

Kansas News

25 Receive High School Diplomas at KJCC



Greeting KJCC Graduates, from right to left are: Steve Backman (KJCC, Lawrence Gardner High School, Principal); Chris Moddemog (Smoky Hill Education Service Center, Executive Director); Joe Norwood (KDOC, Secretary); Terri Williams (KDOC, Deputy Secretary); Kyle Rohr (KJCC, Superintendent); Megan Milner (KJCC, Deputy Superintendent); Keith Bradshaw (KJCC, Contract Programs & Finance Executive Director); Wendy Leiker (LJCF, Superintendent); Carolyn Campbell (KS State Board of Education) & Janet Waugh (KS State Board of Education)

In front of their family and friends, their peers and corrections staff, 25 young men received high school or GED diplomas, symbolizing both their hard work in school within KJCC and also the opportunities that lie ahead for them. [Read more](#)

Senate Confirms Joe Norwood as Corrections Secretary

Joe Norwood, nominee for the position of Secretary of the Kansas Department of Corrections, was confirmed unanimously by the Kansas Senate Tuesday, January 17. [Read more](#)

Kansas Lawmakers May Lengthen Timeline for Juvenile Justice Reforms

As they gavel in Monday for the 2017 session, Kansas legislators are considering delaying juvenile justice reforms enacted last year. Last year's bill was intended to steer low-level juvenile offenders into diversion and treatment programs rather than group homes and detention facilities. It had broad bipartisan support, and Gov. Sam Brownback called it the premier legislation of the 2016 session. [Read more](#)

Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) to all 31 Judicial Districts in Kansas

The Kansas Department of Corrections Division of Juvenile Services is in the process of finalizing a contract to partner with Correctional Counseling, Inc. to make Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) available to all 31 judicial districts in Kansas, allowing for consistency between all judicial districts.

MRT consists of four phases: 1. Engagement (steps 1-3); 2. Creating Change (steps 4-8); 3. Reinforcing Permanent Change (steps 9-12); and Transitioning to the Future (steps 13-16). The program is designed to influence how offenders think about moral issues and make moral judgements. As opposed to many other cognitive-behavioral therapies aimed at juvenile offenders, MRT is an open-ended group (i.e. new youth can enter the group at any time and are incorporated into a group of peers who have already completed a number of steps). This structure allows new youth to better understand the MRT process as they progress through the group. Youth in phases 3 and 4 may become mentors for new members. In addition to group sessions, participants complete exercises and steps as homework and present their work to peers in the group setting.

The MRT Training for Group Facilitators is a 32-hour (4-day) training seminar. Anyone who completes the basic MRT training is authorized to facilitate MRT groups. More information and the MRT Training plan will be announced later as it becomes available.

Children in Need of Care: Problem Areas with Juvenile Justice Reform

A top Kansas lawmaker is now acknowledging that a sweeping program to get more kids out of juvenile detention centers and into foster homes is behind schedule. Rep. Russ Jennings, R-Lakin, said a number of technical and outlier issues has caused the first implementation deadline of [Read more](#)

Lawmaker: Kansas Juvenile Justice Reform Needs Refining

A Kansas lawmaker says a program focused on getting more children out of juvenile detention centers and into foster care is falling behind schedule. Republican Rep. Russ Jennings tells the Lawrence Journal World that the Juvenile Justice Reform Act missed the first implementation deadline due to technical and outlier issues. Jennings, who chairs the [Read more](#)

Kansas News

At-Home Juvenile Treatment Program Expanding to Improve Outcomes for Juvenile Offenders

February marks one year of the implementation of an innovative approach to juvenile justice in Southeast Kansas, with effects already improving the way the state addresses juvenile offenders. [Read more](#)

State to Roll out Functional Family Therapy for At-Risk Juveniles

Families of young people adjudicated to the Kansas Department of Corrections' Juvenile Services will soon have a new statewide option that would allow their children to remain in the home. Functional Family Therapy is a new program slated for rollout on Feb. 6 that would give juveniles and [Read more](#)

Human Trafficking

Governor, Secretary Norwood Observe Human Trafficking Awareness Month



Kansas Governor Sam Brownback proclaimed January to be Human Trafficking Awareness Month. [Read more](#)

State Working to Combat Human Trafficking

Good for Gov. Sam Brownback, Attorney General Derek Schmidt and several state agencies for raising awareness about [human trafficking](#) and taking action to combat the crime. Brownback designated January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Schmidt plans to [pursue legislation](#) this coming session to increase penalties on those who buy sex. Secretary of Labor Lana Gordon vowed to keep fighting against labor exploitation, which accounts for nearly 20 percent of human trafficking. [Read more](#)

