



St. Louis Family & Community Partnership Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1
Winter 2009

Judge Jimmie Edwards Addresses Partnership Council



The **Hon. Jimmie Edwards**, presiding judge of the St. Louis Family Court, shared his thoughts on juvenile justice and child welfare practice with members of the St. Louis Family & Community Partnership Council at their Nov. 19 meeting.

An **18-year veteran judge**, he has served in the Family Court for the past two years.

He praised the contributions of foster parents, but expressed concern that many foster parents are becoming older, over 60 years old. **St. Louis needs more foster parents who understand how important this role is**, he said.

Judge Edwards has slowed the process of termination of parental rights and takes a cautious approach. He said that just because a parent is economically poor does not make one a bad parent.

"If the mom is watering down the baby's milk, is that neglect or trying to get through to the next day? That's the question we don't ask ourselves," he said.

Children get into problems when there is a lack of parental supervision, too much time on their hands and a lack of economic resources, he said. If any two of these factors are present, the youth likely will end up in juvenile justice or in the child welfare system.

He is frustrated with schools that are quick to kick out young people who are in trouble. He stated youths should be in school and also encourages the faith community to become more involved.

"No kid is born a criminal. My responsibility is to make sure that kids have the right plan so they enter the community equipped for success. Yet at the same time I understand my duty to safeguard the community."

Know Your SLFCP Council

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Upcoming Events

Building Community Partnership WG

01.09.09 / 1:30pm / TBA

Self-Evaluation WG

01.20.09 / 9:00am / VCR

Blue Ribbon Planning

01.22.09 / 2:00pm / VCR

SLFCP Council

01.21.09 / 9:00am / VCR

Recruitment/Training & Support WG

01.19.09 / 9:00am / Harris Stowe State University-Library

Strengthening Families WG

01.27.09 / 9:15am / Child Day Care Assoc, 4236 Lindell Blvd.

Team Practice WG



Craig Schmid is the Alderman from the 20th Ward in the City of St. Louis, although when asked he replies that his title is really "Dad, neighbor, son...". He attended Mt. Pleasant Elementary School, Cleveland High School, and St. Louis University, all in St. Louis. He graduated from St. Louis University with a BA and a JD. He is married and has two daughters. His favorite vacation was a trip to southern Spain.

Alderman Schmid is on the St. Louis Family & Community Partnership Council because he wants to help create a more positive environment for children and families in the St. Louis area. He has been involved in community and children's issues for many years. He was actively involved in the St. Louis Neighborhood Network during the Senate Bill 595 and Clark Foundation days as part of the Dutchtown Caring Community HUB. He then became involved in the formation of the St. Louis Family & Community Partnership when it was created from the combination of the Casey Foundation Family to Family and the St. Louis Neighborhood Network.

His wish for the children of St. Louis is to be exposed with gentle direction to the vastness of life's opportunities, to have caring adults in their lives and to know true love and support throughout their lives. The one most important accomplishment that he would like to see from the SLFCP is to continue to press the issue of greater family and community involvement to work on behalf of children for their safety in healthy families and strong communities.

He has many favorite quotes but his most recent favorite is from a speech of President-elect Barack Obama on Nov. 4 from Grant Park: *"This victory alone is not the change we seek - it is only the chance for us to make that change. And that cannot happen if we go back to the way things were. It cannot happen without you. So let us summon a new spirit of patriotism; of service and responsibility where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder and look after not only ourselves, but each other."*

Thank you Alderman Craig Schmid for your long history of service to St. Louis' families and children.

And How Are the Children

"And how are the children?"*... In 2007, **52,979 reports of child abuse and neglect** were made to Missouri's Child Abuse Hotline, involving 77,481 children who were reported to have been abused or neglected, according to the most recent Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Annual Report produced by the Missouri Children's Division. This was a **2.7% increase** over reports in 2006 and represented a change in a three year cycle of declined reporting.

By conclusion, 9.1% of the reports were substantiated, down from 10.3% in 2006 and 34% were unsubstantiated, an increase from 30.8% the previous year. Of reports responded to as a Family Assessment, 12.2% of the families were found to need services, a slight decrease from the 12.3% the year before. Some 69.9% of the families did not need services, which was an increase from 67.6% the previous year.

