volunteers and coordinators need in order to address truancy effectively.

As a result of this focus group, the Federal Youth Court Program published an article in the *In Session* newsletter entitled “Strategies for Responding to Truancy in Youth Courts”. This article provides a brief synopsis of some of the key recommendations the focus group identified for addressing truancy in youth courts more effectively. This article is available through the Federal Youth Court Program web site at www.youthcourt.net. Click on the *In Session* button on the left side of the homepage and go to the spring 2004 issue.

In addition, an article entitled “Addressing Truancy in Youth Court Programs” was published in *Selected Topics on Youth Courts: A Monograph*. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage. For more information about *Selected Topics* see page 27.

Audio Teleconference on Youth Courts Broadcast

This audio teleconference, entitled “Making Evaluation Simpler for Youth Courts Using Performance-Based Measures”, was produced by the Federal Youth Court Program. It provides background information on the concept of using performance-based measures in evaluation efforts and describes how youth courts can develop performance-based measures to collect needed data for enhancing their programs and seeking funds. The broadcast can be viewed on the Federal Youth Court Program web site at www.youthcourt.net by clicking on the “Online Training” button on the left side of the homepage.

The Colonie Youth Court Program Celebrates 10 Year Anniversary

On September 16, 2003, the Colonie Youth Court Program in Colonie, New York celebrated its 10 year anniversary. To mark this momentous occasion, New York Governor George Pataki and founder Scott Peterson surprised more than 225 guests at a special recognition dinner by making an appearance to

commend the Colonie Youth Court Program for serving as a model for New York State and the nation. Since its creation in 1993, hundreds of visitors from around the State of New York, the United States of America, and the world, have visited this program to observe and learn.

Governor Pataki applauded the student members and volunteers of the youth court whose contributions have made Colonie Youth Court such an overwhelming success over the past decade, and he charged them to maintain the program as an example to which others may aspire. Other speakers at the dinner included former Colonie Youth Court members Jonathan Halstuch and Brian Selchick, and Glenn Suddaby, United States Attorney for the Northern District of New York. The anniversary celebration also included a special tribute to Mr. John A. Scaringe, Sr. (1943-2003), whose contributions to the Colonie Youth Court, to his community, and to the Federal Youth Court Program will be sorely missed. For more information about the Colonie Youth Court Program, visit the web site at www.colonie.org.

Deadwood, South Dakota Establishes Teen Court Day

September 24, 2003 was declared Teen Court Day in Deadwood, South Dakota. (*information courtesy of Marlene Todd, Director, Lawrence County Teen Court, Deadwood, South Dakota*)

Justice Television Network Conducts Satellite Videoconference on Youth Courts

This videoconference, entitled “Youth Courts: A Legal Guide for Getting Involved”, featured J. Robert Flores, Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention discussing the role of the United States Attorney’s Office in youth courts. Deborah J. Daniels, Assistant Attorney General of the Justice Department’s Office of Justice Programs provided taped introductory remarks welcoming participants to the broadcast. Tracy Godwin Mullins, Director of the National Youth Court Center (NYCC) served as moderator for the broadcast and Scott Peterson organized this event. This broadcast can be accessed on the Federal Youth Court Program web site at www.youthcourt.net by clicking on the “Online Training” button on the left side of the homepage.

2004

Policy Brief Provides Information and Insight from Youth Court Policymakers

In 2004, the American Probation and Parole Association, in coordination with the Council of State Governments, published a policy brief designed to provide youth courts with a succinct tool they can use to educate their policymakers about the benefits and characteristics of youth court programs. The policy brief, entitled *Policymakers Support Youth Court Growth: Voices and Recommendations from the Field*, provides an overview of perspectives on youth court from local, state, and national policymakers. Policymakers interviewed for this brief offered thoughtful advice to their peers considering legislation or other types of support for youth court programs. Information on the benefits of youth court and tips for establishing youth courts also are included. This policy brief is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

American Bar Association Publishes Technical Assistance Bulletin on Making Youth Courts Effective

In 2004, the American Bar Association, Division for Public Education developed and published Technical Assistance Bulletin #25 entitled *“Making Youth Court as Effective as Possible”*. This bulletin is designed to share lessons learned in Kentucky over the last twelve years about youth courts and what makes them work. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

American Bar Association Publishes Technical Assistance Bulletin on Youth Court Training for Volunteers

In 2004, the American Bar Association, Division for Public Education developed and published Technical Assistance Bulletin #26 entitled *“Youth Court Training for Results”*. This bulletin provides youth court coordinators and administrators with introductory information on identifying the type of volunteer training program needed, developing instructional goals for a training program for youth volunteers, designing a youth court volunteer training agenda based on learning objectives, making the best possible use of community resource people in delivering training to the young people, and evaluating a training program. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

United States Justice Department Official Speaks About Youth Courts at UNICEF Event

Scott Peterson of the Justice Department’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention spoke about the benefits of youth court at a UNICEF event in NYC. UNICEF is the United Nations Children’s Fund, and is the world’s largest provider of vaccines for developing countries. UNICEF also supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS.

Youth court has received interest from a wide variety of countries. People from countries as diverse as Norway, Russia, Nigeria, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy have visited various local youth courts across America to explore the possibility of adopting the program for their countries. The Federal Youth Court Program has provided training and technical assistance on developing youth court programs to people representing Canada and the Philippines.