Backpage.com Shuts Down Adult Services after Senate Report on Sex Trafficking

An online classified ad service shut down its adult content in the U.S. after a damning investigative report on the eve of a Senate hearing. Backpage.com is accused of facilitating sex trafficking and child prostitution. [Read more](#)

Backpage's Adult Sections Shuttered; Online Sex Traffickers Merely Blinked

Headlines blared when the global classified ad giant Backpage.com shut down its adult section on Monday. The move was a desperate attempt to head off a scathing U.S. Senate [subcommittee report](#) linking Backpage to the selling of underage girls for sex. [Read more](#)

The Juvenile Justice Corner

By Jim Johnson, Program Consultant
DOC - Juvenile Community Based Services

The KDOC-JS Mentoring 4 Success Program

If you ask Ken Davis, director of the Kansas Department of Corrections-Juvenile Services Mentoring 4 Success Program, what he likes most about his job, you will likely get a quick response – "It's about the relationships!" Davis goes on to explain, "Every time you get a match it's exciting. You see a smile on both party's faces. It gives you a boost of encouragement. Every single time it validates the program". Mentoring 4 Success is a program designed to match trained and supervised mentors who volunteer their time to focus on providing juvenile participants with support in developing life and job skills that help the youth be successful in the community.

Davis started matching mentors with mentees three years ago. His first match was on February 1, 2014. Davis has finalized 261 matches to date. During his first six months of establishing the mentoring program in juvenile corrections, Davis focused primarily on finding mentors for juveniles at Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex. As he developed and grew the program, he has invested more time across the state in local communities and area offices. Davis stated he is willing to go anywhere to meet with staff within a community corrections agency or with a group of potential mentors. He also appreciates the support he has received through a partnership with adult mentorship coordinators statewide as they have helped provide support in areas when he could not be there. [Continued next page . . .](#)

National News

Justice Department Files Brief to Address Solitary Confinement of Juvenile Offenders in New York

The Justice Department filed a statement of interest today addressing the harmful effects of subjecting juvenile offenders to solitary confinement. The statement of interest was filed in *V.W. et al. v. Conway et al.*, a class action brought by six juveniles and their parents and natural guardians to challenge the placement of youth in solitary confinement in the Onondaga County Justice Center in Syracuse, New York.

[Read more](#)

America's Criminal Justice System is Broken

Editor's Note: Chris Coons is a Democratic US senator representing Delaware. Thom Tillis is a Republican US senator representing North Carolina. The views expressed in this commentary are their own.

As a Democrat from Delaware and a Republican from North Carolina, we disagree on plenty of policy issues. You might think that would be especially true of an issue as historically divisive and politically challenging as crime and punishment. That's not the case. We share a strong belief that America's criminal justice system is broken, focusing far too much on criminalization and incarceration and far too little on rehabilitation.

[Read more](#)

Better Still for Our Convicted Youth

Colorado's most at-risk kids, those being held for convictions or charges of serious crimes in state-run juvenile detention facilities, are getting some much needed attention. These kids, between the ages of 10 and 21, will all someday be released from state custody. It's important for society that the roughly 330 kids currently held in state facilities become productive citizens who don't get caught in the revolving door of incarceration.

[Read more](#)

Study: Juveniles More Likely to Re-Offend if Mother Doesn't Understand Legal Process

Juvenile first-time offenders whose mothers don't get involved in their legal proceedings are much more likely to commit another crime, according to a new study. The study from Michigan State University looked at the cases of more than 300 male juvenile first-time offenders aged 13 to 17. Since juvenile offenders often don't have a present father in their lives, researchers chose to focus on offenders with female primary guardians.

[Read more](#)

Tennessee Task Force Seeks Juvenile Justice Overhaul

As the state legislature reconvenes in Nashville this week, a bipartisan group of lawmakers, juvenile court officials, judges, district attorneys and academics are pushing for a major overhaul in Tennessee's approach to kids who get in trouble with the law. The Juvenile Justice Realignment Task Force on Monday finalized recommendations

[Read more](#)

Staunton Program to Reduce Youth Re-Incarceration Reports Success

The Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Center is reporting a program launched to help reduce re-incarceration rates in youth has seen success so far. The Community Placement Program, or CPP, allows for qualifying juveniles convicted of crimes to spend their time close to home, as opposed to being sent to a facility in another part of the state.

