

# UPDATE!



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## WHAT IS ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING?

A common belief many people have about sentencing (or disposition of a case) in both adult and juvenile court is one of commitment to a state institution, or detention in a county facility. But most judges prefer *Alternative Sentencing*, which occurs when the court avoids commitment or detention through another approach – an alternative, such as probation or diversion boards. It does NOT mean avoiding sentencing altogether.

When the Juvenile Court System (JCS) sentences a youth to the alternative of probation, the judge typically has received a fairly comprehensive overview of the youth’s family history, education, criminal involvement, and need for supportive services such as drug and alcohol treatment, anger management class, or other therapeutic counseling. The court also considers the victim’s impact statement, and need for restitution. When the judge orders probation, the order includes specific requirements the youth must address while serving his/her probation time. Some usual requirements include staying enrolled and maintaining a C average in school, paying restitution, performing community service, and

attending any needed treatment/counseling sessions. The youth’s parents or legal guardians are also often required to participate in special classes that train and educate them in successful parenting skills. (Some areas even offer these highly popular classes for any interested parent.)

From a purely economic standpoint, commitment or detention “is an expensive approach,” according to Magistrate Judge John Varin. He cites a rate of \$200.00 per day per youth in state commitment. With a figure of 600 youth in our 8 county region involved in the system each year, routine sentencing to institutional commitment would cost the state over \$43 million per year. Plus, confinement is almost never a viable long-term solution for youth or their families. Statistics showing reduced rates of recidivism strongly support the effectiveness of alternative sentencing programs.



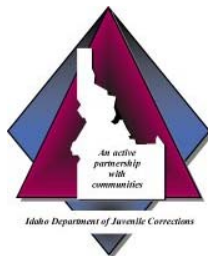
*Judge John Varin, Magistrate Judge, Juvenile Court*

Both Magistrate Court juvenile judges Larry Duff and John Varin support the use of alternative sentencing whenever appropriate for the youth and community.

- Catherine Haynes



Idaho Department of Health and Welfare



Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections

**SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO WORKS!**



### BEST PRACTICES: PARTNERSHIPS SCHOOLS PLAY CRITICAL ROLE FOR JPO

Most area schools work collaboratively with Juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs) to help youth stay on track. If a young person is not in class and has not been reported as ill, the school will typically notify the JPO, who investigates. Some Juvenile Probation offices hire ‘trackers,’ specially trained officers who visit the youth’s home and are also empowered to conduct property and person searches, and administer drug tests. Trackers

Mario Umaña, JoAnn Noble and Humberto “Joey” Castro from the Mini-Cassia JPO visit some youth at their school. They can even access immediate grade reports, thanks to the willingness of educators like principal Steve Copmann of Burley Junior High. Steve and Mario share an open, collaborative relationship based in the commitment that both are equally responsible for each child’s success.

# TRANSITION HOUSE UPDATE

The Transitional House Committee met on February 13 to begin preparing for the final grant presentation on April 24. That will take place in Boise in front of the Economic Advisory Council, competing with 21 other projects. If approved, this additional grant will pay for the rehabilitation of the existing home to accommodate housing for 8 youth and a live-in transitional care team.

Other items included discussion for naming the house; the group agreed to solicit youth input. Long term operational and maintenance funding is still an issue, and proposed solutions include buy-in from county juvenile probation, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, community support, and possible federal grants for homeless youth.

On February 18 Department of Commerce Community Development Specialist Pat



Maderieta met at the site with architect Russ Lively, and staff from Magic Valley Regional Medical Center, Department of Juvenile Corrections and Region IV Development for a walk through of the site. *Note: The address of the transitional house site is 285 Martin, not 284 as reported earlier.*



## YODP STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Joe Herring, Region IV Development Association  
 Judge John Varin, Northside Juvenile Court  
 Judge Larry Duff, Mini-Cassia Juvenile Court  
 Bill Brockman, Twin Falls County Commissioner  
 Veronica Lierman, Jerome County Commissioner  
 Dan Stapelman, Minidoka County Commissioner  
 Bev Ashton, Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections, District 5  
 Candy McElfresh, South Central Idaho Works

## IDAHO JUVENILE CORRECTIONS ACT A VITAL CHANGE IN APPROACH



In 1995, the Idaho Legislature passed the Idaho Juvenile Corrections Act, which has substantially changed the way juvenile offenders are treated.