Audio Teleconference/Web Cast on Funding For Youth Court Programs Broadcast

This audio teleconference/web cast, entitled “Strategies for Locating Youth Court Funding and Writing Effective Grants” was broadcast by the Federal Youth Court Program. It provided youth court coordinators with information on how to locate possible funding sources and how to plan for program sustainability. It also provided tips on how to write effective grant proposals. This broadcast can be accessed on the Federal Youth Court Program web site at www.youthcourt.net by clicking on the “Online Training” button on the left side of the homepage.

Monograph Highlights Six Selected Topics and Issues Facing Youth Courts

This report, entitled *Selected Topics on Youth Courts, A Monograph*, was published by the American Probation and Parole Association and the Council of State Governments. This monograph features papers on the following six topics:

- 1) Addressing Truancy in Youth Court Programs
- 2) Underage Drinking and Other Substance Abuse: Opportunities for Prevention and Intervention by Youth Courts
- 3) An Overview of School-Based Youth Court Program Design Options
- 4) Building Culturally Relevant Youth Courts in Tribal Communities
- 5) A Comparison of Statewide Youth Court Associations and Networking Groups
- 6) Media Access Guidelines for Youth Courts

This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

United States Justice Department Receives Award for Support of Youth Courts

The Justice Department's Office of Justice Program's (OJP) Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) received an award from the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) for its renowned leadership and support for youth courts as a program that can both address juvenile crime and promote civic engagement among America's young people. APPA President Andrew Molloy presented the award during the plenary session at the APPA Annual Institute in Orlando, Florida to Lizette Benedi, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, OJP, who accepted the award on behalf of Assistant Attorney General Deborah J. Daniels. Mr. Molloy emphasized that, because of the incredible support that OJP has provided to APPA's national youth court initiatives, the number of youth courts has increased by more than 1,000 percent in the last decade. He stated, "Youth courts offer youth who have committed minor delinquent and status offenses with a timely and cost-effective alternative to the traditional juvenile justice system".

2005

Wisconsin's first tribal teen court became operational on December 3, 2005

(information courtesy of Nancy Anne Livingston, Associate Professor, Youth Development Agent, Vila County, Eagle River, Wisconsin)

Number of Youth Court Programs Passes The 1,000 Mark For The First Time In History!

According to the first national survey, in 1994 there were only 78 youth courts nationwide. By 2005 that number had grown to an astounding 1,037. The exponential growth of youth courts continues today as communities realize the benefits of having a program in their area. Reaching this important benchmark in the national youth court movement could not have been accomplished without the support of program coordinators, volunteers, and communities who wholeheartedly believe in the program and work diligently everyday to make it flourish.

Federal Youth Court Program Receives Award for Excellence in Community Crime Prevention

The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) Award for Excellence in Crime Prevention recognizes community corrections agencies, or community crime prevention programs coordinating with a community corrections agency, that have integrated community crime prevention initiatives into the traditional roles of supervision, intervention and sanctioning of offenders. APPA President Drew Molloy presented the award to Scott B. Peterson, Program Manager with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention during a networking dinner for State Youth Court Associations and Networking Groups. Mr. Peterson accepted the award on behalf of all the active and developing youth courts, teen courts, peer courts, and student courts across the nation.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Convenes National Meeting of State Youth Court Associations and Networking Groups

Scott Peterson gathered leaders representing state youth court associations or networking groups from 14 states convened in Washington, DC for the first national meeting of State Youth Court Associations and Networking Groups. States represented at the meeting included Alaska, Florida, Illinois, Missouri, North Carolina, New Mexico, New York, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. The meeting was conducted by the Federal Youth Court Program and sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The purpose of the meeting was to give association members and networking groups and opportunity to interact with one another and learn from each other how to enhance policies and procedures and how to generate ideas about how to more effectively manage youth courts.

The meeting proved so successful, OJJDP funded three subsequent meetings in February 2006, June 2006, and October 2006 respectively. These meetings also brought leaders from state associations and networking groups together to further build the capacity of state associations and to begin working toward the development of a national youth court association. These energetic and dedicated youth court professionals, that now form the National Youth Court Task Force, have worked tirelessly on a number of tasks (including the passage of a resolution in support of National Youth Court Month in 2006 by the United States Senate) at the direction of OJJDP to further the national youth court movement. Another major task completed by the group was the facilitation of a process whereby all

active youth courts were invited to vote on the official name of the National Association of Youth Courts.

For a list of the members of the National Youth Court Task Force see Resources.

Federal Officials Recognized for Support of Youth Courts

James B. Wright, Senior Highway Safety Specialist, at the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), was honored by the American Probation and Parole Association and the Federal Youth Court Program for their work with youth/teen courts. The awards were presented during the first national meeting of State Youth Court Associations and Networking Groups in Washington, DC, and were in recognition of their dedication to and support of the expansion of youth/teen courts on a local, state, and national level.

Federal Youth Court Program Co-Sponsors National Youth Violence Prevention Campaign

The National Youth Violence Prevention Campaign is a national initiative designed to raise awareness and to educate students, teachers, school administrators, counselors, school resource officers, school staff, parents, and the public on effective ways to prevent or reduce youth violence. Launched by National SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) and the Guidance Channel, this campaign is designed to demonstrate the positive role young people can have in making their schools and communities safer. Activities are held throughout the school year and culminate in a weeklong national educational event held April 4-8, 2005. With the support of over twenty national youth-serving organizations, each day of the week focuses on a specific violence prevention strategy. These include: 1) promoting respect and tolerance; 2) developing anger management skills; 3) resolving conflicts peacefully; 4) supporting safety; and 5) uniting in action.