[Read more and watch video](#)

OJJDP – The Future of Youth Justice

Community Based Approaches to Juvenile Justice

[To watch video](#)

The Council of State Governments

School Discipline Consensus Report

The School Discipline Consensus Report presents a comprehensive set of consensus-based and field-driven recommendations to improve conditions for learning for all students and educators, better support students with behavioral needs, improve police-schools partnerships, and keep students out of the juvenile justice system for minor offenses.

[Read more and watch video](#)

[To read the report](#)

New Hampshire Bills Aim to Tackle Disparities in School Discipline

As elsewhere in the nation, research shows that New Hampshire students who are poor, male, have disabilities or are minorities are more likely to be kicked out of school than their peers are. New legislation hopes to help the Granite State tackle this problem.

[Read more](#)

Justice Clearinghouse - Training

Autism Awareness for Justice Personnel

Free Webinar, Tuesday, February 7, 2017 12:00 – 1:00 PM

[Read more and register](#)

Juvenile Justice Information Exchange

Bridging the Research-to-Practice Gap in Juvenile Justice

Across the past decade, the juvenile justice community has been **shifting** its thinking from being "tough on crime" to being "smart on crime." This change has been largely attributed to an enhanced understanding of both **youth development** and the **effectiveness of interventions** to reduce recidivism and promote positive outcomes for youth.

[Read more](#)

FFT Alternatives for Adolescent Offenders Should Be Institutionalized Within System

At the age of 16, Mike was convicted of gun possession. The facts: He was part of a gang . . . When he couldn't make bail, Mike was held at the Horizon Juvenile Detention Center for 18 months, pending his conviction, until the judge in his case was convinced to release him into a program called Families Rising. This evidence-based alternative to incarceration works with youth and their families in their homes and communities, and has compiled an impressive track record since its inception four years ago. Based on the **Functional Family Therapy** (FFT) model. After seven months

[Read more](#)

Trusting the Process

In 2010, reformed drug dealer Thomas Cotton created the faith-based nonprofit **Redemption and Advancement Alliance** to encourage men and women to lead healthy, constructive lives free of crime and negativity. Cotton spent 6 1/2 years in prison and understands firsthand the external factors and

[Read more and watch video](#)

States Must Move Funding from Correctional Facilities to Community-Based Treatment

Across the United States, juvenile arrest rates have reached **40-year lows**, dropping precipitously over the past 20 years. As the national juvenile arrest rates have fallen in recent decades, so too has youth incarceration. States now have a choice: they can continue to invest in the detrimental and ineffective incarceration of youth, or reinvest in community-based alternatives that address the underlying

[Read more](#)

Violent Beginnings: The Hot Dog Story

Every story whether it be fiction, nonfiction, dramatic, happy or sad, all have the same structure, they all have a beginning, a middle and an end. The same goes for people's lives. The story you are about to read, I can assure you

[Read more](#)

The Juvenile Justice Corner continued from page 1

Davis knows how important the program can be as it can make a difference between a successful reentry into the community and new charges. Davis remembers his first call from a young man released to a small town in northeast Kansas. When the young man returned home, he was ostracized and rejected by the local community. The young man's mentor stepped up. By providing onsite emotional support and guidance, he helped locate alternate housing and helped the youth relocate. According to Davis, the mentor went well beyond what the general expectations were. "He helped that kid get through that crisis and they are still in contact today. That kid calls me every month to touch base, out of appreciation, to let me know how he's doing". "Their program was over some time ago," Davis added, "but the mentor is still supporting the youth."

Generally, a mentor providing basic support. Mentors also provide other prosocial benefits by being committed and reliable listeners, while having positive impacts on behavioral and academic outcomes. By providing consistent, nonjudgmental support and guidance, the mentor can develop a trusting relationship with the mentee. That relationship allows the mentor to encourage the mentee through what can be a challenging and critical reentry phase from the juvenile correctional facility to the community. On a case-by-case basis, the mentor may make a difference in a young person's life that allows them to **have a profound and lasting effect**.

Davis is excited about the future of mentoring in Kansas. Thus far, long-term program outcomes appear promising. Since the beginning of the program three years ago, Davis is aware of only one out of 261 juveniles that have been charged and convicted as an adult that went through the mentorship program. Davis envisions more opportunities to involve youth earlier in a preventive type program. He wants to contribute to the changes involving the juvenile intake and assessment centers and the schools across the state. He wants to reach out to more community corrections staff, court service officers, probation officers, and anyone else working with at risk youth. You can contact Ken Davis by phone at **785-249-6341** or by e-mail at Kenneth.Davis@ks.gov.