



Community Service Restitution Unit

Triannual e-Newsletter

Serving Our Youth Since 1980

May - August 2015



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Incident Reports*1
- Welcome*2
- Personal Energy*
- Transportation*3
- Friends Fur-Ever*4
- Goodbye*5
- Congrats Crystal*6
- Case Closures*6

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Steven Lerma
Amanda Torres
Vanessa Vasquez
Jesse Vielma

Incident Reports

A fundamental requirement of any Community Service Restitution (CSR) activity is ensuring that it is a safe setting for youth, as well as for staff supervising them. To realize a safe environment, experienced and well-trained staff are essential. In particular, staff abilities to verbally de-escalate potentially volatile situations among youth goes a long way to keeping order and enhancing safety.

As it relates to work crews, CSR staff supervise groups of youth in the community, typically away from other department staff and support systems. On occasion, in remote or isolated areas. Often youth have work tools in-hand. CSR staff must, therefore, rely on their judgment and training to make sure these activities remain constructive and safe. But inevitably behavior issues do surface. Incident reports are generated when this happens.

While one behavior-related incident is one too many, we are pleased to relate that they are not common. In a typical year we operate work crews on sixty-plus days. Over the past seven years, behavior-related incident reports range from three to twelve per year (see graph, page 2).

To put this in perspective, we operated work crews on 61-days in 2014. During that time, 644 youth (unduplicated count), or 2,071 youth (duplicated count) attended work crews. From this population, seven behavior-related incidents were generated. A miniscule amount by any measure.

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WELCOME

Vanessa Vasquez joined the CSR Unit on May 11th. Since then she has been a welcomed addition to our team.

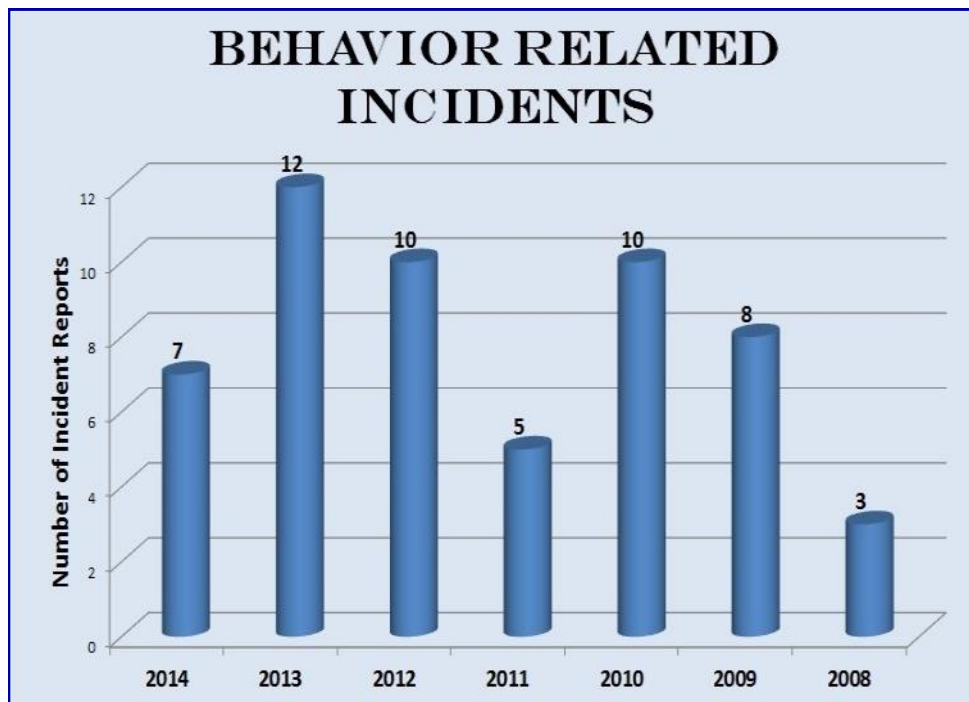
Vanessa first hired with the Juvenile Probation Department on September 16, 2013. During that time, she worked as a Residential Treatment Officer in the Mission Road Center (MRC). That she has fit so well in our unit is not surprising. Her work ethic and task orientation are very strong suits.

Vanessa is a local product having attended South San High School. She is also well on her way to attaining a Bachelor's degree. Currently, she attends Texas A&M University at San Antonio. Previously, she attended Texas Southern University where she played two years on the university softball team.



(Continued from page 1)

In large part, this outcome is attributed to department training that provides CSR staff with the necessary skills and information to effectively supervise work crews. ■



DID YOU KNOW....

Youth placed on probation shall perform community service unless the court determines and enters a finding that:

1. the child is physically or mentally incapable of participating in the project;
2. participating in the project will be a hardship on the child or the family of the child; or
3. the child has shown good cause that community service should not be required.

Texas Family Code, Section 54.004 (a): Community Service

Personal Energy Transportation

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The Personal Energy Transportation (PET) Service-Learning Project is a favorite among our youth. This is the second year CSR youth get the opportunity to take part in PET. This project introduces youth, in a hands-on way, to basic carpentry, construction, painting, manufacturing, safety, and other workshop related activities. Youth who took part in this project were at least fifteen years of age and ordered to perform at least twenty-four hours of community service.



