

48th Circuit Court

2009 Informational Report

May 28, 2009

Criminal/Civil

Friend of the Court

Family Division

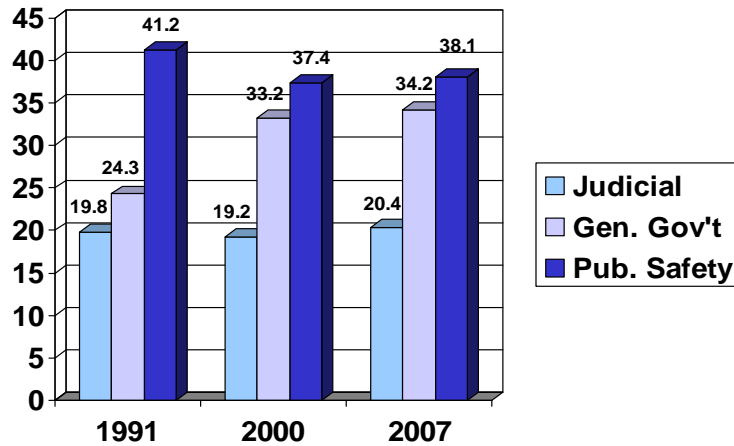
Hon. George Corsiglia, Chief Circuit Court Judge

Hon. Kevin Cronin, Circuit Court Judge

Hon. Michael Buck, Presiding Family Court Judge

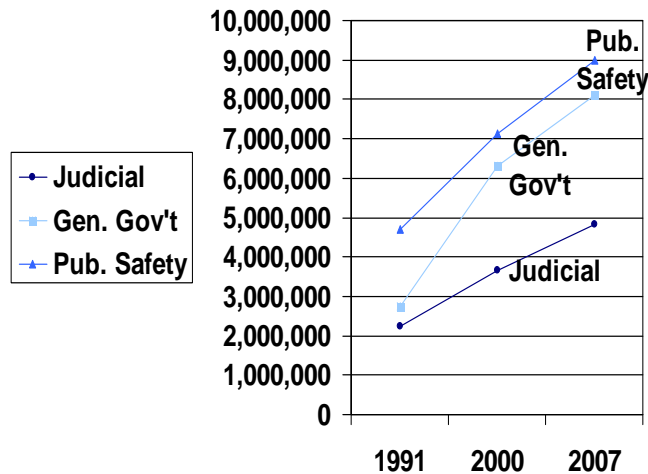
Michael Day, Court Administrator

Percentage of Total, General Fund Dollars Only



The dollars spent for the operation of all Courts in Allegan County has remained steady. Since 1991 the Courts have used in the neighborhood of 20% of the General Fund dollars. This chart demonstrates how the Courts compare to the two other largest users of General Fund dollars, General Government and Public Safety.

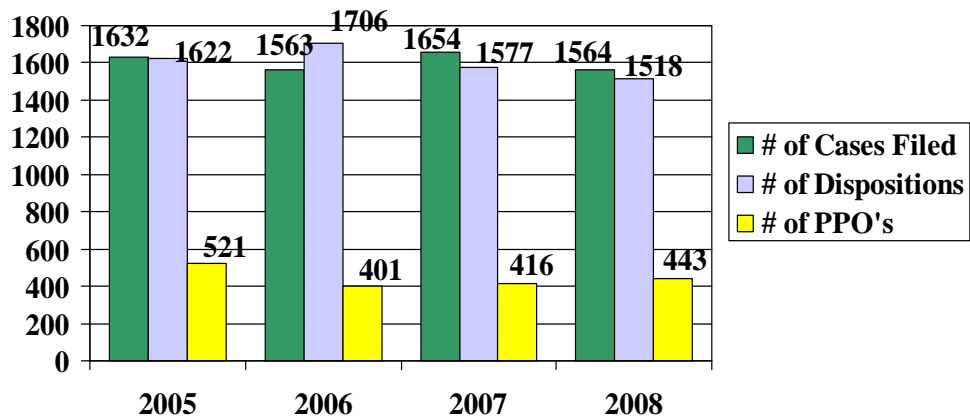
Rate of Growth for Major Areas of Government



Here the chart demonstrates that the Courts in Allegan County have experienced the smallest amount of growth of the three major areas of government in the expenditure of General Fund dollars. The gap in dollars spent for the operation of the Courts, in comparison to other areas of government, has been increasing over time.

