1999

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The Juvenile Justice System of Richmond: Progression into the Future

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INTRODUCTION

The area of juvenile justice in America is a growing concern among both urban and rural community leaders. According to the Community Collaborative for Youth, the juvenile violent crime rate in Richmond is triple the state average. The juvenile violent crime rate is the percentage of violent crime committed by a person under the age of eighteen. This is merely one aspect of the adversity facing the juvenile justice system in the eyes of the community. As a result of the growing need for information on the subject, a great deal of literature has been published about the risk factors, prevention, and rehabilitation measures. Much of this information is useful to existing court officials; however, knowledge about specific gaps in juvenile justice systems and what services and resources are needed to fill these gaps have yet to be explored. It is this subject, gaps in the juvenile justice system and possible solutions, which will be examined in this study. An investigation was performed using available literature on the subject of juvenile justice concerning risk factors, prevention, and rehabilitation. This research led me to understand that many of the existing gaps fit into these three categories.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The juvenile justice system has evolved throughout history. The system is currently under scrutiny as to whether punishment, rehabilitation, or trying juveniles as adults is the most effective means of operating. Studies performed by the University of Alaska Anchorage have identified that, historically speaking, protection and rehabilitation were the primary purpose of juvenile procedures. Before 1900, juveniles in the justice system were treated more or less as adults were. Based on efforts by the
“child savers” in 1899, by 1925 nearly all states had enacted juvenile court acts. From the 1950s to 1970s, the rehabilitation model and the protection of juveniles under the philosophy *parens patriae* (states acting in the best interest of the child) (the juvenile court treats the child as would a kind and loving father) faced questioning because it failed to prevent delinquency. In the 1970s children were given the constitutional rights afforded to adults. By the 1980s failure of rehabilitation and due process protections to control delinquency led to a shift to a crime control and punishment philosophy similar to the adult criminal justice system. Now, in the 1990s, the juvenile justice system is relying on deterrence, defined as the prevention or discouragement of someone acting by means of fear or doubt. Therefore, more research is needed to identify what can be done to make this a more effective and efficient system, and what measures must be taken to reduce juvenile crime.²

**RISK FACTORS**

Much literature exists which delves into service barriers for high-risk youth. There are an infinite number of high-risk children who never have the opportunity to benefit from the positive programs available for them and are now making their way through the juvenile court system.³ This study, “Barrier Busting: A Road Map for the Elimination of Service Barriers for High Risk Youth in Virginia Communities” is asking pertinent questions in relation to high-risk juveniles. Such as, why are some children not getting involved in these helpful and life changing programs and what communities can do to ensure that these barriers to the receipt of such services are removed?

A study prepared by Virginia Commonwealth University, “The Youth Matters: Positive Youth Development Best Practices”, states that there is an assumption that by
reducing or countering risks, problems associated with those risks will be prevented. They identify youth risk factors as community (availability of drugs, availability of firearms), family (family history of high-risk behavior, family conflict, parental attitudes and involvement), school (early and persistent antisocial behavior, academic failure in school, lack of commitment to school), and individual/peer (friends who engage in problem behavior, early initiation to problem behavior, friends who engage in problem behavior). The study also brings to attention resiliency factors. Resiliency factors are those natural conditions in a high-risk child’s life which makes him or her able to overcome the dangers of the aforementioned risk factors. The study states that “not all high-risk youth will become juvenile delinquents, substance abusers, school drop-outs, or teen parents. Resiliency or protective factors in young people’s lives buffer or counter the negative impact of risk factors.” The study then describes “Best Practices” in the areas of crime prevention, after-school programs, etc. Through these programs, communities and families can combat risk factors for juveniles who do not have natural resiliency factors. Although this literature helps identify risk factors, it does not address whether or not the juvenile justice system is actively making positive strides towards preventing these juveniles from becoming part of the system.

Furthermore, a study in the Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology examines the relationship of family problems to patterns of delinquent involvement among urban youth. The dysfunction of families is identified as a risk factor for juveniles and it is becoming apparent that research supports this theory. The results of this study find that “poor family functioning is related to participation in antisocial and delinquent behavior and most of the major types of problem behaviors.” Members of delinquency groups
who are involved in "serious chronic offending" are more likely to have families characterized by various problems such as disruption, conflict, and lack of parental involvement. The study also brings to attention that a causal direction of effect cannot be identified because it is possible that delinquent behavior in youth can affect family functioning.

A "National Survey of Juvenile Needs Assessment" printed in *Crime and Delinquency* explores the needs of juveniles in high-risk situations. One of the survey questions asks about the characteristics of the high-need, high-risk juveniles and subsequently, a profile emerged from the findings. High-need, high-risk juveniles:

- live with mother only
- have a parent or sibling with a criminal or delinquent history
- have been abused (physically, emotionally, and sexually) and neglected
- come from dysfunctional home environments
- come from economically deprived home environments
- score below average on ability tests
- have poor educational achievement records
- have poor school attendance or have dropped out of school
- have been placed in learning disabled or emotionally disabled classes
- have substance abuse problems

The identification of the attributes in this profile helped many states develop formal needs assessment instruments to better help the high-risk youth in their area. This literature relates to my research in that existing studies reveal the needs of high-risk youth, while this work emphasizes where the juvenile justice system is not meeting these needs.

