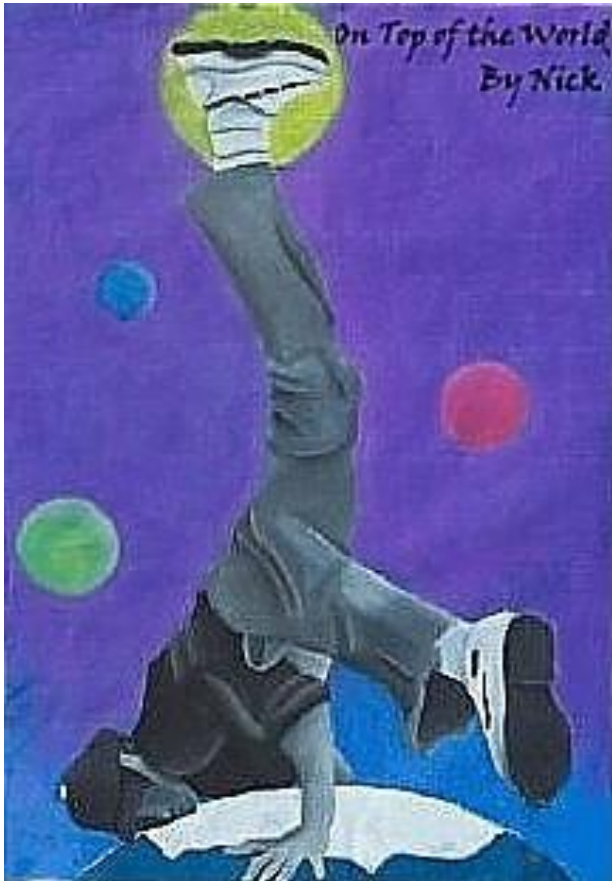


04/11/2011 SYNC Review Evanston Youth Drug and Alcohol Court (Court Supervised Treatment Program)

- Whether it is the Jamaican Bob Sled Team, the Evanston Youth Drug and Alcohol Court or the resurrection of the Union Pacific Round House and associated Machine Shop it is apparent that this community supports those things that are important to citizens. There is a sense of community in this area of the state that seems to go largely unnoticed by others, but is just incredibly effective.
- One of those services that make this a great community to live in, as reported by clients and professionals alike is Evanston Youth Services. There are two parts of this program:
 - **YOU** which stands for Youth Opportunities, and
 - **YDAC** which stands for Youth Drug and Alcohol Court (Evanston).Grace Zolonsky, director of the program(s) reports that YOU is **prevention** and the YDAC is an **intervention** program.



The picture to the left was drawn by one of YDAC's graduates. According to the YDAC participant handbook, the drawing was displayed at a national conference and won "Best of Show" with its title "**On Top of the World.**" The YDAC team felt that this would be the appropriate logo for the program and now use the picture for letterhead, clean time coins, and the graduation key chain. When this young man graduated from Drug Court he donated a print of his drawing, which is hanging in the Court Clerk's office.

While this is a SYNC review of the named court supervised treatment program, the reader of this report is reminded that systemic issues, both beneficial and opportunities for improvement are contained within and noted in *"italics."*

Access to Services:

- Clients come to the YDAC (Youth Drug and Alcohol Court) from:
 - Municipal court;
 - Circuit Court, or
 - Juvenile Court through the Wyoming District Court system.

Clients are typically between the ages of 13 and 18 and must have a current evaluation indicating a substance abuse problem.

- The process of admittance into the program can take a calculated four to six weeks between initial court appearances, to beginning the program with YDAC. While this is not a “wait” to access services, it is a preparation time for the courts and the YDAC team to insure that the potential client is an appropriate fit and will benefit from the program.
 - Clients who may not rise to the level of admittance to YDAC can be enrolled in a diversion program through Uinta County Youth Services, a division of Human Services operated by Uinta County.
 - Once in the YDAC program, clients who may need in patient treatment can access that and then be brought back to the YDAC program. Often times, those inpatient treatment services are sought out in Utah, due to the proximity to the client’s family and Evanston.
 - *Placement out of the State of Wyoming does come with problems such as higher costs, Wyoming Medicaid not being accepted out of state, travel and the Wyoming Department of Family Services not being funded for out of state placements.*
- Parent and clients do not appear to be “forced” into this program at all; in fact, it appears that they are given an appropriate amount of time to “consider” their alternatives before beginning this court supervised treatment program.
- *Like most communities in Wyoming, services are available without going through YDAC but professionals interviewed agree that it is often difficult for those needing services to access them without intervention through the legal system. A percentage of those individuals may of course not be willing as well.*
- High Country Behavioral Health will soon be starting an “Adolescent Intensive Outpatient Program” in Evanston.
 - In the past, Cornerstone had a similar program and professionals in the community report that client numbers “in the system” declined in part due to the program. Once Cornerstone discontinued the program, a corresponding increase in numbers of adolescents “in the system” was seen.
- Youth Services gets a number of referrals from the Wyoming Department of Family Services.
- *While not unique to this area of the state, there appears to be a slight deficit of the education system making referrals to service providers outside of the educational system.*
- When a youth is charged with a substance abuse offense, the case is flagged and several of the pertinent professionals become involved in the matter to discuss and refer the matter to the case manager for YDAC for proper screening.

