

Berks County Evening Reporting Center

Reading, PA

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Berks County, PA at a Glance

- Total population: 403,595
- Juvenile Population (10-17): 43,611
- Berks County Latino Population: 14.12%
- Berks County African-American population: 4.37%
- Reading School District Latino enrollment: 77%
- Reading School District Af.-Am. enrollment: 12%

(2008-2009 PDE Data)



Juvenile Probation

Berks County Juvenile Justice at a Glance

- Youth referred to Juvenile Probation 2009:1086
- Race and Ethnicity of Youth Referred 2009:
 - White/Hispanic 36%
 - Black/Hispanic 9%
 - White/Non-Hisp. 37%
 - African Am./Non-Hisp. 17%
 - Other 1%



Juvenile Probation

ERC Development

- ERC was a recommendation from Alternatives to Detention Sub-Committee
- Steering Committee formed in 2006
- Data collected, files reviewed, Court observations, interviews with stakeholders
- Lack of alternatives to detention identified
 - Loss of shelter beds
 - No structured decision making tool for detention
 - Lack of evidence-based in home services available



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ERC Development

- Identified desired population/location from zip code analysis
- Site visits to Baltimore, Chicago, Pittsburgh
- Reviewed bids from two local service providers
- Invited Sub-Committee members, Judge, DA, PD, and probation officials to visit and “score” proposals
- Selected Children’s Home of Reading (CHOR) as provider
- Consulted with CHOR regarding ERC hires
- Participated in employee interviews for ERC Program Supervisor



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ERC Development

FUNDING

Start-up funding from MacArthur Foundation

Continued funding from a combination of State and Local dollars through PA Needs Based Plan and Budget (PA Promising Practice Grant 90/10 split)- incentives for community based services as opposed to residential services



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ERC Program Overview

- Designed to serve Berks County pre-adjudicated and adjudicated delinquent adolescent males
- Typical ERC clients are placed as part of the graduated response system of accountability or pending adjudication or violation court hearings
- Rooted in Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) principles
- Keeps youth in their home community by providing meaningful community-based interventions as an alternative to secure detention
- Capacity is 8-15 youth with an anticipated average daily census of 12
- Short term program with a projected 30 day average length of stay
- ERC clients are placed on Electronic Monitoring or house arrest by the courts/ juvenile probation department



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Program Location / Facilities

- Program is located in the Robert W. Cardy Educational Building
- Cardy Building houses the CHOR Day Academy private academic school
- Located at
1040 Nicholls Street
Reading, PA
- Juvenile Probation has
office space, phone, and
computer access at the
facility



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Program Location / Facilities



Cafeteria



Juvenile Probation

Program Location / Facilities



Gymnasium



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Program Location / Facilities



Computer Room



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Program Location / Facilities



Library



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Program Location / Facilities



Classrooms



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A Collaborative Effort

ERC is a collaborative effort designed to work closely with schools, juvenile probation, parents / families and other community human service providers

SCHOOLS:

- Program staff visit the home schools of the clients in an effort to establish working relationships with the institutions
- School attendance, behaviors and grades are monitored
- Schools are encouraged to provide daily homework for the youth to complete at the program. If no homework provided, the program provides appropriate grade level assignments / exercises



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A Collaborative Effort (cont.)

FAMILY:

- Attempts are made to engage the family at time of admission to provide program introduction and gather background information
- Family contacts are made to monitor client behavior in the home
- Family is encouraged to contact program staff with any questions / concerns they may have

OTHER PROVIDERS

- Probation utilizes community human service providers to perform various court ordered assessments and as possible aftercare providers for youth that remain in the community



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A Collaborative Effort (cont.)

PROBATION OFFICERS

- Presence at the facility during program hours is encouraged
- Visibility of probation officers is important in establishing a service milieu in which a united team approach is presented
- Probation Officer is considered a member of the service team and open dialogue is recommended
- Drug testing is provided by probation and can be performed on-site



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JPO Collaboration Implementation

- JPO's appear at intake with youth and parent
- JPO required visitation 2x per week
- Quarterly meetings between JPO administration and ERC staff
- JPO administrative staff have attended ERC weekly staff meetings



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Typical Program Day

In operation from :

3:00 – 10:00 pm Monday through Friday, except major Holidays

- 3:00pm – 3:30pm Client transportation
- 3:30pm – 4:00pm Community Group / Goals / Intro
- 4:00pm – 5:30pm Educational Time
- 5:30pm – 6:00pm Dinner
- 6:00pm – 7:30pm Therapeutic Group
- 7:30pm – 8:30pm Community Service / Recreation
- 8:30pm – 9:00pm Focus / Goal Group
- 9:00pm - ? Client transportation



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Program Implementation

- The Typical Program Day was a framework for the program start-up process.
- By program design, it was anticipated there would be increased program involvement by approved community members / agencies.
- ERC programming underwent program schedule changes that were collaboratively agreed upon. Changes included community service projects / sites, tutors, groups and activities.