Part of the 1993 Barriers Research Project, "Barrier Busting: A Road Map for the Elimination of Service Barriers for High Risk Youth in Virginia Communities," contains further information on high-risk youth. It identifies four main themes regarding the barriers to services. Economic issues, image issues, referrals and race are barriers that
emerged in their study. An image issue addresses the degree to which information about a given program is unavailable, affects whether or not people in need are aware of the existence of a program and therefore, image affects the utilization of a service. Referrals to certain intervention programs are not made because of a lack of awareness of the existence of the program, discrimination, or the fact that there is no discernible pattern in the way children were being referred. Race is an issue because of the over-representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system in Virginia. The study identified the themes and then suggested action steps to overcome these barriers. An example of an action step is given here for the issue of economics. Economic issues may be a barrier to high-risk children getting the services they are in need of. The service agency may not have the funds to offer needed services to clients, or the families of at-risk youth may have economic issues that prohibit them from pursuing or maintaining treatment for their children. The action steps that the research project proposed include: contacting local businesses to fund scholarships for low-income youth to participate in fee-based programs, contacting local churches to secure volunteers to transport clients who could not otherwise attend, and developing a grant clearinghouse to increase funding opportunities for local intervention programs. This paper delves beyond the generalities of existing literature, focusing mainly on high-risk youth, and examining gaps in prevention and rehabilitation services.

PREVENTION

Following the trend of prevention and deterrence in the juvenile justice system of the 1990s, “Youth Matters: Positive Youth Development Best Practices”, a study done by
the Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory at Virginia Commonwealth University, reveals information on both Crime Prevention and After-School Programs. The "Best Practices" identified four programs which could be applied to Richmond for Crime Prevention: Family Programs, School Programs, Community Programs, and Sanction Programs. Family Programs provide parent training for managing troublesome children and programs preventing family violence. These programs also include early intervention approaches, preschool, and parental training. School Programs provide education on gang resistance, peer-group counseling, anti-bullying, school discipline, and interpersonal problem solving. These programs are offered in affiliation with local public schools in a variety of ways. Community Programs are programs in which communities organize themselves and mobilize effort against violence, crime, and gangs. They also include mentoring and after-school recreation activities/programs based in the community. This literature found that family programs reduce aggression and hyperactivity in children, building school morale and commitment to the school through School Programs reduces crime and delinquency, and Community Programs such as mentoring and after-school programs reduce both drug abuse and vandalism in public housing.9

Best Practices has determined that the impact of after-school activities is not conclusive. However, children participating in after-school activities have less time to become involved in risky behaviors than students who have free time after school. These reasons verify the need to explore after-school programs: to assess the gaps in the juvenile justice system, and possible solutions.
REHABILITATION

Literature on rehabilitation measures for juvenile delinquents is readily available due to the trend in immediate intervention programs such as Anger Management and Juvenile Boot Camps. The Final Report of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services on Evaluation of the Richmond City Continuum of Juvenile Justice Services Pilot Program, House Document No. 3, examines Anger Management and Virginia Juvenile Boot Camp programs. Anger Management is a non-residential program designed for juveniles who lack appropriate skills to deal with anger and frustration. Typically, these juveniles have a history of violent behavior and assault charges. The children participate in weekly sessions, which focus on teaching necessary conflict resolution skills. The Virginia Juvenile Boot Camp is a five-month, military-style secure residential program. The Boot Camp is designed for non-violent offenders who might otherwise be mainstreamed into the Department of Juvenile Justice and committed. At the Boot Camp, juveniles attend classes and participate in military drills, recreational activities, work duties, and group counseling daily. The Virginia Boot Camp Program also includes a six-month, non-residential Aftercare program. The main goal of the Aftercare program is to help offenders transfer the skills they obtained in the Boot Camp to community living.

The American Bar Association published an article entitled, “Juvenile Boot Camps Don’t Make Sense”, which opposes the theory that juvenile boot camps are an effective rehabilitation method. This article asserts that “boot camps for juveniles are the latest in this dangerous trend [young teenagers being treated as adult criminals] and will be as ineffective as wholesale incarceration of youth in adult facilities.” The article
takes a nurturing spin and states that boot camps violate the basic principles of adolescent development. These principles are identified as:

- Teenagers are fairness fanatics.
- Teenagers reject imposed structure.
- Teenagers respond to encouragement.

On this premise, boot camps are not working as the intended rehabilitative programs, but instead are counterproductive. Young people are reacting against the imposed structure, punishment, and unfairness. "Even when they have committed serious crimes, young people have different needs than adults". 11 On one hand, Virginia's Boot Camp Program is seen as an effective means of rehabilitation for our juvenile offenders, yet literature exists which opposes this view. This study will explore this discrepancy.

Further literature exists on the topic of rehabilitation and community-based correctional facilities. An issue that divides the field of juvenile justice is the extent to which residential placements are necessary, the best settings for such placements, and the most effective way to run them. An article in Federal Probation indicates that "residential placement prevents some immediate crimes through incapacitation, even though it may be less effective in reducing recidivism rates (the fraction of youth rearrested or returned to custody for particular types of behavior, within some specified period) in the long run". The article looks at the leadership of these programs and their effectiveness. The article states that reforms are needed in the field of rehabilitation and that the field is "far too driven by fad and prejudice and not near enough by results". 12

The literature that most closely mirrors the work of this study comes from the book No Matter How Loud I Shout. Edward Humes' book is one man's opinion of how the juvenile courts can successfully function as an integral component for reducing
juvenile crime in the city of Los Angeles. He cites a multitude of problems in the court system including inadequate facilities, too few judges and personnel, too few placement options, lack of mental health services, and too few probation officers. This study will examine where the stakeholders in the juvenile justice system find gaps in the system and how they think these gaps can be filled.

METHODOLOGY

This study will focus on answering the following questions:

1. What are the gaps in the Richmond area juvenile justice system?
2. What are the resources needed to fill these gaps?

In attempting to answer these questions the problem of juvenile justice is investigated extensively through the review of existing literature. Research led to the understanding that many of the existing gaps fit into the three categories of risk factors, prevention and rehabilitation. After the examination of these three issues, data was collected from Richmond's Citizens Advisory Council and outside organization whose functions intersect with the Richmond juvenile justice system.