April 7, 2005 was Support Safety Day, which was sponsored by the Federal Youth Court Program. Youth courts were strongly encouraged to participate in all of the week's activities and events, to partner with schools in projects and educational activities that address youth violence and safety issues. For more information about this event visit the National Violence Prevention Week award winning campaign web site at www.ViolencePreventionWeek.org.

Briefing on Youth Courts Held on Capitol Hill

On April 15, 2005, the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) held a briefing for policymakers on youth courts on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. The AYPF, in coordination with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, conducted a nationwide review of youth court programs between November 2004 and January 2005. A total of 365 youth court coordinators from across the United States participated in the study. A 40% return rate yielded a successful snapshot of the landscape for youth courts nationwide. The goal of this forum was to provide policymakers and the public with an overview of youth court programs, their characteristics, and their benefits. For a copy of the Forum Brief that summarizes this briefing, visit <http://www.aypf.org/forumbriefs/2005/fb4.15.05.htm>.

Important Report on Youth Courts Released by the American Youth Policy Forum at a Briefing on Capitol Hill

On April 15, 2005, at a briefing on Capitol Hill sponsored by the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), a report entitled *Youth Courts: A Community Solution for Embracing At-Risk Youth*, was released. This report presents findings from a nationwide review of youth court programs across the United States between November of 2004 and January of 2005. The findings outlined in the report are both surprising and inspiring and cover topics such as: program completion, cost, impact on youth offenders and volunteers, educational and civic opportunities, program sustainability, and recommendations to policymakers. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

Federal Government Awards Mini Grants to 70 Local Youth Court Programs

In 2005, the Federal Youth Court Program, with funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, provided \$250.00 mini-grants to seventy local youth court programs. These grants were awarded in conjunction with National Youth Service Day (NYSD). NYSD is the largest service event in the world, and records and celebrates the contributions that youth make to their communities throughout the year.

Since 2003, the United States Justice Department has served as a national partner in the event. These grants served to assist youth courts in planning and conducting a service project during NYSD. Fifteen of the mini-grants were designated for service projects that addressed traffic safety issues. Other mini-grants were used by youth courts to plan and conduct activities during NYSD week.

Hundreds of Local Youth Court Programs Across the Nation Participate in Law Day

On May 1, 2005, people across the nation celebrated Law Day. Law Day is an annual event sponsored by the American Bar Association (ABA), Division of Public Education. Lawyers, judges, educators, and legal professionals gather to celebrate our legal system and their faith in people's abilities to make wise decisions in our democracy. The theme of Law Day in 2005 was "The American Jury: We the People in Action". Youth courts across the nation participated in this event. Many youth courts received the *Law Day Planning Guide*. This guide contains valuable information on how to make Law Day a success year after year. The guide is available on the ABA web site at www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/guidemain.html. For more information about Law Day, visit the ABA web site at www.aba.org. Law Day is every May for one day and teen courts and youth courts are strongly urged to involve their youth and adults to participate each year.

State of Alaska Receives \$1 Million Congressional Earmark to Support the Implementation and Enhancement of Youth Courts Across the State

During fiscal year 2005 the Alaska Youth Court and Community Panel Program was awarded a Congressional earmark in the amount of \$986,643 under the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Congressional Earmark Program. The purpose of the grant project was to build capacity in the Alaska Youth Court and Community Panel Program through the enhancement of existing youth courts and community panels and expansion of the program into other communities around the state. This project provided increased resources to address juvenile crime at the front end of the service continuum. Activities included ongoing training and technical assistance, juvenile offender diversion and case disposition, case management, community development, and sustainability planning. The project served approximately 900 victims, 900 juvenile offenders, and 1,200 adult and youth volunteers throughout the state during a one-year period. An evaluation component also was developed and implemented to gauge effectiveness of both the youth court model and the community panel model in urban and rural settings.

Time Magazine Publishes Historic Article on Local Youth Court Program

On Monday, July 18, 2005 an article on the Colonie Youth Court Program in Colonie, New York appeared in Time magazine. The article, entitled "*A Jury of Their Peers*" by Jeremy Caplan, describes a typical case handled by the youth court program in Colonie, New York, and explains how youth court is becoming an institution across the United States. This article is available on Time magazine's web site at www.time.com.

National Youth Court Task Force Created To Establish the National Association of Youth Courts, Inc.

On October 1, 2005, the federal government, lead by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency (OJJDP) with support from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, launched an eighteen month initiative to enhance existing state associations and support the development of new state associations. One of the primary objectives of this initiative was to increase, over an 18-month period, the number of state associations and networking groups from 18 to 25. Additionally, the goal was to ensure that operational associations are functioning on a higher level than the previous year, and that the group of associations and networking groups become more cohesive on a national level. This Task Force was conceptualized and chaired by Scott B. Peterson, OJJDP. For more information about the National Youth Court Task Force that established the National Association of Youth Courts, Inc. log on to www.youthcourt.net

2006

Federal Official Receives Prestigious Lewis Hine Award from the National Child Labor Committee

The National Child Labor Committee presented the Lewis Hine Award to Scott B. Peterson for his contributions to the youth court movement. The Lewis Hine Award honors unheralded Americans and several better-known leaders for their unique contributions to the essential job of helping children and youth move towards self-sufficiency and satisfying adulthoods. In 1993, Scott B. Peterson's mind was on fire with the idea of picking up on a new and innovative program called youth court. At that time, Scott was working in Albany, New York, at a homeless youth shelter. He wanted to do something different, something more, and something that would keep many teenagers from ending up in shelters. A youth court - an alternative to a traditional juvenile justice system - made up of teenaged youth who volunteer to act as judges, attorneys and juries, made sense to Scott.