Non-cooperation was seen in 2.6% of the families, a slight decrease over the last year's 2.9%. Services were needed, and the family linked with these services in the initial 30 days in 13.1% of families, a decrease from 14.9%. Services were needed but declined in 2.3%, a very slight increase over the last year's rate of 2.2%.

During 2007, **May was the month that saw the highest number of reports**, and December had the lowest number of reports. Reporters can be either Mandated Reporters, those required by law to report (Doctors, teachers, social workers, etc.) or Permissive Reporters, people who are not required by

02.6.09 / 1:30pm / 6821 S. Broadway

SLFCP Executive Committee MTG
02.11.09 / 9:00am / VCR

Building Community Partnership WG
02.13.09 / TBA

Self-Evaluation WG
02.17.09 / 9:00am / VCR

SLFCP Council
2.18.09 / 9:00am / VCR

Recruitment/Training & Support WG
02.16.09 / 9:00 / Harris-Stowe

Strengthening Families WG
02.24.09 / 9:15am / Child Day Care Association

Team Practice WG
03.06.09 / 1:30pm / 6821 S. Broadway

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03.18.09 / 9:00am / VCR

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Our Mission

The St. Louis Family and Community Partnership is a partnership of parents, families, schools, faith communities, the St. Louis City Family Court, the Children's Division, public and private agencies, neighborhood organizations, businesses and city and state government working together to support families,

law to report. Fifty-seven percent (57 %) of the reports in 2007 were made by mandated reporters and thirty-seven percent (37 %) were made by Permissive Reporters.

The most common Mandated Reporters were school officials, social workers, and law enforcement officers. Permissive Reporters made up 37.4% of the reporters. Principals or other school officials made 13.7% of the reports, social workers made 12.4%, and law enforcement made 11.6%.

The most frequent type of substantiated incident was for neglect.

Physical abuse and then sexual abuse were the two next most frequent categories of maltreatment. Fifty percent (50%) of the children maltreated in 2007 were neglected, 29.1% were physically abused, and 26.6% were sexually abused.

Information gathered during an investigation can help identify factors which place a child at risk. Observed family characteristics for each family where Abuse/Neglect is found can perhaps help the community and Child Protective Services discover what services could help prevent further maltreatment.

The Family Characteristics reported in 2007 are similar to those reported during the last five years. Families involved in substantiated incidents often had adequate living conditions, were amenable to services, had extended family support systems, were single parent households, and lacked parenting skills.

When looking at **children's ages** when there is a substantiated finding, 6.9% of children who are the subject of a substantiated report are two (2) years old, 6.8% of children are under the age of one, 6.8% are six (6) years old, and 6.3% are 15 years old. For neglect, 10.9% of the victims are age 2 years, and 9.7% are under the age of one year. For findings of physical abuse, 8.6% are under the age of one year, 7.4% are 15 years old, 7.2% are 14 years old, and 7% are 12 years old. Eleven point four percent (11.4%) of sexual abuse victims are age 15, 9.2% are age 13 and 8.1% are age 12.

Worker substantiated findings for neglected children are **Lack of Supervision (50.5%)**, Unsanitary Living Conditions (25.1%), Unsafe/inadequate shelter (16.2%), Failure to Protect (9.0%), Blaming, Verbal Abuse, Threatening (4.8%), Lack of Food (4.3%), and Poor Hygiene (3.8%).

In substantiated findings, **the majority of perpetrators (61%) were between the ages of 20 and 39 years.** Fifty-five percent (55%) were male and 43% were female. The most common type of alleged perpetrator was the natural parent. Perpetrator characteristics can help a Children's Division worker or community provider working with the family, determine which services may be helpful to the family.

Characteristics of substantiated perpetrators that were often seen were adequate support systems, amenable to services, history of criminal activity, no apparent mental or emotional disturbance, unemployed, unrealistic expectations of child, other drug-related problems, mental/emotional disturbance, immaturity, and loss of control during discipline.

Much of the material in this article is taken from the "Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Calendar Year 2007 Annual Report. [Click to read the report in its entirety.](#)

*** "And how are the children?" is an African greeting shared when two people meet each other. It indicates the importance that tribes place on the well-being of their children. This phrase is used to start each SLFCP meeting.**

prevent child abuse and neglect, and help ensure that children have permanent relationships that help them safely thrive with families in their own communities.

Partners in Action

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The Partnership is a strategy of the [St. Louis Metropolitan Children's Agenda](#).





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