In this study, the terms juvenile and delinquent will be defined as they are defined in Virginia's Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Courts Information Pamphlet. Juvenile is defined as any person under 18 years of age. Delinquent is defined as a juvenile who has committed an act which would be a crime if committed by an adult.

The first set of data was collected from Richmond's Citizens Advisory Council (CAC). The CAC was created in 1997 and is chaired by Sharon England, a practicing guardian ad litem (a lawyer who protects the juvenile's best interests) for the Virginia
Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Courts. The committee consists of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secy./Treas., five Board Members, and fifteen Ex-Officio Members. The members include faculty members at the T.C. Williams School of Law at the University of Richmond, members of the Richmond Police Department, the Director of Court Services, Directors of non-profit organizations, doctors, and counselors. Dr. Richard Couto’s two *Critical Thinking* courses at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies worked as research assistants and interviewed eight CAC members. These reports were videotaped and documented. Summaries of these interviews are available in Appendix A.

The second group of data was collected from outside organizations identified as stakeholders and having functions which intersect with the Richmond Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Courts. Phone interviews were conducted with Communities in Schools of Richmond, Inc., Beth Raferty of the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority, Lissa Power-DeFur of the Virginia Department of Education, and Patrick Medley of the Boys and Girls Club of Richmond. Personal interviews were conducted with Deloris Stalton of the City of Richmond Youth Services Commission, Michael Evans of the Richmond Department of Social Services, Reed Henderson of Family & Children Service’s of Richmond, and Lois Gibbs of the Children’s Home Society. Summaries of these interviews are noted in Appendix B and the protocol followed for each interview is noted in Appendix C.

The data collected from the CAC members and outside organizations will be analyzed to outline the three general themes of risk factors, prevention and rehabilitation and answer the original questions:
1. What are the gaps in the Richmond area juvenile justice system and
2. What are the resources needed to fill these gaps.

It should be noted that there are indisputable weaknesses in this methodology. Sophomore-level research assistants collected a large portion of the data. Although it was properly analyzed, the interviews of the CAC members may not have followed the protocol used with the outside organizations. Another weakness in the methodology is that the initial intention was to interview juvenile delinquents within Richmond's juvenile justice system. The data from these interviews would give the most invaluable insight of gaps in Richmond's juvenile justice system. Unfortunately, these interviews were not actualized.

Using the literature as a background and the data collected, I began defining the problems in the juvenile justice system. The goal of this paper is to identify an effective process by which Richmond's juvenile justice system can be improved.

PERCEIVED GAPS AND RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS

Risk Factors

Across the state of Virginia thousands of high risk children are benefiting from worthy prevention and intervention programs and therefore, not ending up involved in delinquency. When examining gaps in Richmond's juvenile justice system, a common theme throughout the topic are the risk factors for today's youth. Nationally, increasing numbers of children are being reared in single parent households, or households with two working parents. According to a national study published in 1998 by the U.S. Department of Education and Justice, roughly 35 percent of 12 year-old children were
home alone on a regular basis while their parents or parent were at work. 16 Most CAC members identified this factor as contributing to the high number of crimes committed by juveniles.

An identified gap in Richmond's juvenile justice system is the lack of mentoring opportunities for high-risk youth. The majority of mentoring programs in the area are focused on the general population and not on high-risk youth or children with learning disabilities. 17 As stated before, these children are most at risk for becoming part of the juvenile justice system. They are not getting the opportunity to see that other options are open for them, and they do not have to choose a life of crime. The Boys and Girls Club of Richmond provide an opportunity for mentoring. However, they do not target high-risk youth. They attract a large percentage of single-parent and high-risk clientele, but are quick to admit that boys and girls form low, middle, and high-income households are all eligible for the program and mentoring services. 18

A solution lies both in creating more mentoring services and raising awareness of services now available. CAC members stress the success of mentoring programs and that mentoring is one of the best ways to get a child at risk out of the average category. A child's problems can stem from family, or friends, or community environment and society needs to give that child a chance to escape this harmful environment. 19 An observation made by a CAC member is that a commonality of the real risk factors is that they all stem from low self-esteem. 20 If low self-esteem is a characteristic of most juvenile delinquents, then a mentor relationship can improve this. Youth thrive through personal relationships with respected adults. They need to know that their lives have value and that they have potential. Mentoring and community service is the answer.
In addition to the Boys and Girls Club of Richmond, the City of Richmond Youth Services Commission offers mentoring services. Unfortunately, they report that their service is not being utilized to its full potential. The courts are not referring youths to them and high-risk teenagers are not eliciting mentoring services on their own.\(^1\) The court system and other youth services must be made aware that mentoring services are available from the Youth Services Commission. The Boys and Girls Club of Richmond also has a Ranger Program. The Ranger Program is a military program for nine to eleven-year olds. It teaches discipline and decision making skills. For teens, the Club has a leadership program, community service opportunities and a basketball team. These are all programs that promote healthy relationships with peers and adults in the Richmond community. The mission of the Boys and Girls Club of Richmond is to provide a nurturing safe haven where youth can develop into confident, productive citizens. For a high-risk youth, these programs could save a child from becoming a juvenile delinquent.\(^2\) Youth service organizations and schools around the city must be made aware of the existence of these mentoring programs and assigned a procedure with which to refer high-risk youth.

Another perceived gap in Richmond's juvenile justice system is a lack of counseling available at the domestic court level. Family problems are recognized as a common thread in almost all delinquents. Court officials on the CAC have established that Domestic Violence is the biggest issue on the court docket.\(^3\) The realization is that many delinquents come from families with severe problems or lack of a positive male role model. The system, as it exists now, works to categorically keep families apart. When a child begins to get in trouble, families react instead of pulling together. They
control the bad behavior instead of healing whatever is causing the behavior.\textsuperscript{24} The court system as it now stands targets kids and not families.