Criminal/Civil

Cases & Dispositions



The overall number of cases filed has remained relatively steady for the past four years.

Personal protection orders filed for 2008 saw a slight movement upward from the recent past, about a 10% increase over the past two years.

General Civil Case Evaluations

- Total case evaluations completed: 40
- Case evaluations that resulted in acceptance of the results: 12
- Percent resolved: 30%



A three attorney panel is appointed monthly to evaluate pending civil cases. The attorneys for the plaintiff and defendant present their briefs to the panel. The panel meets privately to come to an agreement on a recommendation for settlement.

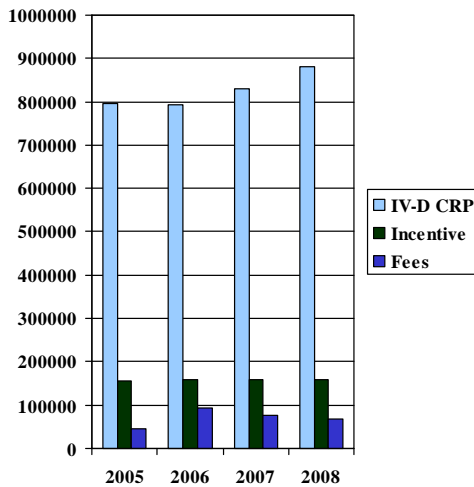
Twelve (12) cases accepted the settlement terms of the panel and avoided trials on their civil matters.

Of the 28 remaining cases evaluated, most were settled prior to a trial. The recommendations of the panel helped lead the parties to settlement prior to their scheduled court date.

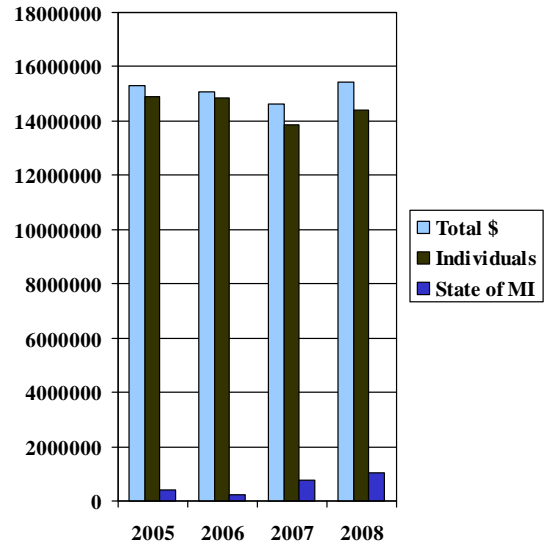
The use of the attorney panel is not only finding acceptable terms for both plaintiff and defendant, it is helping free up precious docket time for the court. This has proven to be a much more amicable means of settling disagreements rather than in the often adversarial setting of a courtroom.

Friend of the Court

• Revenues Generated



• Support Collection Activity



Revenues:

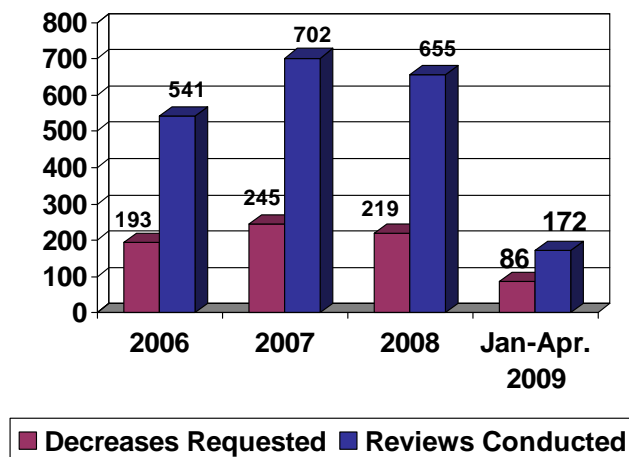
- 1. General Fund IV-D CRP:** Cooperative Reimbursement Program, a federal payment allocated to the County General Fund.
- 2. General Fund Incentive:** Performance-based federal payment allocated to the County General Fund.
- 3. General Fund Fees:** statutory collections allocated to the General Fund.