- *Single point of entry, as required by Wyoming State Statute, was implemented and working in Uinta County spearheaded by a couple of professionals who have since left their positions. At the present time, it does not appear to be in place, but probably needs to be as soon as possible.*

YOU members coordinate and put on a New Year's Eve Alcohol and Drug Free Family Event; last year there were 750 people in attendance for games, dancing with a disc jockey and is a great time for teenagers and families.

- A client reported that as a graduate, if any follow up services or support was needed at any time, YDAC had an “open door.”
- YDAC is an approximate one year program in a one to three year window of treatment as allowed by state statute.

Quality of Services:

- All clients of YDAC go through MRT Therapy¹; this is a 12 step program (not in the same sense as Alcoholic Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous) that typically takes 13-14 weeks on average to complete.
 - MRT Therapy is reported in general terms to help youth clients understand and avoid criminal thinking errors. The MRT Therapy starts with clients testifying their honesty:
 - If a client is caught lying, they have to return to step 1 or 3 and begin again:
 - This reinforces to clients the consequences of lying.
 - The therapy also includes ten hours of community services which can be done at the community youth center.
- Due in part to the coordination and structure of Evanston Youth Services, youth attending YDAC can and do complete their community services in the YOU center.
 - The Community Youth Center is not just for youth in YDAC, but a community youth center. This allows clients of YDAC to comingle and with youth who are not in YDAC which is beneficial.
- The PACT Assessment² if effectively being used in this community.

¹ MRT stands for Moral Reconciliation Therapy; more information can be found at: <http://www.moral-reconciliation-therapy.com/>.

² PACT stands for Positive Achievement Change Tool; more information can be found at: http://www.assessments.com/catalog/PACT_Full_Assessment.htm.

- YDAC is a time proven program and clearly recognized as such in this community:
 - It is in its ninth year of operation, and
 - While is it associated with the municipal courts in the county, other courts such as circuit court and juvenile court through district court support it.
 - This court supervised treatment program seem to have good coordination with the adult court supervised program to the extent necessary such as the court judge for that program being the backup judge for YDAC.
 - The program has a proven record of “sticking with it” through contained, sustained and appropriate growth. Youth services in general started out in a small room and have moved through physical facilities to where it is housed today in a rejuvenated and expanded 1927 former school that is perfect for the programs. These programs have been able to count on many, many community organizations donating time, services and items over the years.
 - Finally, the management team and program coordinator have done an incredible job at securing funding in the form of grants and support from the City of Evanston to keep these program first rate in a time that funding has been typically cut nationally. It is clear that these programs are not totally “funding dependent” but have a great deal of “good will capitol” that sustains them in addition to funding. This is of course NOT to minimize the importance of continued funding in these programs.
- The case manager for the program, who was in college at the time of beginning work as an intern for the YDAC was of such quality the program administration was able to keep the person after the internship, allow that person to finish their college degree and continue working for the program to this day. This is just one such example of the consistency and quality of YDAC.
- Sanctions seem to be appropriate and given in a systematic and consistent fashion, yet individualized to help guide the client to a desired outcome.
 - YAHA residential treatment in Evanston is used as a sanction for some issues, and
 - The detention facility run by Sweetwater County is used for others. This is of course more expensive and involves coordination of travel from Evanston to Rock Springs.
- Clients receive tokens as incentives that they can spend or cash in when the graduate.
- Clients seem to have a good understanding that the Judge has to be a “bad guy” when a client makes a mistake, but he was praised for his supportive demeanor when clients took the right course of action.
- Upon graduation, clients receive a “dare to dream” coin.