Juvenile justice needs to be made a family issue and the system needs holistic, comprehensive family services. The majority of risk factors identified for high-risk youth are family related, therefore, it is imperative that the court system look to the family to help these juveniles. This counseling would alleviate some of the crime and further domestic problems down the line. Another solution is a family to family mentoring project where families can openly discuss issues and forge relationships.\textsuperscript{25} Richmond's Family and Children's Service has a family counseling and education program available both in-home and in community settings.\textsuperscript{26}

Sharon England, Chair of the council and child representative to the court, asks, "Is the public school system failing these kids?" Children who are failing school commit a high number of crimes. Not being successful in school correlates with being successful in crime. These children want to be good at something. There is also a noted correlation between poor education and the reintroduction of juveniles to the court system. Something needs to be done within the school system to better help children with learning disabilities.\textsuperscript{27}

An administrative gap identified within the school system was use a resource called "The Adult Learning Center" to filter out youth with learning disabilities. These teenagers pick up registration forms and the school has them on record as "Transferred to The Adult Learning Center." However, the child never actually registers or goes and therefore they never receive an education. Others that do attend do not want to be there.
yet the school system offers no other choice.\textsuperscript{28} These are the juveniles who drop out of school and tend to turn to a life of crime and delinquency.

A substantive gap is exemplified in a different scenario. In some instances, learning-disabled children will be “tagged” within the school system.\textsuperscript{29} A teacher or counselor will identify a learning-disabled child and their learning disability will be noted in their scholastic file. This process is a form of “inclusion”. Inclusion is the mainstreaming of children with learning disabilities into the public school system. Unfortunately, it is a common occurrence that no one within the school system will pay any attention to these children until high school when they start getting in trouble outside of school. Another common occurrence is that some teachers rely on retention, holding learning-disabled children back for years until they get frustrated and drop out of school.\textsuperscript{30} Many resources needed to help these kids are available. The reality is that most teachers either do not know the rules or regulations on how to implement or refer to available programs, do not care, or think it is too much trouble, so they will not bother to go through the appropriate measures to help these kids.\textsuperscript{31}

The solution is finding ways to change this process. It is imperative that Richmond City teachers are educated on how to deal with children with learning disabilities. Workshops can instruct teachers on how to help mainstreamed learning disabled children in the classrooms and learn what resources and referrals are available to further help these children. There is a need for smaller classrooms and more individual attention. With positive reinforcement and additional guidance on their schoolwork, mainstreamed youth will be given the opportunity to progress or even prosper in their
studies. Bringing aids and volunteers into the classroom can give children with learning disabilities the special attention that they need to succeed in school.\textsuperscript{32}

Another component of the school issue is that teachers need to watch out for abused and neglected children. They are most likely to commit juvenile crimes and have a tendency to become delinquent.\textsuperscript{33} Teachers need to be educated on how to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect in homes, collaborate with youth services and give these high-risk children the help that they need.

\textbf{Prevention}

One CAC member made the point that intervention programs are short-term, whereas prevention can change society.\textsuperscript{34} It is the lack of these much-needed prevention programs that most CAC members attribute the high rate of juvenile crime and therefore identify as a severe gap in Richmond's juvenile justice system.

Juvenile detention centers are overcrowded due to a lack of funding, resources, and development of steps before the offense, such as After-school programs.\textsuperscript{35} There is something missing in the system. Juveniles simply do not have enough to do if they are using their time to commit crimes.

A solution is to implement more after-school programs for youth. We must target kids earlier and give them the opportunity to make choices: choices that will keep them off the streets.\textsuperscript{36} Sports teams and after-school programs will deter crime in the peak hours, 3-6pm. A feasible solution for the Richmond area is a program currently in practice in Washington. Three hours a week, qualified teachers and tutors come into the school and the school day is extended fifty minutes. This would increase the knowledge of kids and give them a place to be during the peak hours that juvenile crimes are
committed. The remaining two days of the week, after school activities (intermurals, clubs, etc.) are stressed. These programs give juveniles a motivation to stay after school and off the streets.37

Another effective, yet costly alternative is Project Adventure. This is an outdoor adventure program that encourages juveniles to develop their own skills. The five aspects stressed are: academics, physical activity, therapeutic, fostering of community partnerships, and professional development. This program provides transportation, which makes it easy for youth to attend.38

The City of Richmond Youth Services Commission also provides prevention programs. They perform needs assessments for teenagers ages thirteen to nineteen-years old and try to keep kids off the streets with programs such as a Youth Employment Program, Youth Police Academy, Youth Civic League, and a Youth Advisory Council. The organization has realized the need for prevention programs, but state money allotted to them must be used for direct services. Because of this, it must put a majority of their state funds into direct services in order to have money for its prevention programs.39

Funding for these prevention programs is a prime concern. Politicians promote punishment for juvenile criminals because if they do not support it, they look soft on crime. Whereas, this money would be better spent on prevention and intervention programs. Political culture has a push to treat juveniles like adults and punish them while court intervention for high-risk youth and prevention is in need of funds they do not receive.40

Another identified gap in Richmond's juvenile justice system lies with parents and family.41 In the history of a typical juvenile justice case, there is a lack of family
skills and a problem with parents and their inability to raise their children. Prevention must be considered from the perspective of parents and family. The history of the children must be evaluated, to discover what went wrong, and what caused it to go wrong.

For example, a possible solution to this problem would be to institute programs that teach parents how to be good role models to kids. Look at where the problem of delinquency originates. If Richmond’s juvenile justice system concentrates on the family environment they can work to instill environments that are healthy, safe, spiritual, and places of morality. Another solution would be to spread Richmond’s Safe Haven Program (Strengthening Adolescent Females for Excellence through Health, Academics, Ventures, Environment, and Nutrition), across the city, to boys, and to parents, who are lacking these necessary skills.