Collections:

- 1. Total:** total dollars collected.
- 2. Individuals:** individual custodians. (parent, relative etc.)
- 3. State of Michigan:** collections to reimburse the State for public assistance.

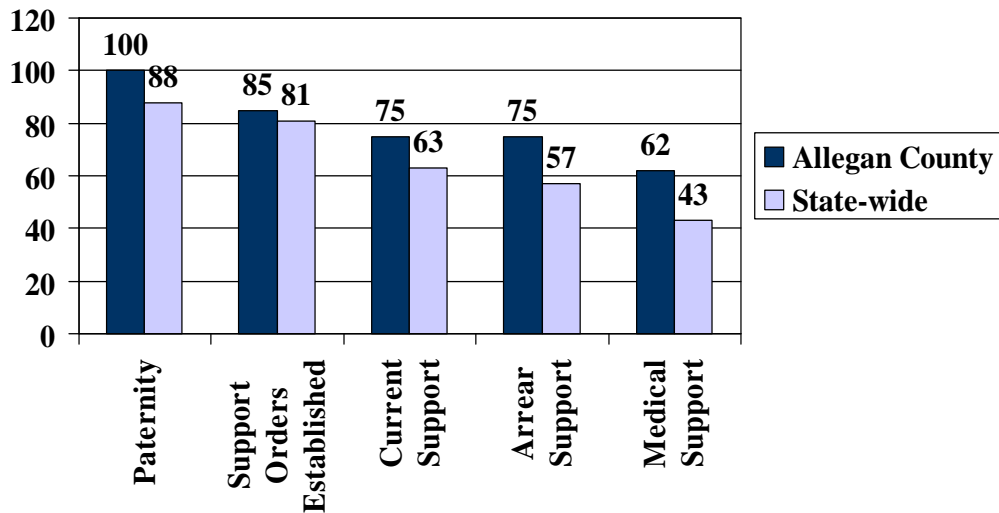
After two years of slowly declining support collection, in 2008 the FOC saw collections increase by 5.5% over 2007, despite the poor economic times.

FOC Child Support Reviews



The Friend of the Court Office averages 55 to 60 child support reviews per month. Of the total amount of orders reviewed on an annual basis, about one third of the support orders have asked for decreases. As of January, 2009 the percentage has jumped to 50%.

Allegan County Comparison to State-wide 2008. Performance Levels



This slide compares Allegan County to the State average in the listed areas. Allegan remains above the State average in all categories.

Graph indicates the *percentage* of cases where support and paternity were established and/or collected.

Allegan County ranks far above the State average in all categories.

FOC Cost Effectiveness

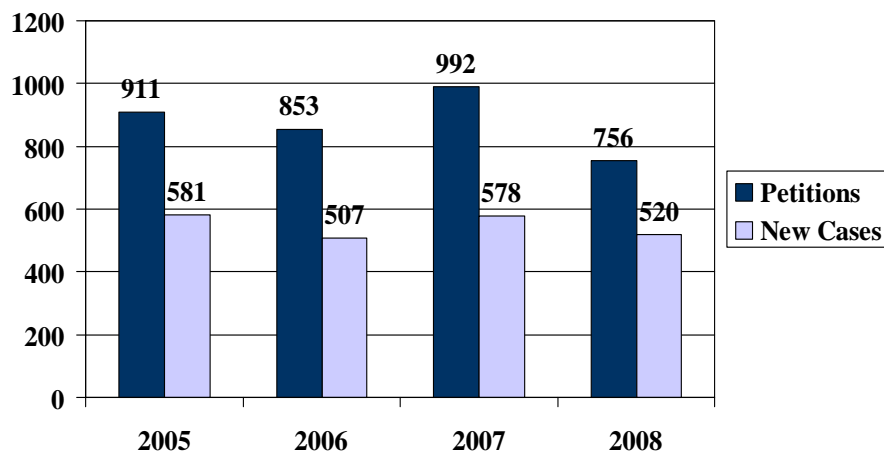
- Dollars spent to operate FOC office in 2008: \$1,224,878
- Support Collected by Allegan FOC in 2008: \$15,442,704
- Support dollars collected per dollar spent to operate Allegan FOC: \$12.60

The Friend of the Court Office in Allegan County consistently remains near the top of the list in all performance measures used to determine the effectiveness of local FOC offices. Allegan County Friend of the Court Office gets a high return of support collected for every dollar spent to operate the office. Allegan consistently ranks in the top 10% of counties statewide in cost effectiveness.