A committee that included Scott was formed, and the youth court concept was explored as a viable option to dealing with delinquent youth. As a result of this committee the Capital District and the Colonie Youth Court Program were established in 1994. Less than two years later, Scott was asked by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice to help them establish similar youth courts throughout the state. He worked closely on the compilation of instructional manuals and operational materials. Soon thereafter the federal government also came to the Albany area to explore the possibility of promoting the notion of youth courts throughout the country. And they did.

The United States Department of Justice did more than incorporate the concept of youth courts into its national program; they also took Scott with them as part of the package. In the nine years he has coordinated the Federal Youth Court Program, he has done much to contribute to the establishment of hundreds of youth court programs around the United States. Thanks to Scott's efforts, the growth of the youth court concept has been recognized by the federal government, hailed by the Urban Institute, and praised by UNICEF as a positive force in our world. In 2008 and in 2009, Scott Peterson will travel around the globe to an increasing number of countries and continue his efforts to expand the use of youth courts and teen courts as a diversion to the formal juvenile justice and criminal justice system.

American Bar Association Releases Guide Book to Typical Offenses Handled in Youth Court Programs

This document, entitled *Youth Cases for Youth Courts: A Guide to the Typical Offenses Handled by Youth Courts*, was published in 2006 by the American Bar Association (ABA), Division for Public Education. It is an invaluable guide for both new and existing youth courts that are trying to determine the types of cases their program should accept or that want to expand their referral base. It begins by discussing how to create and maintain a referral committee and what overall factors youth courts should consider in making decisions about what cases to accept and reject. Readers also will find plenty of advice and practical tips from leaders of some of the most successful and longstanding youth courts across the country. The second section of the document includes outlines of 27 offenses commonly accepted by youth courts, and includes information about special issues youth courts might face with respect to each offense, and tips for creative dispositions. This document is available for purchase from the ABA at www.abanet.org.

United States Senate Passes Resolution Designating September 2006 as National Youth Court Month

Since its formation in 2005, one of the primary tasks of the National Youth Court Task Force was to initiate the passage of a resolution in support of youth courts. Several task force members recruited youth court leaders throughout the United States to contact senators from their respective states to request a resolution in support of National Youth Court Month.

As a result, Senator Stevens of Alaska submitted a resolution designating September 2006 as National Youth Court Month. This resolution was supported by Senators Murkowski of Alaska; Akaka of Hawaii; DeWine of Ohio; Feingold of Wisconsin; Domenici of New Mexico; and Chambliss of Georgia, and was passed on September 25, 2006. The resolution reads as follows:

Whereas a strong country begins with strong communities in which all citizens play an active role and invest in the success and future of the youth of the United States;

Whereas the fifth National Youth Court Month celebrates the outstanding achievement of youth courts throughout the country;

Whereas in 2005, more than 110,000 youths volunteered to hear more than 115,000 juvenile cases, and more than 20,000 adults volunteered to facilitate peer justice in youth court programs;

Whereas 1,158 youth court programs in 49 States and the District of Columbia provide restorative justice for juvenile offenders, resulting in effective crime prevention, early intervention and education for all youth participants, and enhanced public safety throughout the United States;

Whereas, by holding juvenile offenders accountable, reconciling victims, communities, juvenile offenders, and their families, and reducing caseloads for the juvenile justice system, youth courts address offenses that might otherwise go unaddressed until the offending behavior escalates and redirects the efforts of juvenile offenders toward becoming contributing members of their communities;

Whereas Federal, State, and local governments, corporations, foundations, service organizations, educational institutions, juvenile justice agencies, and individual adults support youth courts because youth court programs actively promote and contribute to building successful, productive lives and futures for the youth of the United States;

Whereas a fundamental correlation exists between youth service and lifelong adult commitment to and involvement in one's community;

Whereas volunteer service and related service learning opportunities enable young people to build character and develop and enhance life-skills, such as responsibility, decision-making, time management, teamwork, public speaking, and leadership, which prospective employers will value; and

Whereas participating in youth court programs encourages youth court members to become valuable members of their communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates September 2006 as "National Youth Court Month".

By designating this month National Youth Court Month, the Senate has highlighted the importance of youth volunteer service.”

