

Great Game Huddle Notes

March 21st, 2017

Susan Cox, Juvenile Detention Superintendent presented information about the Greene County Juvenile Detention facility.

The current facility was built in 1991, the year that Susan began working for Greene County. The facility has 19 employees, including the superintendent and an assistant superintendent. The facility operates 24/7, with 3 staff on each shift at all times. The GC Juvenile Detention center is a maximum security facility for boys and girls and holds 24 beds. In 2016, 222 youth were admitted; 21% of which were female; 31% of which were youth of color. The detention center holds youth for Greene County and surrounding jurisdictions and the Division of Youth Services. Of the 222 youth admitted in 2016, 66 were from other jurisdictions or Division of Youth Services.

The average stay is 12.5 days and the facility has about seven (7) youth on any given day.

The facility partners with Springfield Public Schools for youth education. The youth attend classes each weekday for 6 hours per day. Education extends through the summer except for two weeks utilized for remedial studies. Youth at the facility have the opportunity to participate in music therapy provided by Drury, art therapy provided by MSU, faith-based ministries, emergency preparedness provided by OEM, and medical services provided by Mercy Health. Susan pointed out that Evangel University provided money for the trauma room. Meals are provided by the Greene County Jail, and evening snacks are also available to the youth. Youth are encouraged to shower and change clothes daily, and part of the staff duties include doing the laundry for the youth at the facility. The facility provides programs throughout the day, limiting the "free recreational time" to about two (2) hours per day.

The goal is for the youth to leave in a better state than in which they arrived to reduce the likelihood that they will return.

The staff is committed to the youth. The facility has a Detention Alternatives Initiative which ensures that the right kids are in detention for the safety and security of the community. The GC Juvenile Detention center has added performance based standards to utilize quality control to compare GC with other facilities in the U.S.

There are a few challenges for GC Juvenile Detention, including:

1. Staffing-required 3 staff per shift, some in-house training helps overcome this challenge
2. Meal services-not delivered to the facility from the jail. Increased idle wake hours while staff gets the food from the jail
3. Maintenance & custodial services due to an aging facility
4. Security system-not modern equipment.

Some ways to overcome the challenges:

1. Adding staff or have meals delivered
2. Additional maintenance & custodial services
3. Upgrade security systems (camera systems at the facility went down the day of the presentation at the GC huddle)
4. Improve internal training process for employees

5. Find additional community partners to help youth with self-control mechanisms such as yoga or tai chi

Questions from the audience:

1. What changes have you seen since 1991?
Increased number of employees. In 1991, there were 40 employees; in 2017, there are 80-90 employees
Security in 1991 did not exist. Now, reception area is locked and they have a court security officer present
Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) and grants help
2. Who is the typical juvenile detention youth?
Delinquent youth, referrals due to assault, referrals due to misdemeanor stealing
Detention center holds youth that present a serious threat to the community or are at-risk of fleeing
39% are on formal probation
Most detainees are for probation violation
3. What is the youngest youth in detention center?
In 1991, the center had a 9-year-old in detention. In 2016, a 12-year-old is the youngest. Detention center prefers not to have young youth due to the fact that they may have 17-year-olds and murderers in the facility