Family Division

- Judicial(Delinquency & Neglect/Abuse)
 - Juvenile Diversion
 - Community Probation
 - Community Justice
- Cheever Treatment Center
- Weston Hall(secure detention)

Delinquency Petitions & New Cases, 2005 -2008



The above petition counts include all petitions that were handled through Diversion and all Traffic tickets for juveniles handed in the Family Division.

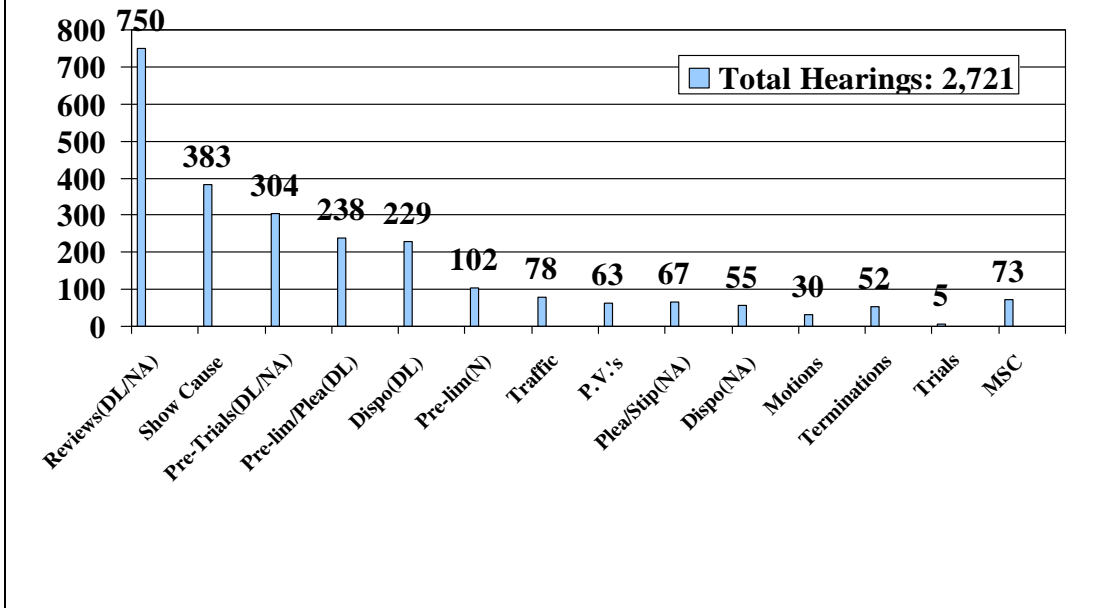
In 2008 there was a significant reduction in delinquency petitions filed with the Family Division. This, in part, is the reason the Court has chosen to temporarily not fill an open probation officer position created through a retirement earlier this year.

The difference in petitions filed and cases reflects that several youth have more than one petition filed in their case.

About one quarter of all petitions coming to the Family Court are handled through Juvenile Diversion, keeping youth out of the formal court system. Most M.I.P. tickets are handled through diversion as well.

