

Kansas News

Kansas Rep. Russ Jennings Dies at 66 After Battle with Cancer

Rep. Russ Jennings, a Lakin Republican who was a leader on juvenile justice and law enforcement issues in the Kansas House, died Wednesday after a battle with cancer. He was 66. House Speaker Ron Ryckman Jr. announced Jennings' death in a letter to representatives. "Over the past few months, he has fought hard through treatments and embraced every minute with his family," Ryckman said. "Every time we talked after a treatment, he was motivated and inspired to fight this thing, to enjoy life and to finish out his term. But God had other plans." [Read more . . .](#)

Hearings Held for Interim Legislative Session

On October 25, 26 and 27, 2021, the Joint Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice Oversight met to conduct interim session hearings and tour facilities. The committee toured Lansing Correctional Facility the morning of October 25 and Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex the morning of October 27. Records and submitted testimony can be found on the website of the Kansas Legislature [click here](#). Links to audio/visual recordings of the hearings

Monday, October 25th [Click here . . .](#)

Tuesday, October 26th [Click here . . .](#)

Wednesday, October 27th [Click here . . .](#)

KJCC Hosts Speaker on Life Choices

On Thursday, November 18th Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex hosted an assembly with author, life coach and motivational speaker [Ron James](#) addressing the youth and staff. James reviewed his life story giving an account of his personal struggles and the impact that personal choices he made resulted in consequences that he had to live with and accept, to include over 20 years of battling severe alcohol and drug addiction while being in and out of prison. Prior to the assembly, youth watched a movie titled [Choices: The Ron James Story](#).



Speaker Ron James addresses youth at KJCC on Making Choices

James told the youth "I am here to help you get hope" and that it is important to recognize that "**we don't know - what we don't know**". James added "the choices we make have consequences and the choices I made ended up in a situation like this (being incarcerated) – I could get mad at everyone and take it out on the next person – but I signed up for it – we signed up for it".

James encouraged the youth to be open to the opportunities they have to make life changing choices. He stated "I know some of you may have come into this room and you may have had different thoughts or different motives – 'I know he ain't talking about me.' Yes, I am. **You don't know - what you don't know.**"

James advised the youth that if you sow seeds of anger, it will grow into more anger. He stated that what made the difference in his life was his mom who would tell him "**Good, better, best – may you never rest until your good gets better and your better best**". James advised the youth how important it was to trust people that are trying to help them be 'better' and to achieve their 'best'. He stated "the same way that my mom gave me everything I needed to be my better and best, this lady here (Superintendent Milner) . . . and these staff are pouring everything they can into you." He encouraged the youth to take advantage of their opportunities.

Finally, James told the youth that "what you tell yourself has an action. The important thing to do is to change your thinking". If you look at the facility like they owe you something, "you'll end up where you are at now. But if you look for opportunities to change – you will – and you can change."

Nonprofit Report Calls for Closing Last Juvenile Prison, Keeping Kids Out of System

Number of Kansas teens incarcerated has fallen for several years after reforms enacted in 2016

Incarcerating young Kansans is more costly and inhumane than providing community services, education and mentoring to keep them out of the juvenile justice system, according to a new report by a nonprofit pushing the state to shutter its last juvenile prison. [Kansas-based Progeny](#), which focuses on juvenile justice reform, [released a report Thursday](#) outlining steps it believes lawmakers should take to close [Read more . . .](#)

DCF – Family First Updates

To access the August/September/October 2021 edition of the DCF [Family First Prevention](#) Services newsletter [Click here . . .](#)

The Juvenile Justice Corner

**Hope Cooper, Deputy Secretary
DOC - Juvenile and Adult Community-Based Services**

In Honor of a Giant

When you hear of a giant one may think of a physically large person or maybe even those obstacles that hinder our progress forward. Webster's defines giant as "a being of enormous size (magnitude) and strength (effective or binding source)". Additional definitions are in parentheses. It is that definition of enormous magnitude and effective or binding source that create a picture of the late Russ Jennings.

Recently, Kansas lost this powerful giant in criminal justice. Much has been said and written about him and the impact of his work. His achievements are vast and very impactful. The magnitude of his impact to the work really is immeasurable. It is the magnitude of his impact to people that will be forever missed. He was so good at bringing people together. He had a way of leading you right to where you needed to be. He could "pepper" you with questions that from anyone else would leave a person feeling small, but not with him. His understanding of the justice system was certainly framed by his professional experiences, but he didn't leave it there. He wanted to learn more, and he would ask for more from you so he could learn. He was a true advocate for criminal justice issues, a mentor, a leader in every sense of the word and a friend to all. **This giant will be greatly missed.**

The Crossover Youth Practice Model - Update

**Daniel Olson, CYPM Coordinator
Office of Judicial Administration**

Montgomery County and Shawnee County continue their path towards implementing the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM). They are making strides with information obtained from the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR). These two counties are working towards developing "101" cross-system training, completing an inventory of assessments, and collecting data from youth and families through listening sessions. These sessions are an important part of implementing CYPM as it gains firsthand knowledge from individuals who were involved in the Juvenile Justice and/or Child Welfare systems. This information will be used to identify positive and negative procedures that affect the youth. By discovering barriers, procedures can be updated to better serve the youth and family. Shawnee County held its first session at the beginning of October 2021 and has two more scheduled later in the same month, while Montgomery County completed its session in September 2021. CJJR will then evaluate the information from these sessions and present them back to the counties.