In essence, the ERC program is a work in progress.



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Admission Process

- All referrals come from Berks County Court / Juvenile Probation
- Upon admission, each client completes:
 - STAR educational assessment - a computer generated assessment utilized in the school
 - Administered by ERC staff
 - Utilized to establish educational grade level of ERC clients in Math and English.
 - Results will assist with generating grade appropriate homework assignments and will be released to BCJPO
 - Bio-Psycho-Social Screening Tool
 - Administered by ERC staff
 - Utilized to assist with identification of areas of concern with clients
 - Information is gathered from client, parents and BCJPO
 - Results are released to BCJPO
 - The Allegheny County Competency Development Needs and Strengths Assessment
 - Administered by ERC staff
 - Results are released to BCJPO



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JPO Implementation of Program Assessments and Documentation

- Strengths, needs and clinical assessments shared with probation staff
- Discharge summary helps guide disposition recommendation
- Satisfaction surveys are completed by JPO, the client's parents / guardians, and the client.
- Non ERC Assessments :
In an effort to increase family competency, Probation and Program staff work collaboratively in encouraging and assisting parents / clients to attend community based court-ordered assessments and treatment.



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Security

- Upon arrival, clients go through security measures
 - Clients check in all materials, coats, backpacks, etc. upon entering facility
 - Clients remove their shoes and all items from their person for inspection/storage
 - A metal detector is used on all clients upon entering the building
 - Clients turn their pockets inside out, lift their pant legs and shake their waistbands for inspection
- Security cameras are located in facility
- Staff secure facility – doors are unlocked from inside
- Entrance to the facility is secured



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Program Staffing

- 1 Full Time Masters Level Program Supervisor
- .75 Part Time Masters Level Clinicians
- 1 Full Time Bachelors or Equivalent Level Interventionist
- 2 Full Time High School Graduate or Equivalent Life Skills Worker
- 1 Part Time Food Service Worker



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Cultural Competency

- All staff received Cultural Competency training as part of new hire orientation
- In keeping with Balanced and Restorative Justice principles, CHOR hired applicants from the communities in which our client's reside.
- ERC staff is representative of the population served
- All ERC staff are bi-cultural and bilingual



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OUTCOMES

- Demographics – Age, Race, Gender, Address
- Maintain / Improve Academic attendance
- Attendance at Judicial hearings while in program
- Remanded to a higher level of care while in the program
- Discharge Code – Successful, Unsuccessful, Other

Since inception on 12/15/2008 through 9/30/2010:

- 129 kids referred to program
 - White / Non-Hispanic 13 – 10%
 - White / Hispanic 70 – 54%
 - Black / Hispanic 24 – 19%
 - Black / Non-Hispanic 22 – 17%
- Students have maintained or improved their academic attendance
- Clients had 100% attendance at court hearings
- 3 clients have committed new charges
- 85% of clients have been successfully discharged
- 5 unexcused absences from the program



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Community Collaboration

Sample of Community Involvement:

- Albright College
- Driven Ministries
- Million Youth Chess Club
- Community Prevention Partnership
- Berks Co. Domestic Relations Office
- Council on Chemical Abuse
- Reading Area Community College
- Rdg Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program
- Career Link
- Easy Does It Inc.
- Planned Parenthood
- Caron Foundation –Kids of Promise
- ELECT Fatherhood Initiative
- Facts of Life Curriculum
- Berks Women in Crisis
- Marywood College



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Community Collaboration

Sample of Community Activities:

- Cabela's
- Clifton Crosby NFL presenter
- Our Voices Theatre Presentation
- School Board election forum
- Fishing
- Arbor Education and Training
- Martin Luther King Presentation
- Reading Community College visit
- Chess In The Park
- Albright College visit
- Wrapped Christmas presents at mall
- CHOR Mural project
- Cartooning Class
- Reading Phillies Game
- Black Top Basketball
- Inter-city Boxing



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Questions?



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