



Futures NOW!

The Quarterly Newsletter of Montgomery County Juvenile Court and Reclaiming Futures

Countywide Poll Reveals Citizen Support For Expanding Juvenile Treatment Options

Despite frustration and concern about area crime rates, Montgomery County voters strongly support a wide range of treatment options for juveniles who enter the justice system, a new poll of county residents reveals.

The survey, by Strategic Visioning, Inc., included interviews of 400 randomly-selected Montgomery County residents, and represents the most comprehensive study in recent years testing public attitudes toward juvenile crime.

"We learned a lot from the data," said Judge Nick Kuntz, Juvenile Court Administrative Judge. "There is a strong silent majority of citizens out there that wants to go beyond incarceration as a cure for juvenile crime."

The survey supports comprehensive treatment options that will be easier when the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC), now under construction, opens in 2007. The JJC will bring together

a wide range of care provider options.

Widespread public support for one-on-one mentoring programs such as Juvenile Court's Reclaiming Futures Natural Helper program was a highlight of the county-wide survey. More than 60% of those interviewed feel "society is too quick to give up on young people who commit crimes" and 72% believe

to economic circumstances like lack of jobs.

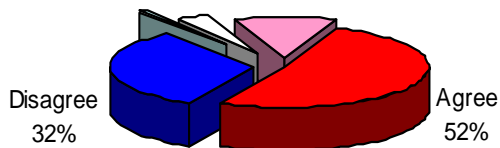
Do county residents see juvenile crime as a big issue? Yes, by resounding percentages. In fact, 84% say crime rates have gone up in the past five years (they actually have gone down).

Do those same residents favor a "throw away the key" approach to jailing young offenders? Not for most cases. In fact, over 40 percent of survey respondents indicated they would be interested in mentoring a child, especially if the youth resides in the same neighborhood or community.

For more information about Reclaiming Futures' community poll, call Charlotte McGuire, Project Director, at 496-6737.

Society is too quick to give up on young people who commit crimes.

Strongly disagree 1%
Don't know 4%
Strongly agree 11%

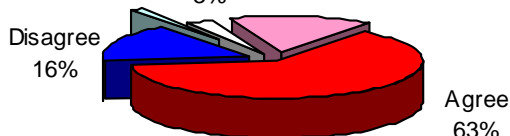


young repeat offenders "have the capacity to change for the better."

Drugs, alcohol, abuse, and dysfunctional family structures were cited as prime culprits in juvenile crime, the survey showed, and most county citizens do not link youth crime

We should focus less on locking up juvenile offenders and more on programs that will help them become law-abiding citizens.

Strongly disagree 2%
Don't know 3%
Strongly agree 16%



RECLAIMING FUTURES—MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Communities helping teens overcome drugs, alcohol and crime.

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Reclaiming Futures is a new approach to help teenagers caught in the cycle of drugs, alcohol and crime.

Montgomery County, Ohio is one of only ten communities nationwide selected to participate in this national project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

FALL 2006



Shaton Yarbrough, a member of the May 2006 Natural Helper graduating class, is linked with 17-year-old Devanna McLemore.

Spotlight: Shaton Yarbrough, Natural Helper

Each edition of "Futures NOW!" focuses on real-life experiences of Natural Helpers, the volunteer corps of local citizens who mentor at-risk children with Juvenile Court histories. To learn more about how you can reclaim a child's life by becoming a Natural Helper, please call 496-6884.

Shaton Yarbrough is a graduate of the May 2006 Natural Helper Class.

This summer, Shaton was linked to seventeen-year-old Devanna McLemore. Instantly, Shaton and Devanna developed an important relationship. Devanna feels as though she has a supporter in Shaton, someone she can count on to listen to her and to offer her honest advice.

Shaton and Devanna began their relationship with a few telephone calls. Both Shaton and Devanna were immediately comfortable with the mentor/mentee role. A few weeks later, Shaton drove to Devanna's work

and had lunch with her. They spent an hour or so talking and getting to know one another.

Devanna is an extraordinary young woman. She completed her Drug Court requirements in June 2006, but wishes to continue having

Shaton as a Natural Helper. Devanna is expecting a baby girl and knows she could use another friend in her life. Devanna attends Patterson Career Center and

is focusing on dental hygiene as her concentration.

Shaton is concentrating on getting Devanna to stay positive. She has offered to help transport her to mother-baby classes. Shaton reminds Devanna that she truly needs to focus on her future.

I hope to be someone who she sees as a friend. I hope to help her be better in life, and to guide her as she enters motherhood.

Shaton Yarbrough
Natural Helper

When asked what she had hoped to accomplish with Devanna, Shaton says I hope to be someone who she sees as a friend.

**Reclaiming Futures—
Montgomery County
Creating positive
futures with
court-involved youth
and families by
building community
solutions.**

Faith Community Unites To Reclaim Futures Throughout Montgomery County

Court Administrator Jim Cole, Juvenile Court Administrative Judge Nick Kuntz, and Pastor Arthur McGuire are part of the effort to raise awareness of Reclaiming Futures in the faith community and in the suburbs.



Juvenile crime and substance abuse are countywide problems, and strong initiatives by Montgomery County Juvenile Court and Reclaiming Futures, working with the faith-based community are raising awareness.