Hearing Activity - 2008

Most Frequently Held Hearings



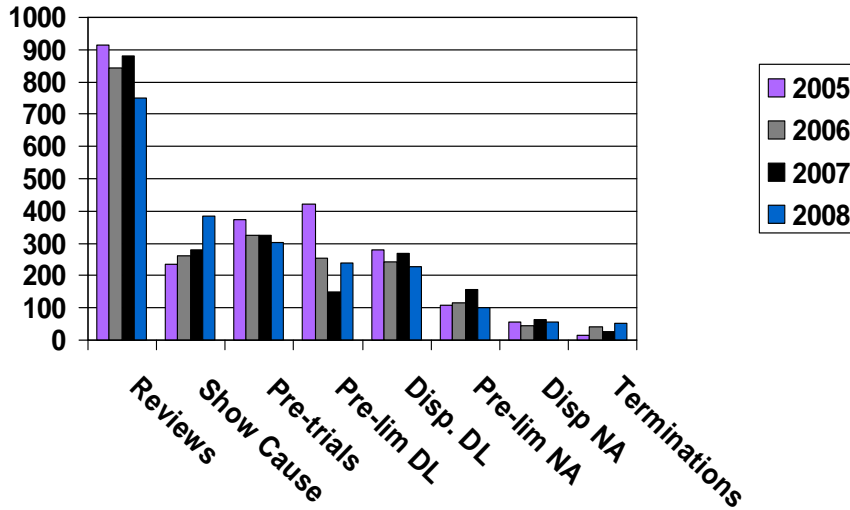
This is a breakdown on the hearings that the Family Division conducted in 2008. **DL** = **Delinquency and NA = Neglect/Abuse**. With *Delinquency* the petition is filed against the youth for an act contrary to State Law or local ordinance. *Neglect/Abuse* deals with petitions filed against parents or guardians with the youth being the victim.

While total hearings held were down 4.6% from 2007, the two areas of increases were Show Causes (for non-payment) up 36%, and Neglect/Abuse Terminations up 93%..

P.V. = Probation Violation Hearing

MSC = Mandatory Settlement Conference held between the attorney's with a referee in attendance

Hearings Conducted 2005 - 2008



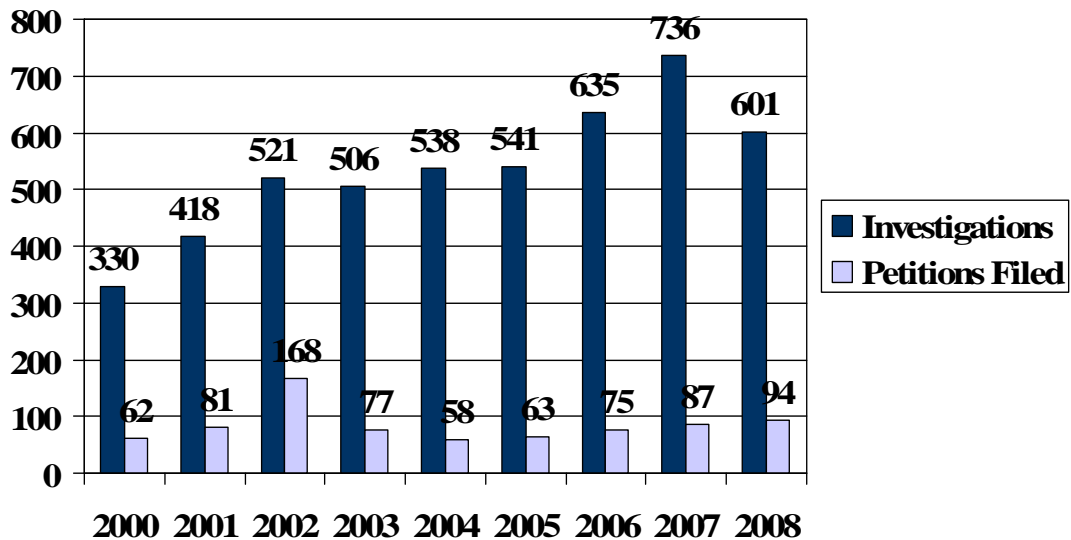
Above are hearings conducted in Family Court that make up the majority of the Court's docket. Many youth on probation go to "frequent review" hearings with Judge Buck. These reviews keep the court informed on a first hand basis of progress or problems the youth are experiencing. These reviews also have had an effect on lowering the amount of other hearings the Court would otherwise have, such as preliminary and supplemental dispositional hearings.

In 2008 the Court saw an increase in the number of Termination hearings for Neglect/Abuse children, a disturbing trend. After a slight decrease in this type of hearing

last year, the trend is again on the rise. These hearings result in placement of children with relatives and/or in foster care.

Show Cause hearings are used mainly to address non-payment of dollars owed to the court by parents of youth placed in care by the Court, both Delinquent and Neglect/Abuse. They also address non-payment of restitution and court costs and fees. Beginning in 2008 the Court began conducting "Show Cause Day" monthly with two hearing officers addressing this issue on a regular basis. This is reflected in the sharp increase in this type of hearing in 2008.