Rehabilitation

Many CAC members identified rehabilitation measures, or lack there of, as gaps in Richmond’s juvenile justice system. CAC members cited rehabilitation programs, specifically follow-through, as a prime concern. People are getting lost in the system. CAC members are questioning what rehabilitation programs are out there, and why they aren’t doing their job.

One solution is rehabilitation programs that really try to get in there and do their job when it comes to follow-through. Audrey Burton’s Safe Haven program for girls age eight to fourteen, is an example of such a program. It is a non-residential program that
teaches life skills. There is a lack of similar programs and a need for more rehabilitation programs for both boys and girls.\(^{45}\)

A weakness in Richmond's after-care program was also identified. After care programs are identified as the weakest area of the court system in Richmond. For example, Richmond has programs such as "Intensive Supervision" for repeat offenders. Unfortunately, it is designed around four home visits per week, which does not promote the personal relationship that is so important to juveniles. Daily contact is a necessity to reduce the rate of repeat offenders.\(^{46}\) Parole officers are overwhelmed. Funding through the state has been cut and resulted in a reduction in the number of parole officers for juvenile offenders. Juvenile delinquents need consistency and attention from their parole officer, yet the parole officers do not have the time or patience to give to them. The limited numbers of parole officers in the system are worn out and easily lose their patience. They do not have the luxury of holding these kids' hands. They reach a point where they have to say they have done all they can for a child and they move onto the next.\(^{47}\)

Two examples of effective rehabilitation programs from the City of Richmond Youth Services Commission are Project Payback and Youth Police Academy. Project Payback is "a restorative justice initiative", which places its emphasis on the future and does not allow the juvenile the luxury of dwelling on past mistakes. A judge refers a juvenile delinquent to the program, a Parole Officer sends them to the Youth Services Commission, the Youth Services Commission offers them Job Skills Training classes and placement in employment. The juvenile then returns one half of his/her paycheck to the Youth Services Commission to pay their restitution.\(^{48}\) This program nurtures children. It
empowers them and gives them choices. It also gives them a way of being constantly monitored once back in their home environment.

The Youth Police Academy is a special initiative for youth sponsored by the City of Richmond Police Department and the Richmond Human Services Commission. This program is grant funded and serves a large percentage of court-appointed youth. The purpose of the Richmond Youth Police Academy “is to cultivate resilient youth by involving them in self development initiatives and community service activities”. Youth are provided the framework and resources necessary for them to develop and implement crime reduction and prevention projects in their neighborhoods through participation in Youth Civic Leagues.49

One CAC member identified lack of Anger-Management Programs as a gap in Richmond’s juvenile justice system. Neglect makes children feel angry. Teachers and community members must ask kids how they are feeling and actually listen. This will give youth an outlet and problems with delinquency will not turn up in the future.50 Another CAC member believes that these programs exist, but they are not being executed properly. These types of programs are necessary because if children are taught to manage their anger there is a greater possibility that they will not turn towards a life of crime. Anger Management classes as they now stand, are not being used as effectively as they could be. The youth involved in the program do not know why they are there and are therefore apathetic to their place in the program.51 The Teens, Crimes and Communities Program, Conflict Resolution Program, and Anger Management Programs in Richmond are all promising programs in need of improvement.
CONCLUSION

The issue of juvenile justice requires attention at both the public and policy agendas. To motivate toward the improvement of Richmond’s juvenile justice system, the issue must be elevated and reframed. Framing the issue so as to bring it to the public agenda and illicit interest from all members of the community is a necessity. Juvenile Justice is a family issue, a substance abuse issue, a crime issue, and a community issue. They are all interrelated factors. This was evidenced by the gaps identified by CAC members and outside organizations. In each section, risk factors, prevention and rehabilitation, youth, family, community and service providers are placed responsible for the gaps identified and elicited to help with the proposed solutions.

In this study, gaps in the juvenile justice system have been identified by CAC members and outside organizations, and multiple solutions and options for action have been outlined. Each of the proposed solutions would be a positive step for Richmond’s juvenile justice system. This being the case, a collaboration of services would make significant strides towards filling the gaps in the juvenile justice system. The juvenile justice system as it stands now is fragmented. There is no seamless continuum of care: no comprehensive system. There needs to be a proposal to refer difficult youth to coordinated care. The concept here is to take a troubled child who has entered the system and use all available resources to help this child. The child can be plugged into whatever resource will fit his/her needs. This can only work if there is a change from small independently functioning organizations to larger, multi-service organizations. Youth services need more coordination and must be actively aware of what other services
are available. The goal is to help these children in the most effective and efficient manner possible and reduce juvenile crime.

The prevailing challenge is the successful implementation of the necessary improvements as well as maintaining momentum. The services in their current state of fragmentation and the passive dependency on the part of service providers to learn what other resources are available for juveniles, makes the system unsuccessful. Now that we have identified the problems, placed them on both public and policy agendas and generated multiple solutions; we must concentrate on making sure the collaboration of these services becomes a reality.\textsuperscript{54} Money will be needed to drive this managed care system. The fact is that there will never be enough money in not for profit organizations, so it is what they do with the money they have that is important. If support can be gained from the majority of the area service providers for youth, then an alliance can form and a collaborative effort. Energy can be created through agreement on the shared outcome: comprehensive care for youth. Partnerships must be formed between service providers and this cohesion must be developed and maintained throughout the process of implementation and beyond. Service providers must be able to refer youth to the services that will help them the most.