"The problems facing our young people are our problems too," says Pastor Arthur McGuire of Joshua Christian Ministries. "We need to build awareness of the challenges facing these kids, especially in the suburbs of Dayton."

As Reclaiming Futures' new Faith Based

Champion, Pastor McGuire is spearheading an effort to raise awareness of the problem and to recruit Natural Helpers from Montgomery County's faith-based community.

With assistance from Pastor Scott Davidson of the Urban/Suburban Network of Churches, Pastor McGuire and Reclaiming Futures have identified objectives designed to invoke and maintain divine providence over Juvenile Justice leaders, workers and the work; to divide Montgomery County into jurisdictions and to increase the number of Natural Helper volunteers for court-involved youth; to develop a faith-based blueprint for Reclaiming

Futures Day; and to identify churches as safe places for juvenile justice youth to drop in for help and/or positive activities.

Already, civic leaders in West Carrollton have invited faith leaders from that community, Moraine and Miami Township to attend a call-to-action breakfast on October 3. And Pastor Samuel Winston, Jr. of Mt. Cavalry Missionary Baptist Church has agreed to host a "Reclaiming Futures Sunday" on October 29.

"It's commitments like this that will help us accomplish our goal and truly reclaim the futures of Montgomery County's court-involved youth," said Pastor McGuire.

Most Recent Class Is Largest Ever

Eighteen Complete Rigorous Training To Become Natural Helpers

Growing numbers of community volunteers are stepping up to help Montgomery County youth overcome challenges of drugs, alcohol and crime. In fact, the 18 men and women who graduated from Reclaiming Futures' Natural Helper Training in August comprise the largest Natural Helper yet.

"These men and women are ready to give their attention and energy to young people who really need it," said Charlotte McGuire, Project Director for Reclaiming Futures—Montgomery County. "With this graduating class, Montgomery County Juvenile Court is Reclaiming Futures, with 87 trained community volunteers, 58 actively mentoring youth in a one-on-one relationship, and 95 youth served to date" said McGuire.

Every Natural Helper applicant completes a

detailed screening process and four class session that include an overview of Montgomery County Juvenile Court and specific information pertaining to the Probation Department, the Drug Court Program and the LIFE program of South Community. In addition, Natural Helpers learn about diversity, applying faith as a means of action, and rules for successful mentors.

The majority of members in the August Natural Helper class were recruited as a result of Reclaiming Futures' "Call To Action" faith-based event held in March 2006.

The next Natural Helper class is forming now, with training set to begin in October. For more information about Reclaiming Futures or how to become a Natural Helper, call 496-6884 or visit our website at www.mcjc.mcoho.org/departments/RF.

Natural Helper graduates have good reasons for Reclaiming Futures of Montgomery County youth:

"I want to be a mentor because the mentoring tools of listening, sharing, and caring are so powerful to the both the mentee and the mentor. I would like to help motivate the mentee and encourage the youth down the right path towards a successful and prosperous life."
—Jacquise Jackson

"I believe that I can encourage and inspire youth to realize what their full potential is by being consistent, compassionate, caring and respectful. Our youth need a second chance and need understanding people by be by their sides."
—Marcy'a McDonald

"I want to be there for someone when no one else will. I would like to talk , give advise, and help a child gain confidence."
—Tia Gibson

"I want to be a mentor because I remember what it was like to grow up in a single parent household with no real father figure. I know what it feels like to need encouragement and advice and not to get it. For the kindness I did receive and the unconditional love from my mother, I want to give back."
—William Lawson

"I want to have the opportunity to help change someone's life for the better and this will give me the value of doing something for the betterment of the community."
—Zerrick Columbe

Natural Helper graduates celebrated together in August. Shown in the front row (left to right) are Yolanda Tinsley, Ethel Washington, Natural Helper Coordinator Melissa Sanders, Teresa Beasley, and Virginia Smith. Back row (left to right) includes Judge Anthony Capizzi, Priscilla Hawkins, Ralph Thomas, Carolyn Stiffler, Linda Chapman, Marcy'a McDonald, Mekeea Hanson, Geraldine Newberry, Sylvia Mosely, Zerrick Columbe, Rick Friebel, William Lawson, and Judge Nick Kuntz.



Reclaiming Futures In The News!

Reclaiming Futures—Montgomery County was again in the news this summer. The Dayton Daily News editorial board ran a piece on Sunday, July 16 discussing the results of Reclaiming Futures' community poll (see page one of this newsletter). The article ended with an appeal for volunteers: "With so many people saying that they believe children in trouble with the law deserve treatment, it would be helpful if more stepped in to help the kids get that assistance and to be a positive presence for them."



Following publication, more than a dozen people called Reclaiming Futures to find out how they could become Natural Helpers.

By The Numbers

- **8,412 young people were referred to Montgomery County Juvenile Court for criminal acts in 2005.**
- **Of these, more than half were in need of substance abuse and/or mental health treatment.**
- **35 percent were under age 15**
- **3,284 were girls**
- **The youngest children were six years of age.**

Help Us Get The Word Out!

If you belong to a professional or social organization, congregation or neighborhood group or club that is in need of a speaker and would be interested in learning more about Reclaiming Futures, please contact Charlotte McGuire by phone at (937) 496-6884 or by e-mail at mcguirec@mcoho.org.



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