Neglect/Abuse Investigations & Petitions, 2000 - 2008



Neglect/Abuse investigations declined for the first time in years. Despite this decline, petitions filed rose to 94, the highest total since 2002. Of the investigations completed, only 15.6% resulted in Court action. All investigations are performed by the Protective Services staff at DHS.

Nearly all children placed in foster care are from results of these investigations and subsequent Court proceedings. Some children with more severe emotional difficulties may be placed in residential treatment centers as well.

The Family Court manages the financial obligation for these placements through the Child Care Fund, while DHS manages the casework, either with DHS workers or with a

contractual arrangement with private agencies. The new State requirement to license all relative caregivers will increase the cost to the County Child Care Fund, as all relatives will now be paid the foster care per diem.

The Court is seeing many more youth “aging out” of the foster care system by being placed in Structured Independent Living as they approach 18 years of age. These youth essentially have no family to return to. This is an added cost to the Child Care Fund budget, but hopefully it also prevents the youth from going on to the adult criminal justice system.

Juvenile Diversion

- Youth served: 163
- Number of contacts: 815
- Cost per service unit (contact): \$84.89
- Cost per youth served: \$424.45
- 29 MIP/Alcohol tickets or petitions also were diverted
- Only 14 youth failed diversion and were sent on to formal court in 2008.

Once a **Diversion Agreement** is entered into, and the youth successfully completes their agreement, they do not have to appear in formal court and establish a “juvenile record”.

Successful Agreements: Of the 14 youth sent to formal court, 7 had agreements revoked and 7 had new petitions filed prior to a diversion conference. These numbers have steadily improved over the years, as in 2004 there were 41 youth sent to formal court, 16 with revoked agreements and 25 with additional petitions filed or failing to appear.

MIP-Alcohol are first offenders only. Minimally they all must attend the youth Victim’s Impact Panel, pay \$100 fee and write their parents an apology letter.

MIP/Marijuana first offenders being diverted are required to give three negative drug screens before completing the diversion agreement.

The Diversion Coordinator conducts a **Focus Group** based on Choice Theory® which helps the youth in making better life choices and gets them to see how the choices they made brought them to the attention of the Court.

Community Probation

- **Total probation cases for the year: 204**
- **Average # of cases per worker: 20**
- **Face to face client contacts: 7,129**
- **Average # contacts per case: 34.5**
- **Average cost per case: \$2,398.47**
(This amount would purchase less than 2 weeks of residential care)
- **Average cost per contact: \$68.58**

Probation Officers are assigned to specific school districts and specific areas of the county. Each has a law enforcement contact person they collaborate with on juvenile probation cases.

School districts and law enforcement now have one contact person for their area of the county. Probation staff are more involved in the community and in the everyday supervision of the youth on their caseloads. Probation staff are now also expected to work some “non-traditional” hours in order to accomplish this increased community presence.

With detailed case planning and identification of problem areas through the use of the YASI assessment tool, probation staff are keeping more youth at home and connected to family, school and community.

Community Justice Program

(Keeping Kids at Home)

Aftercare:
 Cases: 35
 Contacts: 1,246

Community Service:
 Cases: 50 Contacts: 281

Surveillance:
 Cases: 94
 Contacts: 1,580

Adolescent Sex Offender Group:
 # of Groups: 48 @\$280 = \$13,440
 Assessments: 11 @\$350 = \$3,850
 Individual Sessions: 8 youth, 49 sessions
 @ \$75 = \$3,675

OTTAGON Addictions Recovery (O.A.R., Inc):
 Drug/alcohol counseling/education:
 Assessments: 4 @ \$110 = \$440 Sessions: 15 @
 \$95 = \$1,425
 Cases: 5 youth

Outlook Strict Discipline Academy:
 Cases: 17 youth
 Days of enrollment: 1,234 @ \$37 per day =
 \$45,658

Truancy Prevention:
 42 elementary age youth worked with
Misc. Services (mentoring, camp, etc.)
 Cases: 34 Contacts: 204

Surveillance: This year the Community Justice Officers provided after hours surveillance for 94 youth. Youth are checked on in their homes in the evenings and on weekends. The Community Justice Officer emphasizes the home visits to be utilized as family support.