As concern grows for the youth in the City of Richmond, the need for positive change is growing as well. The gaps identified in this study and the proposed solutions introduce the potential for remarkable improvement in Richmond’s juvenile justice system. The Richmond community must be actively committed to the improvement of youth services and the strengthening of its juvenile justice system. This study is a
beginning. It provides suggestions and direction for further investigation. The juvenile justice system is far from perfect; it is a work in progress.
1 The Center for Public Policy Virginia Commonwealth University, “Community Collaborative for Youth: Preliminary Data Report, City of Richmond, County of Henrico, and County of Chesterfield”, (Jan. 1997).
2 http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/just/just110/intro2.html
5 Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory VCU.
8 Towberman, 1992.
9 Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory VCU.
15 “Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Courts”.
16 Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory VCU.

17 Edward Green, interview by student, Feb 1999. See Appendix A.
18 Patrick Medley, phone interview by author, 23 Mar., 1999. See Appendix B.
19 Tom Dertinger, interview by student, Feb 1999. See Appendix A.
20 Green, 1999.
21 Deloris Daulton and Merna Wilson, interview by author, 30 Mar., 1999. See Appendix B
22 Medley, 1999.
23 Dertinger, 1999.
24 Reed Henderson, interview by author, 23 Mar., 1999. See Appendix B.
27 Sharon England, interview by student, Feb. 1999. See Appendix A.
30 Kathryn Shaw, interview by author. 13 Apr., 1999.
33 Margaret Bacigal, interview by student, Feb. 1999. See Appendix A.
34 Audrey Burton, interview by student, Feb. 1999. See Appendix A.
35 Eugene Downing, interview by student, Feb. 1999. See Appendix A.
36 Downing, 1999.
37 Robert Shepherd, interview by student, Feb. 1999. See Appendix A.
38 Shepherd, 1999.
39 Daulton and Wilson, 1999.
40 Robert Scott, interview by student, Feb. 1999. See Appendix A.
41 Bacigal, 1999.
42 Bacigal, 1999.
44 Bacigal, 1999.
46 Shepherd, 1999.
47 Daulton and Wilson, 1999.
48 Daulton and Wilson, 1999.
49 Daulton and Wilson, 1999.
50 Downing, 1999.
51 Green, 1999.
54 Luke, p123.
APPENDIX A:

Summary of Citizen's Advisory Council Interviews

Margaret Bacigal, Professor, T. C. Williams School of Law

Rehabilitation Programs

Gaps:
Follow-through. People get lost in the system.

Solution:
That the rehabilitation programs really try to go in there and do their jobs when it comes to follow-through.

How is the court working? Talk to the parents sitting out in the waiting room.
Talk to the judges, they want to make the court user-friendly so they will pretty much listen to any suggestions.

Watch out for kids that are being abused and neglected because they are most likely to commit these crimes and have a tendency to become delinquent.

Those programs needed.

Prevention

Look at the history of the kids and look at what went wrong and what caused it to go wrong. Ex. programs teaching parents how to be good role models to kids.

Attack it from parents and family. Where does the problem originate. Concentrate on the family environment and how we can instill environments that are healthy, safe, spiritual, and places of morality. Dealing with families, communities, and education providers.

Audrey Burton, Safe Haven (Strengthening Adolescent Females for Excellence through Health, Academics, Ventures, Environment, and Nutrition.)
Teaches Life Skills. Age range 8-14. Both residential (not really) and after-school.

Rehabilitation Program. This Program will be used when the parents of youth do something to put the children at risk, or if the child has committed an offence. Non-beurocratic. Need for more programs for both boys and girls.

Intervention programs are short term, whereas prevention can change society.

Intervention and Prevention.

Problem: Parents and their inability to raise their children. Family skills.

Spread the Safe Haven program across the city, to boys, to parents who also don’t have these skills.

Robert Shepherd, Professor, T.C. Williams School of Law

After Care Program (after Boot Camp for example.)

A program to get them back into society focusing on sex education, job training skills (how to write a resume). 18-21 month program and delinquents have parole officers more or less. They act as mentors. Three phases of rehabilitation. (Last chance) Phase one is like camp, outdoors. Phase two is dorm living and can get paid for work project. Phase three is daily contact with officer for three years after release. Get them on the

This is a tertiary summary based on presentations made by Dr. Richard Couto's Critical Thinking students.
right track, change their behavior and therefore stop the cycle so they don’t have a chance to become a repeat offender.

*Listening to the kids.

Is there a problem with probation in the court system?

Bob Shepherd says...These programs are one of the weakest areas of the court system in Richmond.

We have programs like this, one is called the Intensive Supervision, which is for repeat offenders. Unfortunately it is designed around four home visits per week, and what Robert Shepherd is saying is important is this personal relationship. Daily contact lowers rate of repeat offenders.

Pittsburgh program is similar to Richmond program, only it is 7 days a week. They have an after-school program every day and it costs $40 for each member per day. However, live-in is $70-$80 per day.

Too much attention on intervention and not enough on prevention. We need to have more after-school activities and to give these kids something to do.

Sports teams and after-school programs will deter crime in the peak times, 3-6pm. (3-8pm)

Last Chance Ranch (FL)

General idea: 3 or 4 kids to each counselor so they could monitor their school work and everything.

Model (solution), smaller scale of Last Chance Ranch.

Robert Scott

Politicians want to get in on Punishment ($$$) because if they don’t support it they look soft on crime. Whereas the money would be better spent on intervention.

Political culture is a push to treat juveniles like adults. However, juvenile courts are set up to rehabilitate kids.

Eugene Downing, Associate Pastor for First Baptist Church in Richmond

Overcrowding of juvenile detention centers. Why? Lack of funding, resources, and development of steps before the offense. Such as After-school programs. Something is missing. These kids don’t have enough to do it they are using their time to commit crimes.

Targeting these kids who have already taken the first step towards being a delinquent, however, giving all kids (esp. young kids) the opportunity to make choices. To keep them off the streets.