Popular Community Service-Learning Manual Revised and Updated

In 2006, the Constitutional Rights Foundation, in coordination with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, published a document entitled *Giving Back: Introducing Community Service Learning/Improving Mandated Community Service for Juvenile Offenders*. This document is an updated and revised edition of the original *Giving Back: A Community Service-Learning Manual for Youth Courts*. It gives youth courts and other juvenile justice agencies the tools they need to apply school-based service-learning methods to court-mandated community service. This document provides skill building strategies and materials to introduce juvenile offenders to basic concepts of community and community problems and offers three options for planning and implementing community service-learning projects specifically designed to deal with ten offenses that youth courts and other juvenile justice agencies most frequently address. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

Federal Government Awards Mini Grants to 81 Local Youth Court Programs

In 2006, the Federal Youth Court Program, with funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, awarded mini-grants to 81 youth court programs. These grants were awarded in conjunction with National and Global Youth Service Day (NGYSD). NGSYD is the largest service event in the world. This event supports youth on a life-long path of service and civic engagement, and educates the public, the media, and elected officials about the role of youth as community resources.

These grants served to assist youth courts in planning and conducting NGSYD projects. A few of the activities conducted by youth courts in 2006 included assembling care packages for military units deployed to Iraq; designing and creating murals to cover walls for a visitation room where children in foster care visit their parents; building a memorial trail to identify youth who have died in the past year as a result of underage drinking or DUI crashes; reading books to children in hospitals and libraries; and working with local animal shelters.

Since 2003, the federal government has awarded over 300 mini-grants and hundreds of local youth courts have undertaken projects in support of this initiative. For more information about National and Global Youth Service Day, visit the web site at <http://ysa.org/NatlGYSD/tabid/59/Default.aspx>. For information and project highlights from National and Global Youth Service Day events conducted in 2006, visit the Federal Youth Court Program web site at www.youthcourt.net.

A Record 1,127 Youth Courts Operating Throughout the United States

By 2006 forty-nine States and the District of Columbia had at least one youth court program. In addition, hundreds more communities were in the process of planning and establishing local youth court programs.

Research Bulletin Provides Overview of Youth Court Legislation

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) released a bulletin entitled “An Update on Teen Court Legislation”. This bulletin was supported under a cooperative agreement from OJJDP with support from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, and the U. S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. The bulletin provides an overview of teen court legislation in the United States, as well as information and resources to guide those who are interested in reviewing existing or drafting new legislation. The information in this bulletin, coupled with information gleaned from further research into this topic, can provide a starting point for local and state-level discussions about the need for or parameters of teen court legislation. It also can assist teen court practitioners in knowing whether they are operating within the bounds of current laws. A copy of this bulletin is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage and go to Legislation. (*information courtesy of Kathleen Zeitlin, Salt Lake Peer Court, Salt Lake City, Utah*)

National Youth Court Resources Publication Guide and CD-Rom Released

In October 2006 the Federal Youth Court Program published an important resource document entitled *National Youth Court Resources Publication Guide and CD-Rom*. This document is a compilation of resources that have been developed to provide assistance to communities that want to start or enhance youth, teen, peer, or student court programs. Anyone looking for answers or information on a multitude of youth court issues will find a publication to help in this document and CD-Rom. For more information, or to download any of the publications listed in this resource document, go to the Federal Youth Court Program web site at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

First Lady Laura Bush Visits the Colonie Youth Court Program

On October 4, 2006, while the First Lady was in the Capital Region of New York campaigning for a local Congressman, she visited the Colonie Youth Court Program in Latham, New York. During her visit, the First Lady observed a mock trial, and talked with some of the youth court volunteers and defendants about their experiences with the program.

Mrs. Bush visited the program as part of her lead role in Helping America’s Youth. Helping America’s Youth is a nationwide effort designed to raise awareness of the challenges facing young people today, particularly at-risk boys. For more information about Helping America’s Youth, visit the web site at www.helpingamericasyouth.gov/. For more information about the First Lady’s visit to the Colonie Youth Court Program, visit their web site at www.colonie.org/police/YouthCourt/index.htm.
(PHOTO)

Russian Judges Meet With Teen Court Officials From Montgomery

County, Maryland

A delegation of judges from Russia met with the Teen Court Coordinator in Montgomery County, Maryland to have a session of court filmed and subtitled for use in developing Teen Court in Russia. The Maryland-Leningrad Rule of Law project hosted a delegation of three judges from the Kingesep City Court in Russia. Russian Judges Elena Kulshina, Tatiana Arzhanenko, and Lubov Kondrashova made up the delegation.

The delegation began the educational portion of the program by visiting the Juvenile Assessment Center, which is a multi-agency center bringing together the services of the Montgomery County Police Department, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and other agencies. Next, the delegates had the opportunity to have roundtable discussions with agency heads of the Department of Health and Human Services' Screening and Assessment Services for Children and Adolescents (SASCA), Child and Adolescent Forensic Evaluation Services (CAFES) and Child Welfare Services; the Police Department's Youth Services Investigative Unit; the Maryland Department of Juvenile Justice intake and supervision unit; the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Alternative Community Service Program, and Montgomery County Public Schools.

The delegation also had a tour of the regional detention facility, the Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center, serving youth primarily from the county and providing residential care for a capacity of fifty-seven youth ranging from ages twelve to eighteen.

During the next phase of the program, the delegation moved to the Montgomery County Circuit Court, Juvenile Division, where roundtable discussions were held with defense attorneys, prosecutors and judges regarding jurisdiction of the juvenile court, rehabilitative goal of juvenile law, statutory time frames, differentiated case management and the overriding goal of juvenile justice.