Northside Lion Volunteer Tack Welds as Youth Observes

In partnership with the Northside Lions Club, youth spent part of this summer assisting in the construction of hand-cranked mobile carts, called PET® Mobility Carts. These carts provide a means of transportation to individuals living in developing countries who are unable to walk.

Carts are produced by volunteers in Affiliate workshops throughout the country. The Northside Lions Club is one of these Affiliates. After these carts are produced, they are shipped to third world countries. This includes Haiti, Nicaragua, Vietnam, and many more.

This summer the service learning project was held from July 14th to August 12th. It was conducted at the Northside Lions Club PET manufacturing site located at 219 E. Nakoma. CSR lead staff were Steven Lerma and Joe Medellin.



PET Mobility Cart

To learn more about the PET® Mobility Project, please go to <http://petinternational.org/> ■

For questions, comments or suggestions on this newsletter, please contact:

Pete Gonzales, CSR Unit Supervisor
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Friends Fur-Ever



The Friends Fur-Ever Service Learning Project took place from June 15th to July 6th. This project is new to our service learning menu. It focuses on an introduction to pet care and grooming. Emphasis is placed on enhancing the knowledge base of participant youth as it relates to animal care, the pet community, and pet needs.

Project youth met at the Converse Animal Shelter. Youth ranged in age from 14 to 17. Both court-ordered probation and deferred prosecution

youth participated. Excluded were youth with offenses related to animal cruelty and aggravated assaults.

Jesse Vielma, CSR Specialist, served as project lead. He worked very closely on this project with Joann Stokes, Converse Animal Shelter Manager.

About the Converse Animal Shelter, Inc.

Converse Animal Shelter, Inc. (CASI) has been a CSR community partner since 2009. It is located in northeast Bexar County at 9634 Schaefer Rd. in Converse. It is a non-profit, no-kill shelter subsisting exclusively on grants, donations, adoption fees and fund raising.

CASI began operations in September 1982. Since that time, over 18,000 helpless, abandoned, unwanted, sick and lost animals have come through their gates. CASI takes in unwanted and abused animals in Converse, working to place them in suitable homes throughout the San Antonio area.

Since they are a no-kill shelter, they can only take in additional animals as others are adopted. CASI also provides opportunities and community support events that advance responsible pet ownership and the humane treatment of pets.

Donations to the Converse Animal Shelter are tax-deductible. To learn more about CASI, please go to <http://www.mynewbestfriend.org/index.html>. ■



Dog Walking



Hello Kitty

Goodbye



May 7th was Alesha Giridy's last day with the Juvenile Probation Department. Prior to becoming a CSR Specialist with the JPD, she worked as a Facility Administrative Officer for the San Marcos Treatment Center. After leaving us, she returned to the San Marcos Treatment Center as a Unit Manager.

In the few years Alesha worked in the CSR Unit, she quickly established herself as a hard-working, thoughtful, and very competent employee. One who is greatly missed. Fortunately Alesha visits from time to time, and even helped the Soft Serve Volleyball Team to a 2nd place finish in the department's co-ed volleyball tournament held on June 20th and a 3rd place finish on August 22nd.

The following is part of Alesha's Goodbye Message:

I would like to take the time to speak on my experience while working here. I have had the opportunity to work alongside some great individuals who share the same passion for the youth. ... I had the opportunity to attend trainings and have always been encouraged to further knowledge and skills that the department has to offer. I must say this has been a great experience and environment to work in.

... I hope the unit continues to progress and improve to its greatest potential and everyone continues to work as a team toward the mission of the department. I have learned so much through my interactions within the unit and the department that I will be able to take with me as I begin my new journey. You all have been very encouraging and supportive throughout my time here, although it was brief. We've grown together in a short time and have been able to depend on one another We can do more as a team than we can do as individuals. No one is the same as anyone else, it is our differences that set us apart, our similarities that bind us, and when we put our talents together we can do great things.... ■

DID YOU KNOW....



When youth are assigned to outdoor work crews, they are encouraged to take as many water breaks as needed. Plus, on those especially hot days, staff often works youth in shifts. For instance, half of the crew may be on task while the other half rests. Texas heat is brutal and precautions must be taken to insure the well-being of youth.

Congrats Crystal

Yes indeed, congratulations to Crystal Guerra. She was promoted to Probation Officer with the Southside Unit. Her promotion took effect on August 25th.

On May 20, 2011, Crystal came to the CSR Unit by way of the Detention Center. Since that time, she worked as a CSR Specialist demonstrating a high-energy, very creative and compassionate demeanor. For instance, she led this unit's Photography Service Learning project with enthusiasm and skill making it one of our marquee projects. And a kid favorite. Her passion in working with youth is also self-evident. She takes great pride in impacting their lives.



Well done, Crystal. ■

Case Closures

Over the years, the CSR Unit has worked hard to improve successful closure rates. By providing a wide range of program options for youth, the likelihood that they find success in fulfilling their community service obligation is increased. Last year youth experienced the highest CSR successful closure rate to date – 72%. This rate is derived by comparing successful closures to failures. Other closures such as transferred out of jurisdiction, absent without permission, etc. are not included in the computation of this rate. ■