Anger-Management. Neglect makes children (5 years old) feel angry. If teachers can ask kids how they are feeling and really listen, maybe it will give them an outlet and problems won’t turn up down the line. Economic argument for extra tutoring vs. incarceration.

Target kids earlier.

Sharon England, Guardian ad litem (a lawyer who protects the juvenile’s best interests)

High number of crimes committed by children who are failing in school. Not being successful in school correlates with being successful in crime. They want to be good in something. Is the public school system failing these kids?
Special attention to learning disabilities. These kids are filtered out of system.
Correlation between poor education and the reintroduction of kids to court system.
The Adult Learning Center. The school system uses this to filter out kids with learning
disabilities. The kids pick up registration, the school has them down as transferred to the
Adult Learning Center, however, and they never go so the kid never gets educated.
Others that do go do not want to be there, they are given no other choice from the school
system.
Learning Disability kids would be tagged, but no one would pay any attention to these
kids until high school when they would get in trouble outside of school. A lot of the
resources needed to help these kids are there, but teachers wouldn’t know about the rules
or regulations on how to implement these programs, or didn’t care, or thought it was too
much trouble so they wouldn’t bother getting the kids to counseling etc.
Solution: ways to change this aspect.

Edward Green, counselor
Importance of self-esteem. They feel that they can’t do the work so they do what they
and do-crime.
Solution:
Have workshops on self-esteem. Also get parents involved. When students have backing
from parents they tend to do better in school in general.
Should be more programs between courts and schools. Judges coming in to talk with
kids. Is this happening? Is it working?
Anger Management is after... we need something beforehand.
Don’t just distract them, teach them how to make the right choices, the right decisions.
Anger Management. If you teach the kids to manage their anger they may not go towards
a life of crime. Edward Green says that right now the Anger Management classes aren’t
being used as effectively as they could be. He feels that the kids don’t know why they
are there and they are apathetic to their place in the program. Teens, Crimes and
Communities Program. Conflict Res., Anger Man.. etc.
Programs aren’t being executed appropriately. Also, a lot of mentoring programs are
focused on the general population and not the high-risk kids or the kids with learning
disabilities. And these are the kids that are most at risk for becoming part of the juvenile
justice system and they are not getting the opportunity to see that there are other options
open for them and they don’t have to choose this life. Mentors don’t want to deal with
kids with problems.
If you look at all of the real risk factors, they all have in common the fact that they stem
from low self-esteem.

We have the programs, but how do we reach the kids that need them the most?
Problem: What kids do after-school. We need more after-school programming.
Solutions:
Washington
3hrs a day qualified teachers and tutors would come into the school and the school day
would be extended 50 minutes 3 days a week. This would increase the knowledge of
kids and give them a place to be at the peak hours of crime committing. The other 2 days
after school activities (intermurals, clubs) will be stressed. Give the kids motivations to
stay after school.
Project adventure. Outdoor adventure programs. Encourages them to develop their own skills. Five aspects: Academic, physical activity, therapeutic, fosters community partnerships, and professional development. Make it easy for kids to go—transportation, etc.

*costly

Tom Dertinger, Chief Operating Officer, Richmond Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court

Problem: Lack of effective mentoring. (Lack of self-esteem)
Mentoring is defined as a sustained relationship with an adult.
Family relationships are one of the key things lacking and where we need to start in a solution.
Solution: Family to family mentoring project. Openly discussing issues, forcing relationships, etc.

**Domestic Violence is biggest on the court docket
Common thread in delinquents is family problems. Either neglect or lack of mentors.
If you take the realization that many delinquents come from families with severe problems and lack of male role model, than possibly making more counseling available at the domestic court level would alleviate some of the crime and further domestic problems down the line.
Tom said that there are often custody cases of mother and grandmother fighting over kids. It’s a new ballgame if we bring the father into the picture.
Stressed how much mentoring worked and that mentoring is one of the best ways to get a child at risk out of the average category. Realize that a child’s problems can stem from family, or friends or community environment and you want to give them a chance to escape this environment.
Solution: Mentoring and community service.
APPENDIX B:

Summary of Outside Organization Interviews

Communities in Schools of Richmond (interviewee wished to remain anonymous)

Gaps- the City is moving to integrate services (team working together). Implementation of wrap-around services, new wave of doing things. Haven't seen help from the juvenile justice system. Possible solution: placing officers at schools.
Wave: moving beyond identifying individuals as problems and seeing entire family. The system has a way of targeting kids and not families. Make it a family issue. We need holistic, comprehensive family services.
Prevention. We need to go from the back end instead the front end. Coordination of prevention services.

Boys and Girls Club of Richmond- Patrick Medley

The mission of the Boys and Girls Club of Richmond is to provide a nurturing safe haven where youth can develop into confident, productive citizens. They serve 7-18 year olds and work on the core areas character and development, fitness, health and life skills, and arts. It is a preventative organization. Operating hours- from after school to 9pm.
Kids haven't been involved in law.
Never had to deal with juvenile delinquency.
A recent occurrence with delinquency has made him think of my project. There was a harassment incident with a 15 or 16 year old boy. He had been part of the organization, but they had to turn him away. The Boys and Girls Club doesn't want to shut the door on anyone, but once it comes to safety measures, they must turn away.
At the time this harassment took place, the club called the police but by the time the police showed up, the boy had left. The police said that they couldn't do anything because the boy was not there. The question becomes, does the staff have the responsibility to physically restrain a kid? If there is an altercation, the child could turn it into the B&G Club harassing them. It's a Catch 22.
Gap: communication between them and the police department as to what should be done in this situation.
Decision making.

Ranger Program- military program. 9-11-year olds. Teaches discipline.
Teens- Leadership, community service, basketball team.
High number of membership of single parent families. Don't need to target at-risk youth. Middle income and high income are all eligible for program.