And finally, the delegation met with Maura Lynch, prosecutor, Dorothy Lennig, House of Ruth, Lt. Brian Roynestadt, Sheriff, Domestic Violence Unit to discuss domestic violence procedures. They were provided with an overview of the domestic laws in Maryland, research statistics on violence and fatalities, various types of legal remedies (civil and criminal), responsibility of police and prosecutors, and victim services. (*information courtesy of Georgine DeBord, Teen Court/Mediation Coordinator, Montgomery County State's Attorneys' Office, Rockville, Maryland*)

2006-2007

Over 1,200 Local Youth Courts Listed in Newly Released National Youth Court Center National Program Directory and National Resources

This directory provides information on the Federal Youth Court Program, its managing organization and sponsoring agencies, as well as a state-by-state listing of youth courts; state youth court associations and networking groups; national resources available to youth courts; and information about allied agencies.

2007

Record Number of Local Youth Court Programs Across the Nation Participate in National and Global Youth Service Day

National and Global Youth Service Day (NGYSD) is the largest service event in the world. This event supports youth on a life-long path of service and civic engagement, and educates the public, the media, and elected officials about the role of youth as community resources. In 2007, NGSYD was held on April 20-22, and the Federal Youth Court Program encouraged youth courts across the country to participate in the event by publishing five “tips” in the monthly e-update. Following are the five tips:

1. Encourage your Youth Court and Teen Court Network to Register National & Global Youth Service Day Projects.
2. Issue a Press Release Highlighting Leadership of National & Global Youth Service Day and Projects Led by Your Youth Court and Teen Court.
3. Post the National & Global Youth Service Day Logo and Web Banners on Your Local and State Youth Court and Teen Court Web site.
4. Engage Public Officials in Your National & Global Youth Service Day Events.
5. Disseminate and Promote Free National & Global Youth Service Day Materials Including the Planning Kit, the Service-Learning Curriculum Guide, and Posters.

Record Number of State Youth Court Associations and Networking Groups Operating in the United States

By 2007, the number of states that have formal and informal State Youth Court Associations and State Networking Groups has reached 17. These organizations support local youth courts, teen courts, student courts and peer courts, by providing continuing education and training for those operating youth courts; maintaining a communication network between existing youth courts to develop consistency between programs; promoting the development of other youth courts; and reducing juvenile crime. About 12 of these State Youth Court Associations are non-profit organizations like those operating in Texas and Florida and Maryland. Several others are operated by State Administering agencies such as the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts and the Tennessee Bar Association. Others are operated by a group of local youth court and teen court coordinators and directors who meet several times a year and plan activities. Seventeen of the states are listed on the Federal Youth Court Program web site at <http://www.youthcourt.net/resources/associations.htm>. California, Idaho, Louisiana, and Indiana are more states that have made considerable progress and several have also incorporated among these.

Over 13,000 Youth Court Recruitment Posters Distributed To Recruit More Youth Volunteers

The Federal Youth Court Program created and distributed over 13,000 posters to help youth courts promote their programs. These posters are available with three different headings: “Youth Court”, “Teen Court”, and “Peer Court”. To view the posters, to obtain pricing information, or to order posters, visit the Federal Youth Court Program web site at www.youthcourt.net. Click on the Resources button on the left side of the homepage, then select Recruitment Posters.

Once Again, Youth Courts Across the Nation Celebrate Law Day

On May 1, 2007, people across the nation celebrated Law Day. Law Day is an annual event sponsored by the American Bar Association (ABA), Division of Public Education. This year, the <http://www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/nosearch/ldkits.shtml> the ABA and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention made 300 free Law Day kits available to local youth courts, teen courts, peer courts, and student courts. Law Day is a popular project for lawyers, judges, educators, and legal professionals, and the event allows youth courts to join in this celebration of our legal system and the place of youth courts in it. The theme of Law Day in 2007 was “Liberty Under Law: Empowering Youth, Assuring Democracy”. For more information about Law Day, visit the ABA web site at www.aba.org.

National Double-Track Youth Court Training Draws Over 150 Attendees

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), in collaboration with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, sponsored a newly developed National Double Track Youth Court Training Program. This training was held on June 10-13, 2007, in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. National Trainers included Nancy Livingston, Gary Kepley, Scott Peterson and Marlene Todd among others.

Track one of the training was designed for communities interested in establishing a youth court program and for new youth court staff and volunteers. Track two was designed for experienced youth court staff and volunteers seeking innovative techniques to enhance current programs. The first National Double-Track Training took place January 2007, and was filled to capacity with 150 registrants.

Action Kit ©

The 2007 National Youth Court Month Action Kit was designed to assist youth courts in preparing for this year’s events. Sections of the Action Kit include tips for planning events and activities, suggested activities to commemorate National Youth Court Month, strategies for communicating more effectively with the media, and a listing of national youth court resources. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage.

Photojournalist From Japan Works on Youth Court Book

In 2007, Atsu Otsuka, a photojournalist who is committed to promoting peace and justice worldwide, began working with the youth court coordinator in Clallam, Washington on a project dedicated to youth courts. Otsuka will write a book about youth court, and would like to introduce the concept to the Japanese government. For more information about Atsu Otsuka, and her many projects, visit her web site at <http://atsukophoto.com>.

Following is a quote from Otsuka's web site: "Since I began my career as a photojournalist in 1986, I have been growing this sense deeply while covering wars and environmental destruction, learning of the lives of those who are affected with diseases, and seeing the trials faced by people who are struggling to put troubled pasts behind them. Through my books, and through this website, I would like to show you the efforts of people who are seeking to learn what we can do to live in harmony. Here you will find healing gardens for the sick and disabled, community gardens that revive communities, the power of human-animal bonding for emotionally injured children and adults, art in medicine, the creative wisdom of those challenged with life-threatening diseases, and much more."

