



## New outdoor area offers kids & parents a chance to play



Supervised visits at Aviva Children's Services will likely be a lot more fun now that they've added an 11,000 square foot outdoor visitor center.

Check out the details on Page 8.

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## Family Drug Court changes may increase graduation rates

When parents graduate from Pima County Juvenile Court's Family Drug Court program, roughly 90 percent of them are reunited with their children. However, only 44 percent of parents graduate from the program.

Since the program began in 2001, 860 clients have been served. Fifty-eight percent of them either graduated or voluntarily quit the program because their dependency case closed, or their other commitments, such as a job or school, conflicted with their drug court schedule. About 75 percent of these parents still achieve family reunification, as do a smaller percentage of parents who are unsuccessfully discharged from FDC.

Officials hope multiple changes over the last several months will boost the graduation rate of the program, said Anne Chamberlin, program manager.

Family Drug Court provides extra support and accountability while parents are



Judge Susan Kettlewell congratulates one of our most recent Family Drug Court graduates.

working on their recovery from addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. Participants are required to appear regularly before Judge Susan Kettlewell to talk about their progress and whether they are in compliance with their Department of Child Safety case plan. Depending upon how well they are doing, incentives or sanctions (called

responses) are applied.

Participants in Family Drug Court may be eligible for extra visits with their children, group and/or individual therapy to address trauma issues, stable housing, job training referrals, monthly bus passes, etc. (Contd. Page 3)

Since the program began in 2001, 860 clients have been served. Fifty-eight percent of them either graduated or voluntarily quit the program because other commitments, such as a job or school, conflicted with their drug court schedule.

The program holds two sessions for moms and one session for dads every Wednesday. There are currently 52 participants enrolled, although there will soon be capacity for 90, Chamberlin said.

Everyone involved in the Family Drug Court program is excited about the new changes and hope to see improvements in the number of graduates. Only 45 percent of parents who don't enroll in the program are reunited with their children.

In recent months the following changes have occurred:

- Department of Child Safety staff members have replaced court staff as case managers and are now located within Pima County Juvenile Court. This change has eliminated a duplication of services provided, given parents much easier access to their case managers and improved communication between Judge Kettlewell, FDC Recovery Support Specialists, other court staff and DCS.
- Every program participant is now assigned a peer mentor. Parents who have just had their child removed from their homes now meet with a Family Drug Court graduate shortly after their children are removed, usually at their first court hearing. The mentors can provide emotional support and educate parents about the program.
- FDC has partnered with Easter Seals Blake Foundation to provide evidence-based parenting and therapeutic services to FDC families.
- Staff members now screen every participant to see if they have been the victims of child abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or domestic violence. By doing so, staff can ensure participants are referred to agencies that provide evidence-based, trauma responsive therapy.

Perhaps the biggest change, however, is how moms and dads progress through the program, Chamberlin said.

Up until January, participants in the program progressed through phases before graduating. Each participant was expected to complete specific assignments and remain compliant a certain number of weeks before moving up to the next phase.

(Contd. Page 4)

However, there was no link between what was going on in Family Drug Court and what was going on in the parents' dependency case. Now, a parent's progress in Family Drug Court is directly linked to their DCS case.

Participants are given packets to complete that include certain tasks determined by



their Child and Family Team and their Adult Recovery Team. Every time they complete a packet, the Family Drug Court Team will make a recommendation for the next milestone, whether it's unsupervised visits, overnight visits, reunification, or graduation and a closed case.

"We wanted to increase their motivation to complete the program," Chamberlin said. "We wanted to make their progress more relevant to what mattered the most to them. Visits are a big deal and we figured if we could make visits central to how things are going in drug court, they'd become more compliant and have a better chance at graduating."

Pima County's Family Drug Court program has been nationally recognized and many eyes will be watching to see if the changes will have a significant impact.

Chris Swenson-Smith, division director for the court's Children and Family Services division has high hopes.

This little one was removed from her mother's care right around her first birthday. Her mother has since graduated from the Family Drug Court program, the two have been reunited and their case is close to being closed.

"Since its inception almost 14 years

ago, Family Drug Court has been the testing ground for what works the very best for families with parental substance abuse. With the launching of the Milestones, the use of peer support and other evidence-based practices, and the partnership with DCS, we expect to see earlier reunification, significant cost savings and sustained family recovery," Swenson-Smith said.

## Pima Outreach & Education Team regular visitors to detention

Within five minutes it was perfectly clear. This was not going to be an ordinary lecture. There would be no nodding off, day dreaming or glazed expressions.

Noel Valle had his audience's attention and he was on fire.

No, Valle isn't a stand-up comedian, although he is funny. Instead, Valle works for the Pima County Health Department as a part of the POET or Pima Outreach and Education Team.