Family & Children's Services- Reed Henderson, President and CEO

Vision- Stronger families for a stronger community.
Mission- the Mission of Family & Children’s Service is to support and strengthen families and individuals throughout their lives.
Values- Respect, Integrity, Responsibility, Excellence, Community.
Biggest gap in the system: compassion and understanding. 
The system needs to be trashed and started over. The reality is that we, as a society, are choosing not to understand why kids are acting out. 
Mentality: bad kids, need to be punished. No room here for real understanding, that these are cries for help, attempts to stay alive, etc. 
The great frustration is that if our goals are: results that assure less money down the road and productive kids... 
Most of what we are doing works against these goals. 

Intersections: 
Two residential programs: 
Oasis House 
Independent Living- provides supervised transition program. 
Kids come from both welfare and private referrals. 
Families that need a break will drop their kids off. 
30% of kids are adjudicated delinquents (not incarcerated). 
Healthy Start- early intervention for new parents 
- Targets parents with a high chance of abusing or neglecting their new baby. 
Project Safe Place- a community resource for teenagers in crisis. They can go to a business with a Project Safe Place sign in their window and get help. 
Continuum of Care: good part. The juvenile justice system is so fragmented. After juveniles do their time they are discharged and no after care. 
There is no seamless continuum of care. There is no comprehensive system. 
City of Richmond proposal... 
Refer difficult kids to coordinated care Crisis Alliance. 
Concept: a troubled kid enters into system and all resources are used to help kid. Kid is plugged into whatever resource will fit his/her needs. 
Money is driving this. Managed care approach. 
Gaps: Isolated services, not integrated. 
Lack of early intervention. 
He's been doing this for 35 years. On the issue of referrals, red hareing? 
It doesn't make sense how you can be in human services and not know what other resources are out there. Complaints are not of services, it is passive dependency on the part of leadership. People need to actively find out what else is out there. 
Money. There will never be enough money in not for profit. What are you doing with the money you have? 
CHANGE from small organizations functioning independently to larger, multi-service organizations. Comprehensive care. Need for more coordination. 
Comprehensive, multi-service, seamless. 
Active partner with government. 
Service tighter. 
Parent involvement, the system now works to categorically keep people apart 
Desire to survive vs. dysfunction. 
Family: "I don't see it" 
Trouble, controlled, not healed. Family reacts instead of pulling together.
Children’s Home Society- Lois Gibbs

Child placing agency.
Adoption, foster care, pregnancy... courts.
89 days after voluntary entrustment, file petition, foster care plan.
Difficult situation in Richmond City. Long process. (drags) Children get older
They say they’re working on it. Scheduling.
Help:
Educating attorneys
Social Service vs. Child Placing
Termination of parental rights.
Collaborative
Court improvement project.

Richmond Behavioral Health Authority- Beth Raferty

Function of the RBHA is to provide public mental health. Government non-profit.
Gap: Lack of treatment resources. Rehabilitation.
Not an issue of collaboration, but lack of funding. Court orders treatment and then can’t pay for it.
Little money is attached to the juvenile justice system.
Richmond State Law- no local funds.
The City must match 14% of state funds, but because there are no local funds for kids, there is below a 7% match.
There’s only so much the city can do because of shrinking revenue. All human services are being cut.
**Lack of resources, a funding problem. Commitment is there, just no funds.

City of Richmond Youth Services Commission- Deloris Daulton and Merna Wilson

They do needs assessments, and try to keep kids off the streets with programs such as:
Employment, Youth Police Academy, Youth Civic League, Youth Advisory Council.
The program has only children from the courts.
Project Payback: (Merna)
Judge refers kids to program. Parole Officer sends them, employers hire kids and they pay off restitution.
Parents are biggest enemy.
Biggest gap: Parole Officers are overwhelmed. Kids need the repetition and attention from the PO, yet they just don’t have the time. POs don’t have the luxury to hold the kids’ hands. At what point do you say you’ve done all you can and you have to move on to another child?
Resources: funding through state, funding cut, POs cut, limited number of POs worn out, no patience.
Supervisors are also overloaded dealing with case management. Not enough of them (supervisors). This amazing program lacks referrals because to the referers, it's paperwork. Just another program they have to overlook.
The kids end up with a changed mindset, but put them back in that environment, they don't fit in, their lives are in danger. This program nurtures kids. It empowers them and gives them choices. It gives them a way of being constantly monitored once back in their environment.
29 kids, 12,13,14-years old, since mid-December. Very young program.
10 are actively working. Goal is 50 working by June.
They need mentors.
Holistic: parents.
Youth Police Academy:
Grant funded. % of court-appointed youth. Role-plays with Police Department. Police officers are kids and vice versa. Most kids live for the moment, don’t see the future, or see themselves living past 20.
Partnership with Richmond public schools. April 19th.
Educare, alternative school. For kids who fight or drug problems. Mentoring built in.
9 Week program, then assessment.
Lock-up facilities are overloaded. We don’t have the space to lock kids up so we must concentrate on prevention programs.
State money needs to go to Direct Service programs so the Youth Commission has to use money for direct services in order to have money for their prevention programs.
Youth Employment Program
- summer program (revamped)
- job fairs 100-140 youth, 40-50 hires.
- Kings Dominion (60 kids employed).

Virginia Department of Education- Lissa Power-DeFur

Function: technical assistance to school division.
Advisory council. Link to Richmond Detention Home.
Truency.
Need for collaboration/communication between the court and school system.
APPENDIX C:

Protocol of Interview Questions for Outside Organizations

1. What is the function of your organization?

2. In what ways does your organization intersect with the Virginia Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Courts?

3. What does your organization identify as weaknesses or gaps in Richmond’s juvenile justice system?

4. By what means can these gaps be filled?
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