French Documentary On Youth Courts in America Being Developed

In 2007, Charlotte Altschul, a French television journalist began working on a television documentary about youth courts with Scott Peterson and it is still in the development stage.

6th Annual National Youth Court Month Theme Announced

At a meeting of over eighty local, state, and regional youth court leaders, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) asked that a theme for the 6th Annual National Youth Court Month in September 2007 be selected. The winning theme was "Empowering Youth – Experiencing Justice". This theme will be used by OJJDP to once again encourage youth courts across the country to participate in National Youth Court Month in an effort to bring attention to the Youth Justice Movement.

South Dakota Passes Legislation Establishing a Teen Court Grant Fund

This legislation was overwhelmingly passed in South Dakota. It established a Teen Court Grant Fund, which provided the first endowment of \$100,000 to be used for the creation of new teen courts within the state. For more information about state youth and teen court legislation see *An Update on Teen Court Legislation* by Michelle E. Heward. This document is available through the Federal Youth Court Program at www.youthcourt.net. Click on Publications on the left side of the homepage. (*information courtesy of Marlene Todd, Director, Lawrence County Teen Court, Deadwood, South Dakota*)

International Criminal Justice Journal in Canada Highlights Youth Courts

In the May/June 2007 issue of Law Now, a Canadian criminal justice journal, an article entitled “*The Next Big Thing: Teen Courts in America*”, appeared. This article examines how teen court, a simple idea that inspired a grassroots movement, has become the most replicated juvenile justice program in American history. Co-written by Scott Peterson, the article describes how teen courts in America work, and goes on to state that youth justice leaders in Canada have taken note of the success of teen courts in America and desire to introduce the concept north of the border. The article goes on to surmise that due to the success and growth of the youth court movement, and the interest in the concept from other countries, there is little doubt that the movement will soon be a truly international one. A copy of this article is available on the Law Now web site at www.lawnow.org.

Training to Establish State Associations and State Networking Groups

On October 28-31, 2007, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention convened a team-approach training for states that do not have associations yet, but do have five or more local youth courts, teen courts, peer courts and/or student courts. More than forty youth and teen court professionals from seven states met to discuss the establishment of more state associations and networking groups to further enhance the local, state, and national movement through networking of local youth court leaders. Nancy Livingston and Gary Kepley were the lead trainers from Wisconsin and Illinois.

Europe Launches its 1st Youth Court (Peer Panel) in England/UK

In September 2007 the United Kingdom’s National Centre for Restorative Justice convened an international conference at the Lancashire Police headquarters in Preston, Lancashire. The purpose of the conference was to launch three new Restorative Justice Centers. At the heart of the Centers are Peer Panels, which are the British version of youth/teen courts in the United States. Approximately 200 delegates joined United Kingdom Government Ministers and the Restorative Justice Centre’s project ambassador, Archbishop Tutu. The conference was designed to both acknowledge the significant contributions that the United States Department of Justice has made to the United Kingdom’s efforts to establish and institutionalize peer panels in England, and also to further build the relationship between peer panels and youth/teen courts. Simon Evans from NACRO in the UK spearheaded this effort which came to fruition as Europe now has local youth court programs – referred to as peer panels that are now being established so more young people around the globe experience the benefits of peer justice. Scott Bernard Peterson from the United States traveled to the United Kingdom to help launch the very first Peer Panels in England. Log on there to learn more: http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojdp/news_at_glance/219940/sf_2.html

National Association of Youth Courts Incorporates

In 2007, the National Association of Youth Courts, Inc. (NAYC), was established to “serve youth courts, teen courts, peer courts and student courts”. The association is the latest initiative of the Federal Youth Court Program administered by the United States Department of Justice since 1997. **It replaces both the National Youth Court Center and the Federal Youth Court Program.** With considerable support and funding from four federal agencies including the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Office of Safe and Drug Free

Schools, and the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, the NAYC was established through the efforts of an extraordinary group of 77 local and state teen court and youth court leaders along with OJJDP staff member Keri Strugg and Scott Peterson who chaired the National Committee to establish the National Association of Youth Courts, Inc.

Planning for this federal initiative began on March 27, 2005 with the specific purpose of creating the first private national organization in America to represent and serve local, state and national youth court, teen court, peer court and student court efforts since this local grass-roots movement began a quarter of a century ago.

There are seventy-seven (77) individuals from twenty (20) states that comprise the Board of Trustees and the National Committees of the National Association of Youth Courts, Inc. These founders include most of the movers and shakers who have been and/or will continue to be instrumental in turning the American idea of Youth Court into the local grass-roots national youth court movement that is now taking hold in other countries around the globe, as it continues to rapidly expand, in and around various geographic areas in America - resulting in hundreds of thousands of youth and adults involved each and every year. The children, youth and families are better off as a result of these individuals, and the many more that will join with the National Association of Youth Courts, Inc., in the coming years, to better serve our most at-risk children, youth and young adults.

