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County Creates Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative *New Community Council Established in Response to Probation Department Report on Juvenile Detention Reform Initiative*

SAN JOSE-CALIF.— As the Juvenile Detention Reform (JDR) Initiative sunsets, the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors approved this week a “Five Years Later” Report presented by the Probation Department, and created a new community council to continue connecting system partners as they work together in the best interest of the minors in the local juvenile justice system.

The report acknowledged that most of the eleven goals created when JDR began have been accomplished. JDR goes beyond detention and affects every aspect of the juvenile justice system. The continuous improvement process it leaves as its legacy has been the most significant accomplishment of the County’s Juvenile Detention Reform Initiative. The report also outlines next steps to ensure ongoing progress in JDR.

“I am proud of the progress the County and our partners have made in tackling juvenile detention reform,” said Supervisor Blanca Alvarado, Chair of the Public Safety and Justice Committee and a champion of the Juvenile Detention Reform Initiative. “While we have changed a number of systems and processes, we have more to accomplish and I am heartened to know that these efforts will be advanced by the collaborative being established today.”

Known as the Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative, (JJSC) the new community Council encompasses a different organizational structure that will continue the Juvenile Detention Reform efforts now underway. Two working groups will seek prevention and reduction of the unnecessary detention of minors. The first group will focus on early intervention and programs that serve the youth in the County. The second one will involve improving system processes for minors’ cases in court.

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“Juvenile Detention Reform has raised awareness of the complex needs of our youth in the Juvenile Justice System,” said Probation Chief Sheila Mitchell. “Our goals for this Systems Collaborative involve preventing youth from engaging in or becoming deeply entrenched in delinquent behavior and keeping them out of our Juvenile Hall and Ranches.

Established in 2002, the County’s Juvenile Detention Reform teams have made much progress in the past six years. The work groups have successfully implemented countywide the Police Booking Protocol and created the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (Detention RAI). These changes have decreased in the total number of referrals to Juvenile Hall and the detention of the youth referred. Juvenile Hall referrals are down from 4151 in FY03 to 2741 in FY07 – a 34 percent reduction. Juvenile Hall detentions are also down from 3024 in FY03 to 2534 in FY07 – a 16 percent reduction in the number of minors detained.

Juvenile Detention Reform also identified other efforts that may help reduce the disproportionate representation of minorities detained within the juvenile justice system. The Community Release (CRP) and Electronic Monitoring Programs (EMP) and the Alternative Placement Academy (APA) were among the earliest alternatives to detention (ATD), implemented before JDR began, and the most recent alternative, the Evening Reporting Center (ERC), opened its doors in September 2006.

Specific goals set by JDR were to use data to determine where there are opportunities to reduce the unnecessary and inappropriate detention of youth; Create and use alternatives to detention; Reduce disproportionate minority confinement; Reduce unnecessary delay in case processing; Reduce unnecessary and inappropriate detention of youth; Control the Juvenile Hall “front gate” by developing and implementing effective admissions policies and practices; Improve conditions of confinement; Engage impacted parents and youth; Develop ombudsman type services for juvenile justice system (later dropped as a goal); Conduct public forums to better understand community concerns; Help inform the JDR planning and implementation process; and Improve community understanding of the juvenile justice system

Many other goals have been achieved over the course of JDR. The Enhanced Ranch Program and the Life Skills Unit have directly impacted the conditions of confinement of youth and are another example of the process changes established by this initiative.

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“Juvenile Detention Reform has set a strong foundation for addressing the challenges we face in the County’s juvenile justice system,” said Supervisor Ken Yeager, Vice Chair of the Public Safety and Justice Committee. “This collaborative will aid us in meeting the unique rehabilitative needs of juvenile offenders and help them avoid entering the justice system as adults.”

The Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative will develop a model blue print for at-risk youth that focuses on prevention community engagement, self reliance and community sustainability. Assignment of membership to this collaborative is to be delegated by the Board of Supervisors to the County Executive. This delegation of authority commences on July 1, 2008 and expires on June 30, 2011, and will include the following officials or their named alternatives:

1. Chair, County Executive’s Office
2. Chief Probation Officer, Probation Department
3. County Counsel, Office of the County Counsel
4. Director, Dept of Drug & Alcohol Services
5. Director, Mental Health Department
6. Director, Social Services Agency
7. District Attorney, Office of the District Attorney
8. Parent Advocate
9. President, Santa Clara County Police Chief’s Association
10. Presiding Judge, Juvenile Court
11. Public Defender, Office of the Public Defender
12. Representative, Faith Based Organization
13. Sheriff, Office of the Sheriff
14. SJPD Chief, Mayor’s Gang Prevention Task Force
15. Superintendent, County Office of Education
16. Superintendent, School District
17. CEMA Representative
18. 521 Bargaining Unit Representative
19. 1587 Bargaining Unit Representative
20. Victim Advocate
21. Youth Advocacy Organization
22. Youth Advocate
23. Youth or Youth Representative
24. Youth Service Provider Representative
25. Youth Service Provider Representative as nominated by the Silicon Valley Council of Non-Profits

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