Noel Valle

Every Thursday, someone from the team comes to the Pima County Juvenile Detention Center to talk to the teens about such things as puberty, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), birth control, stress management, and healthy relationships.

The first and third Thursdays of the months are devoted to the boys; the alternate Thursdays are strictly for the girls.

On a recent Thursday, Valle was in the 1400 Living Unit talking to about 30 boys about sexually transmitted diseases and family planning. His talk is peppered with plenty of "bros" and "mijito." Mijito can mean "son" or "dude" in Spanish.

Valle uses the same language the teens use when talking about sex, masturbation and body parts. He was blunt when he talked about the consequences of unsafe and unprotected sex from both an emotional and a financial standpoint.

"If you don't want to be a daddy until you're ready and you're (having sex with) somebody, you'd better listen to me," Valle said at one point. (Contd. Page 6)

Valle's frank talk prompted plenty of laughs, but also lots of shock and follow up questions.

Valle explained to the teens that STDs left untreated can keep getting passed on to their partners for years. Sexually active people need to realize they are not just sleeping with their partner, but all of their partner's partners.

Valle also informed them there's an 85 percent chance of a pregnancy if a couple goes one year without using birth control. He asked the boys to imagine what kind of a "sweet ride" they could get if they didn't have a monthly child support check to pay.

Last June, POET began coming to the detention center to engage in STD education and outreach. "Our data showed that detained youth were testing positive for sexually transmitted diseases at a higher rate than their counterparts in the community," said Moira Alexander, who is the POET program coordinator.

**"They ask a lot of straight-forward questions and you can tell there's a need for these visits. They need this information to make healthy decisions—" Moira Alexander**

Alexander further explained, "Young people under age 25 make up 65 percent of those who test positive for STDs. At the top of the list are chlamydia and gonorrhea."

POET uses PowerPoints and games to teach the teens the facts about STDs and birth control, but they also tell them about the resources available to them through the Pima County Health Department's family

planning offices.

All of the public health clinics offer confidential pregnancy tests, birth control methods, free condoms, pap smears, pelvic and breast exams, STD testing and treatment, counseling and education and emergency contraception.

Valle and the other presenters are well-received by both the staff and the teens, said Shannon Kinne, a central supervisor for Detention's C shift.

"They make it fun and comfortable so the kids are willing to bring things up," Kinne said. "You have to have someone who's ready to take any questions that are far-fetched (Contd. Page 7)

and the many different maturity levels. Some of the kids are very experienced and others are not experienced at all. You don't know what's going to come out of their mouths."

The teens are encouraged to attend the classes, but there are times when certain teens may be prevented from attending a particular lesson because it might be too traumatic for them or it might trigger an inappropriate response, Kinne said.

At any one time, the detention center is home for a handful of teenaged parents and sex offenders.

Alexander said she and the other presenters look forward to their visits and always hope the teens will come to the planning centers once they are released.

"They ask a lot of straight-forward questions and you can tell there's a need for these visits," Alexander said. "They need this information to make healthy decisions."

Valle, who has been social worker more than 20 years, said there's lots of misinformation out there.

"They're not prepared," Valle said. "They listen to a tremendous number of myths and they rely on their partners."

As for his style, Valle said he's simply being himself.

"If you're fake with these guys or try to be their friend, it's not going to work," Valle said. "You have to be who you are and get down to their level. You've got to keep it simple. We want to try to empower these teens to make little changes because little changes can have a big effect."

**For more information on the Family Planning Offices, visit: [www.pima.gov/health](http://www.pima.gov/health)**



## Aviva adds outdoor play area for more enjoyable visits

Bob Heslinga will never forget one of the first moms to visit Aviva Children's Services new Outdoor Visit Center. She and her little one went straight to the bright yellow school bus structure and began to climb all over it, sheer pleasure written all over their faces.

For the first time in a long while, the mom was free to be herself, to have fun with her little one out in the sunshine without four walls closing them in and strangers peering in through a window.

Aviva Children's Services is one of 10 agencies that have a contract to provide services to children who are in the care of the Department of Child Safety because of abuse and neglect. One of the



Aviva Children's Services Executive Director Bob Heslinga

services they provide is supervised visits between those children and the parents who hope to one day be reunited with them.

Heslinga hopes the addition of the 11,000-square-foot visit center will add 20 percent to the number of visits Aviva can accommodate on their premises. Aviva supervises 3,700 visits in their indoor facility and another 5,000 visits in the community. The agency anticipates accommodating an additional 700 visits because of the Outdoor Center.