- Participants must continue their education, begin and/or finish their GED³ while in the program. If the client is working on their GED, then they must also do 20 hours of community service or be employed.
 - Statistically, according to one professional interviewed, sixty percent of graduating seniors from main stream high school cannot pass the GED.
- One client participated in the B.O.O.S.T. Program offered by B.O.C.E.S through a joint partnership with Wyoming Work Force Services.⁴
- Parents of clients are encouraged to come to court sessions to support their child; even extended family or family friends can come. If they choose not to attend, the case manager contacts them and advised them of the proceedings.

Drug court has been a necessary experience that has been more positive than negative; my child and the YDAC client came out ahead in the program"

Comment from an interviewed professional

Coordination of Services:

- Coordination with the education system seems to be as good in this part of the state as anywhere; there are two representatives from education on the YDAC team.
 - *In other similar reviews, and in this one, there is an underlying theme, while not necessarily expressed by anyone from the YDAC team, but felt by the SYNC reviewer that outreach from the education system to other professional entities could always be enhanced and it is always encouraged that others reach out to education.*
 - It was noted by the YDAC case manager that teachers in the past have reached out and coordinated effectively.
- Before planners began YDAC, they met with the schools and an agreement was reached for youth clients. The schools agreed that clients could stay in school if they were involved in the YDAC. This was an exception to the “zero tolerance” policy and the local education system is to be commended for this variation.
- The case manager for YDAC does have access to “Power School” and seems to coordinate well with the teachers of the youth clients.

³ GED stands for General Equivalency Diploma and is an alternative degree for those not completing high school.

⁴ More information regarding this program can be found at:
<http://www.uintaeducation.org/AdultBasicEducation/BOOST.aspx>.

- By all reports, teachers are reported to be generally supporting of the YDAC program, but
- *There was one report of a school administration official not being supportive of a child and that child's parents in getting the child needed services.⁵ Possibly it may simply be a lack of understanding of the disease of substance abuse according to some professionals in the community.*
- Horizon High School is the alternative high school in the area and is used for youth who “are not able to make it” in mainstream education. Several of the YDAC clients attend Horizon. A building is being renovated for the “new” Horizon High School.
- It was demonstrated that there seems to be very good coordination with the Evanston Police Department. A police officer once encountered some juveniles in an abandoned house and gathered them up and brought them to Youth Services where an individualized plan for the kids was created.
- The prosecutor for Evanston Municipal Court, a contract position, is firmly behind this program and feels that citizens are getting a good bang for their buck with this program. Ironically, he has not always been a supporter of court supervised treatment programs in general, however recent statute changes and rule changes have put “due process” back in the court supervised treatment programs.
 - There is no doubt that the prosecutor has the best interest of the client and the community in mind. In one case reviewed, he was stern at the beginning of the case with the client and the client's parents, however once the client has successfully completed YDAC, the prosecutor advocated for the client administratively.
- The Judge for YDAC does not attend the “staffings” before court; he is given a set of minutes from the staffing before court and gathers the input of the treatment team during the court proceedings.
- Once a youthful offender has successfully completed the program, their record can be and is expunged.
- According to one professional, YDAC works because of the relationship that develops between kids, staff and counselors; all in a structure where clients are learning and being held/learning accountability.

“This is community working with youth; everyone from 4H programs to the Department of Family Services.”

Comment from an interviewed professional

⁵ This claim is made and is one sided; no attempt was made to gain the perspective of the education official as it could have violated the privacy of the youth client.

Systemic Issues:

- Alcohol and marijuana seem to be the drugs of choice in the area with alcohol being viewed as a gateway substance according to law enforcement.
 - The area has seen some heroin use and it is reported to be very cheap in neighboring Utah.
 - One incident of cocaine has been noted in the recent past.
 - Spice is also making an appearance in the area.
- The WYCAS computer system is much better than the old system and easier to use and navigate.
- A parent reported that while this court supervised treatment program worked, it would be very difficult for a single parent to have the time to help their child succeed.
- Due to the funding formula from the state, YDAC is only compensated for “10 slots.” Currently the program has nine participants with 2-3 pending. While management of the program feels that 15 might be a maximum of their capacity, they will take as many as are appropriate despite the funding challenges created by the state.
- In exit questionnaires, clients report that jail is an effective sanction and curfew is a good incentive.

A simple lack of parenting may be the biggest factor in youthful clients having to become involved with YDAC according to professionals in the community.