The NAYC represents the first ever private national association dedicated to local youth, teen, student, and teen courts across the country. After almost 25 years, local communities now have their own voice and will begin to make their own way into the bold new future of the national youth court movement. While off to an expected slow start, Scott Peterson said “by 2010 the National Association of Youth Courts, Inc. should be providing several useful services to local youth courts”. “I expected it would take four (4) or five (5) years for the National Association to get up and going and I encourage everyone to support it and tolerate patiently the volunteer efforts of those trying to get this up and going”. “I encourage everyone to get involved with it and become a member”. Said Scott Peterson, Chairperson, National Committee to establish the National Association of Youth Courts, Inc. Stay tuned to www.youthcourt.net

2008

Publication of this Global Update On Youth Courts and Teen Courts. 15 Years of the National and International Movement: 1993-2008

In September 2008, *Youth Courts: A Report to the Nation on How Local Grassroots Efforts Led to the Creation of a National Youth Justice Movement* was published. This document was conceived, research and co-written by Youth Court Historian Scott B. Peterson and was co-authored by Scott B. Peterson and Jill Beres, a consultant on the project. The document provides an overview of the youth court movement and chronicles how it has evolved from a handful of local grassroots efforts to a national and international movement. The 45 page report is available on-line and an electronic copy can be obtained by emailing Scott Peterson @ dryouthcourt@aol.com

Author's Bios: Scott Peterson and Jill Beres

Scott Bernard Peterson

After nearly two decades of advocacy and leadership, Scott Peterson is regarded as the leading authority on Youth Courts and Teen Courts here in America and Abroad. In 1993, Scott became the founding director for the Colonie Youth Court in New York. The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services funded the establishment of the Colonie Youth Court and its success led to it being a model for the state of New York.

In 1997, Scott relocated to Washington, D.C. and accepted a position at the United States Department of Justice within the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Scott was hired specifically to develop a National Infrastructure for youth court in America, and did so more than a decade later, as during this time – the Youth Court program experienced unprecedented growth and acceptance across America and in other countries. Scott has visited more than 100 local youth court programs and been the keynote or a featured speaker at more than 50 state and national conferences on youth court.

Scott has been published on the subject of youth court in numerous professional journals and books released by the American Correctional Association, National Juvenile Detention Association, and Scott's efforts to advance the Youth Court movement in America and Abroad is featured in the College and University text book "Corrections in the United States: A Contemporary Perspective," published by Prentice-Hall in 2008.

In 2002, Scott represented the United States Government at the United Nation's Special Session on Children in NYC. This takes place once every ten years to assist UNICEF in developing a blueprint for improving the welfare of children worldwide. Scott organized a Youth Court session at this event that was highlighted as a strategy to reduce worldwide the length of time and number of children who are incarcerated. Scott continues to work with other countries who are interested in establishing a demonstration youth court in their country. In the past year, Scott has traveled to England and Canada to help launch new Youth Court programs. He has served as a keynote speaker at State Youth and Teen Court Conferences in Alaska, Washington, California, New Mexico, New York, South Carolina, Illinois, Wisconsin and Tennessee among numerous others.

Scott received a "Citation" issued by Governor George E. Pataki for his work with Youth Court and he was the recipient of the 2003 *Paul F. Chapman Award* by the Foundation for the Improvement of Justice. Scott was notified by the National Child Labor Committee that he is the recipient of the prestigious 2006 Lewis Hine Award.

In 2007, Scott graduated from the prestigious Federal Bureau of Investigation's Citizen Academy Class of 2007 and Scott served as the founding chairperson to establish the National Association of Youth Courts, Inc. which was incorporated in April of 2007.

In 2008, after a decade of public service within the Executive Branch of the United States Government, Scott left the U.S. Department of Justice and accepted a Senior National Director position at YouthBuild USA & International in Boston, MA. He also works as a private consultant and speaker for select projects here in America and abroad on the topic of Youth Court and Teen Court. Scott also accepted an

appointment to the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice – a group established by the United Nations. In June of 2008, Scott appeared on the ABC Worldwide news broadcast of Nightline where he was interviewed by the Emmy award winning investigative journalist Brian Ross. In 2008, Scott also developed and co-authored the first ever “15 Year Update on Youth Courts and Teen Courts in America and Abroad”. He is currently working on a regional coalition of youth courts in America and will travel to Australia in early 2009 to help with efforts to establish a youth court in the Country, as well as help launch a new national training in the U.S. He is employed at YouthBuild USA as the Senior National Director for Juvenile and Criminal Justice. dryouthcourt@aol.com

Jill C. Beres worked for nine years at the U.S. Department of Justice in the areas of corrections, drug courts, and legislative affairs. Currently she is a consultant to the Justice Department’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. Jill received a B.A. from Rosemont College in Rosemont, Pennsylvania.

Special Thanks

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all the youth courts, teen courts, peer courts, and student courts across the nation. Youth court professionals and volunteers are true pioneers who work tirelessly to support and promote the development and expansion of youth courts in the United States. This document stands not only as an historical overview of the national youth court movement, but also as a testament to the ideas, creativity, and expertise of the thousands of dedicated professionals and volunteers who work in youth courts across the United States. In appreciation for their contributions to this publication, we wish to thank so many of the individuals who contributed ideas and suggestions to this document. We believe that their ideas and suggestions have contributed greatly to the usefulness and authenticity of this document. 1993 to 2008 was the defining time that led to the institutionalization of youth courts and teen courts here in America and to these programs being spread to other parts of the world.