CJJR continues to provide information for Sedgwick County to have its current model become more in line with CYPM. Sedgwick County continues to explore options with its current system and make updates as needed. For the past couple of months, Sedgwick County has been creating an inventory of the assessments that are used in each agency that is involved with youth. They are compiling the assessments to gain a better understanding of what information each agency collects.

To learn more about the Crossover Youth Practice Model and information regarding past and upcoming meetings of the State Policy Team [click here . . .](#)

National News – Crossover Youth

Never Too Early: Moving Upstream to Prevent Juvenile Justice, Child Welfare, and Dual System Involvement

"Traveling by stealth, from one system of care to another," is how some describe the population of young people known as "crossover youth." Indeed, it was the need for better serving this group of youth that motivated the creation of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy in 2007. In that regard, the Center was designed to support public and private agency leaders and staff from across the country, representing local, state, and tribal jurisdictions, in learning how to better meet the needs of this too often invisible population. [Read more . . .](#)

Idaho Publishes Reports on Crossover Youth

Crossover Youth in Eastern Idaho: Results from the District 6 Crossover Youth Practice Model Pilot Project presents the results of a pilot project in Bannock, Oneida, and Power Counties. Stakeholders from across the juvenile justice and child welfare systems came together in 2019 to begin implementing the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM). Fully implemented in February 2020, the CYPM aims to streamline services for "crossover youth", youth who are involved in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, by bringing together stakeholders from both systems to create joint case management plans that provide the most appropriate services to crossover youth in a more efficient manner. ISAC found that youth who "crossed over" after the CYPM was implemented experienced better outcomes on a wide range of measures as compared to youth who crossed over prior to CYPM implementation. [Read the report . . .](#)

Human Trafficking – Kansas

New Report Ranks Child Sex Trafficking Legislation in Kansas and Missouri. Both Failed

Both **Kansas** and **Missouri** received failing grades in a new analysis of [state laws on child and youth sex trafficking](#). The report cards, published Wednesday by [Shared Hope International's Protected Innocence Challenge](#), are the first to use a new grading system that analyzes "advanced legislative framework." **Missouri** received an F, taking the hardest hit in the areas of prevention and training. **Kansas** ranked slightly better than Missouri, but also received a failing grade, with prevention and training also its weakest areas, followed closely by continuum of care. [Read more . . .](#)

Human Trafficking – National

What Does Human Trafficking Look Like in Rural Missouri?

An undercover human trafficking operation has led to two victims being rescued and a **Missouri** man being arrested. The Platte County prosecutor reports 29-year-old Sean D. Green faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted. Investigators say the break-in this case happened during an undercover operation at the Argosy Casino on Aug. 26 in the Kansas City area. [WDAF in Kansas City reports](#) undercover officers met up with the victims. They told officers during an interview they were routinely sent on dates by an individual by the name of "Huss," an alias used by the suspect. [Read more and watch video . . .](#)

Understanding Human Trafficking

We understand that human trafficking, like any human rights violation, is a complex topic, but understanding these complexities is the best weapon we have in the fight to end it. We created an interactive free online training program comprised of six modules which address what human trafficking is, how it happens, who the victims and traffickers are, highlights the importance of knowing the story vs. knowing the signs, and discusses what we can all do in the fight against human trafficking. [Read more . . .](#)

NCSL - National Conference of State Legislatures

Even as Pandemic Limits Services, States Steer Kids from Justice System

The juvenile justice system saw some highs and lows during the pandemic, according to a panel at the 2021 NCSL Legislative Summit. Many of the programs meant to support youth who wind up in the system were extremely limited or shut down, according to Anne Teigen, associate director of NCSL's Criminal Justice Program. But some states managed to pass reforms that help more kids avoid the system altogether, which saves the states money and spares the youths from being dogged by a criminal background. [Read more . . .](#)

Annie E. Casey Foundation

Frequently Asked Questions about Juvenile Probation

Youth probation is the [most common outcome](#) in cases referred to juvenile delinquency courts in the United States year after year. At its best, probation offers court-involved juveniles the chance to remain in their community and be connected to constructive and therapeutic activities rather than being incarcerated. However, probation can also become a gateway to unnecessary confinement for youth who frustrate authorities with noncompliant behavior but pose minimal risk to public safety. This overreliance on confinement disproportionately affects youth of color and exacerbates the already severe racial and ethnic disparities plaguing [Read more . . .](#)