Underneath brightly colored sail shades, children and their parents can now swing on swings, play on a teeter-totter, eat lunch, climb and shoot hoops. Their feet will be softly cushioned by wood chips or a surface comprised of shredded tires. In the summer, huge fans will cool the air with the help of a misting system.

While working through their DCS case plan, most parents are allowed to have two supervised visits per week. The parent aides are there to supervise the visits, but also to help parents.

"The parent aides coach the parents; it's not meant to be confrontational or a lecture," Heslinga said. "Some of these parents are just now learning to interact with their kids. Often times, the abused and neglected parent of today was the abused and neglected child of yesterday."

Heslinga said the visit center would not have been possible without the help of Angel Charity for Children, a Tucson non-profit organization that awarded Aviva a \$250,000 grant. The center's total price tag was \$450,000.

An invitation only grand opening event will be held April 17, Heslinga said.

## Child & Family Team meetings key to reunification

Every month, roughly 165 Pima County children are placed in foster care or with relatives because their parents aren't able to care for them properly. In the end, less than half of them will be reunited.

Many may not realize it, but there is an entire team working to meet the behavioral health needs of removed children and to provide individualized services for parents who are actively working to regain custody.

A Child and Family Team (CFT) includes family members and professionals involved in the child's care and education. These professionals work together to meet the child's needs, and also provide support and education for the family.



Hilary Mahoney

A CFT may involve a Department of Child Safety case manager, a behavioral health case manager, therapists, Court Appointed Special Advocates, school officials, a probation officer and the child's placement, whether it's a foster parent, relative or family friend.

The teams meet once a month to talk about what services are best for the child and the family, and they share frequent updates on their progress, said Hilary Mahoney, a Network Management Specialist with the Community Partnership of Southern Arizona (CPSA).

It's important to have input from the CFTs, because state and federal laws mandate that the courts must, within one year, determine and document where every removed child will live on a permanent basis. Before judges decide whether parents can be reunited with their children, they must determine if the parents have substantially completed a case plan and if they can demonstrate the children will be safe in their care.

CFTs are focused on family, and help determine which services will provide the most benefit to children and parents, depending on their situation, Mahoney said.

Behavioral health service plans are typically split equally between providing therapy and helping parents and children build the skills to create a "happy and functioning home," Mahoney said.

Many forms of child therapy are available, as are rehabilitation services and parenting classes. For example, parents can be taught better communication skills. They can also be provided help with daily living activities, jobs, housing, rehabilitation and respite care.

Members of the CFT meetings also collaborate with the schools to make sure the children are getting the help they need there, especially if they need an individualized education plan.

Evidence-based trauma therapy is often a must for both the children and their parents. Many parents were themselves the victims of domestic violence, physical or sexual abuse.

While not all parents and guardians choose to participate, CFTs maintain a positive attitude, confident that shared input and comprehensive services are improving the lives of children and families in Pima County, Mahoney said.

"We focus on resiliency during the CFTs," Mahoney said. "It's strength-based. Families can overcome this. We want parents to know that if they are working their DCS case plan and behavioral health service plan, positive changes can be made. We help them identify what they need to do to get their kids back."

# Odds & Ends

## Milestones

Vivian Spencer, 20 years, judicial

Joy Johnson, 20 years, detention

### Detention Employee of Month

Corrections Cook and laundry assistant **Robbin Miranda** was honored this month because she consistently volunteers to take on extra duties and always with a positive attitude. She is considered to be an invaluable and appreciated employee.

### Upcoming Events

**March 16-20 Spring Break**

**March 23 — Cesar Chavez Day**

## Please don't forget to get your nominations in!

The 11th Annual March for Children is Saturday, April 11.

As you all know, there are tons of unsung heroes out there working hard for the children in our community. Every year, we like to recognize those folks by presenting Child Abuse Prevention Awards at the March. They could be case managers, CASAs, therapists, foster parents, etc.

Please help Aviva and the other March for Children organizers find these very special people by either spreading the word or nominating deserving people yourselves! Attached you will find more information about the categories. The deadline is March 27.

<http://www.marchforchildren.webs.com/>

We hope to see you at the March and Casa de los Niños' Family Fiesta, which follows.

Thanks so much!

# Voices

Since the PCJCC is here to help strengthen kids and families, it seems only appropriate the kids in our Detention Center have a platform from which to speak. We'll be asking them questions periodically and printing some of their unedited answers here.

## Who or what gets you through difficult times?

When I am going through a difficult time who helps me, well most of the time, is my best friend Joseph. He is always there for me and never gives up. No matter what I have done he always helps me - BH

Something that gets me through a hard time is music, walking/running alone. I let my anger in outside. I throw rocks at a tree. When I am mad I can run for miles. - Henry

When I am going through a difficult time watching TV make forget about what I was going through - Connor

When I am mad I like to talk to my girlfriend. She always calms me down. She gets me calm then we talk about what happened. We just start talking which leads to a different subject. By the end of the conversation I forget about what I'm about and laugh it off with her - N.I.