Community Service: The youth are encouraged to find and complete their assigned community service hours in their own community, however, when this cannot be done the Community Justice Officer will coordinate group projects. A few examples of group projects include; United Way, Camp Kidwell, County Parks, City of Fennville and Allegan, Baby Links Program, Challenge of Children Conference, Cops for Christmas and several others.

Case Management/Aftercare: The Community Justice Officers provide case management services for youth transitioning from residential placement back to their community. As with the youth referred for surveillance, the CJO works with the entire family to help facilitate a successful transition back into the community.

Adolescent Sex Offenders Group: This community-based, contracted service deals with sex offenders in an intensive 40 week group setting. Most youth take over one year to complete, as specific assignments measuring progress are required. By keeping these youth in the community tens of thousands of dollars are saved in residential placement costs.

Drug/Alcohol Counseling & Education: This service is contract with OAR for youth on probation presenting problems with substance abuse.

Outlook Academy: The court contracts with Outlook for probationers who are expelled or on long-term suspension from school. These dollars makes it possible for Outlook to provide an extended school day with extra activities and services otherwise unaffordable.

Truancy Prevention: works directly with elementary age children and their parents to support acceptable school attendance and cooperation.

Cheever Treatment Center

How Are We Helping Youth?

- **Maintain a safe environment for the community and the residents.**
- **Provide appropriate, therapeutic environment.**
- **Address the emotional, developmental, educational, and mental needs of the residents.**
- **Provide appropriate therapy services.**
- **Provide appropriate activities that nurture personal development and responsibility.**
- **Effectively work with other agencies, including schools, and social agencies.**
- **Provide opportunities for residents to restore the victim and the community for the harm they have caused.**
- **Teach and develop the skills necessary for being meaningful and effective participants in their communities.**
- **Help develop and support relationships/connections in their communities.**

Cheever Treatment Center is a community based residential treatment program for serious delinquent offenders. The program is based on the Balanced and Restorative Justice principles, addressing community restoration through youth accountability, skill development and community safety. There is a focused effort to repair harm to the victims through community service, restitution and the development of valued skills that lead to desired community membership. The program facilitates the establishment of effective connections to their communities, having a significant impact on the community's safety.

CTC services include assessment, crisis intervention, milieu therapy, residential services, intensive home-based programming, community service, educational assistance, employability skills and any special services the youth's particular situation may merit. Youth may spend as little as four months in the program or as long as a year or more. The days in residence vs. the days home-based depend on the level of cooperation, accomplishment and self-direction shown by each youth and their family.

The Cheever Treatment Center provided care to 30 residents over the course of 2008. A total of 5,220 days of care, with 3,507 days spent in residence, and 1,713 days spent in their homes.

Secure Detention

- Average length of stay: 12 days
- 2008 Admissions: 448 (322 boys & 126 girls)

• Admissions by race:		
Caucasian	367	82.0%
Hispanic	36	8.0%
African/American	31	6.9%
Bi-racial	8	1.8%
Native American	6	1.3%

Age of youth admitted to Secure Detention:		
17 years old; 12	16 years old; 146	15 years old; 138
14 years old; 70	13 years old; 51	12 years old; 17
11 years old; 9	10 years old; 3	9 years old; 2

*We have a Graduation Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.) Program
in our Detention Center*



The average length of stay for a youth in detention was 12 days, which is about 4.5 days longer than just two years ago. The increased average length of stay is attributable to the fact that the Court uses community options more often than detention as a consequence for probation violations, and the youth who are lodged are only the most difficult to manage with the most severe behavioral problems.

Youthful Offenders: The 14 youth under age 12 is the highest number ever admitted in one year of this age group. The younger age youth present programming challenges for the detention center staff. Most present a combination of serious mental health, behavioral, community, school and family problems.

Girls: 28% of all admissions were girls, a rising trend. Just 20% were girls 2 years ago, and only about 10% ten years ago.

The Kitchen offers cooking classes and community service opportunities.

The Greenhouse/garden supplies fresh produce to the kitchen.

Building projects, such as picnic tables, bird houses & feeders etc. are also a part of the detention programming.

Aggression Replacement Training and **Girl's Circle Group** are ongoing programs in detention.

During 2008 there were 17 GED graduates from our detention center.

The Court is exploring contracting with Outlook Academy for the Juvenile Center school program for future years in order to reduce the cost of the education program and to implement year round school.