



MISSOURI JUVENILE JUSTICE ASSOCIATION EXCELLENCE IN JUVENILE COURT PROGRAM AWARD 2015

6th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT YOUTH ACCOUNTABILITY DIVERSION PROGRAM

One of MJJA's many goals is to provide and share information on new ideas and programming designed by Missouri's juvenile and family courts, which are truly beneficial to the children they serve. When MJJA created the Excellence in Juvenile Court Program Award in 1993, it did so with two purposes in mind: firstly, to acknowledge the outstanding work being done in juvenile and family courts throughout the state; and, secondly to inspire us all to creativity and excellence. From its inception, MJJA has chosen to recognize a program only if it has risen to the level, through the judging process, to truly merit the label EXCELLENT. While many very good programs have been offered for consideration, one program was chosen by the Juvenile Court Program Award Committee to receive this year's Excellence Award.

In August, 1993, the Platte County Juvenile Office initiated the "**Youth Accountability Diversion Program**" to benefit first time youthful offenders through short-term impact services delivered to the youth and their family while maintaining their presence in the community. A contract hearing is held with eligible youth and their parent/custodian where the Judge decides whether or not the youth should be accepted into the 150-day program. A few of the program requirements for the youth and his/her parent are: supervision, community service, victim restitution, participation in the Parent Adolescent Conflict Education Program and the Adolescents and Parents Together Program. Youth who participate in the program are tracked until their 17th birthday. Recidivism is determined by a youth committing subsequent law violations. Since August 1993, four hundred and thirty-five (435) youth have participated in the program. As of December 31, 2014, forty-two (42)

participating youth (9.6%) were adjudicated for additional offenses. Twenty (20) participating youth (4.6%) were committed to Missouri Division of Youth Services and two youth (0.5%) were certified to be tried as adults. 85% have successfully completed the program.

Parents of youth who have participated in the Youth Accountability Diversion program have continuously praised the program for providing a holistic approach to working with their child. Some parents sum the program up by saying, “the Youth Accountability Program was amazing! Everything from the beginning to the end, from the classes to the community service has a purpose”... “it is truly a partnership with the family and the personnel of the Youth Accountability Diversion Program”.