A Tree is Planted  by Chief Probation Officer Allen Nance

The planting of a tree is incredibly symbolic in what it represents. On top of the benefits to our environment and beautification of our landscape, trees also symbolize our investment in the future. Our commitment to new growth and our responsibility to nurture and develop a tree is in many ways, symbolic of our work. Recently, I had the occasion to participate in the planting of lemon trees on our property adjacent to the parking lot. This project was spearheaded by Dr. Isabel Wade, Executive Director of the non-profit organization, Just One Tree and Urban Resource Systems. She is also a former Executive Director of the San Francisco Neighborhood Parks Council. Their organization advocates for the use of public lands to promote the development of urban farms. Youth from a local Boy Scout troop, students from Success Center San Francisco, and adult volunteers, worked long and hard over the course of a weekend to do this work.

The creation of something new and different can inspire hope and brings with it anticipation and a renewed energy to establish and accomplish new goals and develop plans to achieve them. There is something reaffirming and inspiring about goals and objectives to which we seek attainment. Call it eternal optimism or wishful thinking. Either way, my motivation to do better, climb higher, and achieve more is as intense as ever. The transitions of the past year have been significant and yet our vision and mission remain the same. We must continually find ways to enhance and preserve public safety, hold youth accountable for their actions, while continually seeking to serve their best interests. Each passing day, I am impressed and grateful for the opportunity to work with so many dedicated professionals who have accepted the challenge to administer justice in our system. Each of us plays a part as major contributors to our collective efforts. Over the past 25 years in the field of probation, I have come to realize that despite the very real challenges faced by youth and their families, there still remains tremendous opportunity to impact their lives and improve the quality and conditions of the communities in which they live. We have seen through our efforts to engage teens and provide intensive clinical and social services to youth that their resiliency and resolve often goes far beyond what we could have imagined. At the same time, we know that real change doesn’t happen in a vacuum. Youth need parents, guardians, and caregivers who are equally committed to behavioral change and invest in their own efforts to improve the family’s circumstances. Finding ways to engage families so that they embrace the challenge and opportunities for change requires skill, patience, and persistence. When we are successful in that endeavor, we can be confident that in the end; like the tree, the roots for sustainable change can and will grow deeper.

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Down on the Ranch: Contributed by Tim Diestel… will return for the next issue. Meanwhile, down at the Ranch Tim Diestel has been appointed as Acting Director of Log Cabin Ranch. Staff is lending their full support and cooperation as he assumes this top management position for LCR. Thank you Tim and best of luck to you.

Pet Photo

Juvenile Hall Counselor Michael Munson’s Pitbull/Labrador Mix “Satchmo”. Good friend and companion.” A.K.A. “KissingBug” famously nicknamed after Duke Ellington’s song because Satchmo loves to kiss women” according to Mr. Munson. “He is a lovely dog.”

Heart of the City 2013

Thanks!

Teen Outdoor Experience: A Weekend to Remember

The 2013 Teen Outdoor Experience (commonly known as TOE) provided 21 young people with a unique outdoor leadership experience. TOE almost didn’t happen due to the Yosemite Fire in August, but we were able to re-schedule the trip for late September in partnership with the S.F. Boys and Girls Club at its Camp Mendocino facility.

Camps engaged in team building exercises on the low ropes course, and then went for broke 30 feet up in the air on the high ropes course. The highlight was sliding down the ‘zip line’, which took campers from the high ropes course, way over Lake Inyo, until finally stopping with the help of a well-trained boys and girls club staff member over solid ground. The smiles on the faces of the youth as they landed, even as they said the words “Never Again” told the whole story. (and..for the record… many did go again!).

Other activities included mountain bike riding, archery, swimming in the lake at 7:00 AM in the morning, sleeping in Tepees, building huge campfires. The youth talent show, which is held the last night, was spectacular with the campers displaying dancing and singing talent worthy of prime time.

Best part of the TOE is that every youth that attended under the age of 18 has been placed at a job through Rec and Park’s WorkCreation Program. They are placed all over the city at various Recreation Facilities working with young people and helping Rec and Park staff. The youth who are 18 and over either have been hired or will be hired soon in the 3279 classification and if they aren’t working yet, will be working shortly after the New Year.

TOE is more than a 4 day camping trip: it is part of a leadership development initiative co-sponsored by JPD, Rec and Park, SFPD and community agencies. All youth had to attend 4 Friday afternoon orientations before the trip and they all had to apply for a Rec and Park job on-line, a new and good experience for every youth. They had to go through job interviews and then job training. These young people have earned their jobs!!!

As part of TOE’s leadership development, we designated seven (7) former campers who are now over 18 years old to serve as ‘peer leaders’. These leaders helped the staff with activities and provided assistance to the campers as needed.

JPD’s warm thanks to the Rec and Park staff, SFPD, Community Response Network and to the Boys and Girls club for a great team effort to make TOE a success.

Written by Garry Bieringer
The Juvenile Collaborative Reentry Unit (JCRU) is the newest addition to the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department and was established in January 2013. JCRU works hand-in-hand with the San Francisco Public Defenders Office, the Private Bar Panel, the San Francisco Superior Court and the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice. They provide intensive aftercare planning and support to prepare the youth to reenter the community. The program offers ongoing structured educational, vocational, therapeutic, mentoring and other supportive services developed by a team of probation officers, social workers, and case management coordinators.

Another facet of JCRU is AB12 which is extended foster care benefits for youth 18 through 21 years old. AB12 helps youth who are committed to foster care or out-of-home placement by their 18th birthday. AB12 provides a monthly housing stipend, medical insurance and additional support to promote independent living.

**JPD Holiday Celebration 2013**

The Juvenile Hall Girls Garden Project sprouted when two outspoken young women detainees declared in class that being around nature and living things would provide much needed solace from the pain in their lives. It was argued that bringing life into Juvenile Hall, by providing each youth with a living plant to nourish and nurture, could bring comfort.

The next day, a teacher brought in a wide variety seeds to class. The students were invited to pick the plants to nurture. From that day forward, creating a school garden within JJC became a Mission.

JJC staff and teachers began an affiliation with the Center for Ecoliteracy. We attended their Leadership Academy, and with their guidance developed a plan. Probation and School administrations supported the idea. With funding from the TomKat Foundation and Center for Ecoliteracy, the project began.

Shortly after launching this project, JH staff created a partnership with Log Cabin Ranch Staff, teachers, the SF Conservation Corps. The Log Cabin Ranch students built redwood boxes for both the pilot and expanded gardens. JJC probation and Woodside Learning Center staff supported classes in support for the program. Urban Sprouts provided students meaningful academic-hands-on lessons to cultivate an appreciation for a nature environment, teach nutrition, and examine issues of food justice. The garden beds were designed, constructed, and installed with love by our former students, the residents of Log Cabin Ranch.

JPD will continue to develop the space further into an even more beautiful, green outdoor classroom oasis that students, their families, staff can enjoy.

Staff learned from the students, who taught us they need positive nurturing activities to assist their healing while placed in a detained facility. The groups mentioned previously partnered to help the youth realize their dream. The reminder that Our three main objectives of this project?

1) Healing 2) rehabilitation, and 3) empathy.