Building a Unified System to Better Serve Young People

Despite their many talents and aspirations, young adults are struggling to find well-paying jobs and are achieving financial self-sufficiency later in life. Economic downturns and uncoordinated educational and training systems are to blame, according to a new report funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and released by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW). The report, [If Not Now, When?](#), documents trends that put pressure on young people as they attempt to achieve economic independence. It notes that the recessions in 2001 and 2008 severely damaged the job market for youth and [Read more . . .](#)

Juvenile Justice Information Exchange

A New Yorker's One-time Criminal Charge, Juvenile Probation and Homelessness

In the eyes of court officials with say-so over whether he remains free or on lockdown, Nasheem Heath has mostly made the right moves since, at age 16, he was arrested for pointing a pistol at a random stranger and snatching that man's necklace and cash. Heath has not been re-arrested. He has held a seasonal job with a moving company. What he still doesn't have is a home to call his own or the kind of income that would let him afford it. Heath has not been re-arrested. He has held a seasonal [Read more . . .](#)

2021 DOC-Juvenile Services Training Schedule

New Employee Kansas Detention Assessment Instrument (KDAI) Training

Zoom Thursday December 16th, 2021
Times 10 am – 4:00 pm

All intake workers, supervisors and anyone who approves intakes and placement decisions must be trained in administering the KDAI. These trainings are reserved for intake workers and supervisors. Due to COVID-19 precautions, KDAI trainings are being provided via the zoom platform. For more information on KDAI training or to register contact Steve Bonner at steven.bonner@ks.gov

2022 DOC-Juvenile Services Training Schedule

New Employee Kansas Detention Assessment Instrument (KDAI) Training

Zoom Thursday January 13th, 2022
Times 10 am – 4:00 pm

All intake workers, supervisors and anyone who approves intakes and placement decisions must be trained in administering the KDAI. These trainings are reserved for intake workers and supervisors. Due to COVID-19 precautions, KDAI trainings are being provided via the zoom platform. For more information on KDAI training or to register contact Steve Bonner at steven.bonner@ks.gov

Mental Health Training Curriculum – Juvenile Justice (MHTC-JJ)

KJCC - The Mental Health Training Curriculum – Juvenile Justice (MHTC-JJ) will be available for new employees from Judicial Districts to attend at Kansas Juvenile Correction Complex as a part of KJCC's new employee orientation.

To inquire about upcoming trainings or if you have questions please contact Lt. Johnathon Ashley at johnathon.ashley@ks.gov or 785-354-9820. KJCC will have MHTC-JJ training as a part of their basic training for new employees approximately every four weeks.

National News

I Was Sentenced to Life as a Juvenile. Now I Help Kids Build Brighter Futures

I never expected to work with youth. Growing up, I did well in school. I was a huge baseball fan, particularly of the Chicago Cubs. But by age 17, I was entrenched in street life and hustling. I was arrested for a double murder and kidnapping and sentenced to natural life plus 30 years at the age of 17. I took a plea deal, but either way, I expected to spend most of my life [Read more . . .](#)

Making Youth Detention 'Obsolete'

St. Johns, **Arizona**, calls itself "the town of friendly neighbors." With a population of around 3,500 people and a surrounding landscape of ponderosa pine forests and rolling hills peppered with cattle, the quaint town is as bucolic and all-American as it gets. It's why Michael Latham moved here with his wife and kids back in 2009. "My wife's mom is from St. Johns, and we would come here for family things," says Latham, who was raised in the Mormon Church and studied law at [Read more . . .](#)

Researchers Develop Intervention to Cut Recidivism Among Children Reentering School from Justice System

For a child leaving juvenile detention, building a relationship with a teacher who believes in them can make all the difference. A new Stanford-led study suggests that a personalized one-page letter can go a long way toward helping forge that relationship - and reduce the likelihood that the student will re-offend. Researchers found that this letter, which articulated the child's aspirations and asked for their teacher's support, reduced recidivism to juvenile detention through the next semester from 69 percent to 29 percent in a small initial sample [Read more . . .](#)

Time for an All-One-System Approach to Youth Policy

Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

The United States needs a new all-one-system approach that supports youth on their journey through education and training and into careers, according to a new publication from the *Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce* (CEW). [If Not Now, When? The Urgent Need for an All-One-System Approach to Youth Policy](#) suggests major changes in programs for youth from early childhood through early career. The nation has long had a disjointed approach to youth policy, with pre-K-12, postsecondary education, and the workforce operating in silos that allowed many young people to [Read more . . .](#)

Council of State Governments – Justice Center

Site Snapshot: Update on How Three Counties Are Serving High-Needs Populations

Across the U.S., hundreds of jurisdictions have committed to improving their systems' responses to "high-needs" or "priority populations" - community members who frequently and repeatedly encounter law enforcement, jails, emergency departments, and other social services. The CSG Justice Center is highlighting three of these communities: Bernalillo County, New Mexico; Fulton County, Georgia; and Polk County, Iowa. Each of these jurisdictions is both a [Stepping Up Innovator](#) and a [MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge](#) site. This snapshot will [Read more . . .](#)