The Act promotes a balanced approach of accountability, community protection, and competency development. Here is the specific opening text:

*It is the policy of the state of Idaho that the juvenile corrections systems will be based on the following principles: accountability; community protection; and competency development. Where a juvenile has been found to be within the purview of the juvenile corrections act, the court shall impose a sentence that will protect the community, hold the juvenile accountable for his actions, and assist the juvenile in developing skills to become a contributing member of a diverse community. It is the further policy of the state of Idaho that the parents or other legal guardians of the juvenile offender participate*

*in the accomplishment of these goals through participation in counseling and treatment designed to develop more positive parenting skills and an understanding of the family's role in the juvenile's behavior. It is the further intent of the legislature that the parents or legal guardians of the juvenile offender be held accountable, where appropriate, through monetary reimbursement for supervision and confinement of the juvenile offender, and restitution to victims of the juvenile's delinquent acts. In enacting this legislation, the legislature finds that the juvenile corrections system should encompass the following aspects: day treatment, community programs, observation and assessment programs, probation services, secure facilities, after-care and assistance to counties for juveniles not committed to the custody of the department of juvenile corrections. — 20.501*

If you are interested in reading the entire Juvenile Corrections Act, you can find it at [www.djc.state.id.us](http://www.djc.state.id.us) and follow the link.

## TRANSITIONAL HOUSE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bill Brockman, Chair  
 Judge John Vain, Northside Juvenile Court  
 Jim Fields, South Central Community Action Agency  
 Sylvia Ann Bradshaw, Magic Valley Youth and Adult Services  
 Linda Wright, Fifth Judicial District, Trial Court Administrator  
 Bev Ashton, District 5 Juvenile Justice  
 Kathy James, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare  
 Kyla Kelly, Magic Valley Safe Kids Coalition  
 Ray Strolberg, Covenant Insurance  
 La Deane Brown, U.S.D.A.  
 Brian Coffey, Valley House  
 Diana Lincoln Haye, Idaho Diagnostic Sleep Lab  
 Ken Loosle, Magic Valley Regional Medical Center  
 Tom Mikesell, Twin Falls County Commissioner

# CALENDAR

## ADD YOUR EVENT / MEETING

The purpose of this UPDATE is to:

- ◆ **INFORM ALL INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS**
- ◆ **DIALOGUE, INFORM, RESOURCE, CONNECT**
- ◆ **SPOTLIGHT BEST PRACTICES**
- ◆ **EXCHANGE INPUT AND IDEAS**
- ◆ **ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION AND CONNECTIONS**

Please feel free to add your upcoming youth oriented events and meetings by contacting Project Coordinator Catherine Haynes at [catherine@rivda.org](mailto:catherine@rivda.org).

March 4 — District 5 Juvenile Justice Council meeting, Hallows Office Complex on N. Blue Lakes Blvd, Twin Falls, 6:30 p.m.

March 7 — Deadline for submitting follow-up to Transitional House rehab grant request

## GLOSSARY



Because the terminology between juvenile justice, education, and community forums can be confusing, UPDATE will regularly feature a column addressing some of the more commonly misunderstood terms. Your suggestions are welcome!

**Adjudication:** The giving or pronouncing of a decree, or the rendering of a decision on a matter before the court.

**Alternative Sentencing:** Disposition of a youth's case which avoids commitment to a state facility or county detention. The most common alternative sentencing in our area is probation, which has almost always includes requirements such as maintaining a C average in school, working, paying restitution, attending counseling or drug treatment, etcetera. Other alternative sentencing programs include youth court and diversion programs.

**Commitment:** Refers to placing a young offender into a state juvenile corrections facility, such as the one in St. Anthony

**Disposition:** Refers to the sentencing of a youth's case in juvenile court.

**Young Offenders:** (For our grant purposes) Youth who have been adjudicated or convicted for committing delinquent acts, such as crimes against persons, crimes against property, and crimes related to substance abuse.

## CONTACT CONNECT COMMUNICATE

### YODP Project Coordinator:

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### IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELFARE:

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### SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO WORKS:

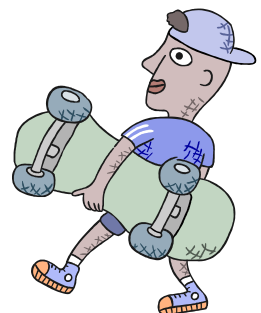
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### IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE CORRECTIONS, DISTRICT 5

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### MAGIC VALLEY YOUTH AND ADULT SERVICES:

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## ATTENTION: YOUTH!

You can email, write, or call Project Coordinator Catherine Haynes at the contact information below.

Personal comments, poetry, or suggestions are welcomed.

Whether you are currently involved with juvenile court system or not – this is an open forum