Me I just go outside and talking some one - Anthony

When I am going through a hard time my girlfriend helps me get through a difficult time. She tells me everything is gonna be all right. She was always there for me when I was sad, but now she's gone :( -- Jose

My family and my girlfriend helps me through hard times. No matter the situation my family and girl can help me. They give me all the support I can want. Like if I was going to D.O.C. my mom would tell me to keep your head up and stay strong and my girl sends me letters and talks to me and comes to my courts and my family always comes to visit me - Jacob

Well first of all my mother. Why because my mother is the only person in the world that can talk to me and calm me down when I'm mad. When I'm frustrated my mother talks to me. If I have anything on my mind she's the first one there. Always and forever will I love and care for my mother - Nathan

The Bible, peers, music, being out, Julio, Robert (the old man juvenile detention officer), Juan, Jacob, Richard (juvenile detention officer), Alex Sr., Bow - Mark

My bro because he is always there for me and he listens and makes it way better. He is just really understanding and also my stepdad because say I get in a fight he shows me their point of view and how they got mad without taking their side completely and how I can make it better and just like my brother he is a person I can always talk to and they never make me feel like crap - Joseph

## Month in Photos



Judge Susan Kettlewell swore in another seven new Court Appointed Special Advocates on Feb. 27, bringing our grand total of CASAs to 143. If you're interested in becoming a CASA, please call 724-2060 or visit <http://pimacountycasa.org>

Tina Mattison (left) joined Pima County Juvenile Court on Feb. 17 as Deputy Court Administrator. Interim Deputy Court Administrator Ron Overholt and Judge Jane Butler were among several who attended a reception to welcome her on Feb. 23. Mattison spent more than 25 years working in the California Court System, most recently as the Division Manager for Riverside Superior Court.



On Feb. 2, participants in the International Visitor Leadership Program toured the court and detention center to learn more about kids in the U.S. Justice System. They hailed from Bangladesh, Croatia, Germany, Guatemala and Hungary.

## Did You Know?



Eight years ago, administrators decided to create an employee recognition program to honor employees who are devoted to the Court's mission, vision and values. More than 300 employees filled out a survey on how the program should work and Bravo was born.

Under Bravo, the higher the accomplishment and the higher the impact on a team, division or the Court overall, the higher the level of recognition and reward. A team of PCJCC employees selected from each division meets monthly to determine the level of the reward.

It works as follows:

The nominator completes and submits the

"You Make a Difference" message on the Court's Intranet page.

A copy of the message is emailed to the recipient in the form of a High 5 award and another copy goes to the recipient's supervisor.

The supervisor will forward the message to the Bravo team and the Bravo team will decide if the recipient deserves a High 5 or recognition at a higher level.

Employees are eligible for the following awards:

- **High 5** – The employee has completed a task/action that made a difference to someone. Five Points
- **GEM** – The task/action involved a more substantial effort and/or more than one individual benefitted. 10 Points
- **UROC** – The task/action had a significant impact to a team/unit; supports the Court's mission. 15 Points
- **Whatever it Takes** – The task/action had a significant impact to a division or the Court; supports the Court's mission. 30 points
- **Team** – The task/action of a group significantly impacts the division/Court; supports the mission. 30 points

Employees can use their points to purchase items from the Bravo store. The store stocks everything from candy and chips to miscellaneous household and office items.

"People need to take the time to acknowledge their co-workers' efforts," said Bravo team member Lynn Parente. "It only takes a few minutes, but it can really bring a smile to people's faces."

Because the Bravo team believes so strongly that people need to be recognized, the IT Department has revised the nomination process to make it more user-friendly. Be sure to check it out so everyone gets the kudos they deserve.

You'll find plenty of new items in the Bravo store, but don't hesitate, they won't last long!

If you have any questions, please contact Parente or any of the other Bravo Team members: Julie Auvil, Gilbert Delgado, John Gauger, Joy Johnson, Guy McLee, Kathleen Quigley, Mona Ramirez, Christina Reyna and Lupe Ornelas.

**Universal Truth No. 1 –**  
Children succeed when they are surrounded by adults who believe they can succeed, NO EXCEPTIONS.

**Universal Truth No. 2 –**  
Children succeed when they have meaningful and sustainable relationships with caring adults.

**Universal Truth No. 3 –**  
Children succeed when they can articulate their future in more than one destination. (Home & Family, Community & Service, Hobbies & Recreation, Education & Career)



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