

# RESEARCH BRIEF

## SONOMA COUNTY PROBATION

November 2013

### Positive Youth Justice

The Positive Youth Justice model continues to gain ground in Juvenile Justice, and forms the framework for Sonoma County Probation's new Quest long-term commitment program in Juvenile Detention. Based on the important work of Jeffrey Butts, Gordon Bazemore and Audra Meroe, the model adds a youth-as-resource lens to the problem-oriented risk-need-responsivity model pervading probation. View their work here:

<http://johnjayresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/pyj2010.pdf>

How it works: Behavior change and development are addressed through practice areas including work, relationships, health, education, community and creativity, by focusing on the development of skills and connections, with a strong emphasis on community participation.

Who is using PYJ? The District of Columbia's Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services (DC's juvenile institutions department) transformed their approach using the Positive Youth Justice model. A handful of California counties (Alameda, Sacramento, San Diego, San Joaquin, Solano and Yolo) received grants from the Sierra Health Foundation to implement Positive Youth Justice with their juvenile populations. They are entering year two of their planning/implementation projects.

What Results Does PYJ Produce? Positive Youth Development has been around since the 1970s. Integrating it with Juvenile Justice has been done to varying degrees for nearly as long. But the idea of a framework for organizing programs and services for juvenile offenders based on Positive Youth Development as an organizing principle is new.

Researchers think the model holds promise for getting better results with justice-involved youth, and early results from Washington DC are encouraging:

- Recidivism rates during the year after release have declined from 45% to 30%.
- Rearrest rates dropped by a third in the last year alone.

View the Washington DC DYRS 2012 Annual Report here:

[http://dyrs.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dyrs/page\\_content/attachments/DYRS\\_AR-low-res\\_041713.pdf](http://dyrs.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dyrs/page_content/attachments/DYRS_AR-low-res_041713.pdf)

## THE POSITIVE YOUTH JUSTICE FRAMEWORK:

View the youth as a resource, not a problem.

### Focus on Key Assets

- Skills – Learning/Doing:
- Connections – Attaching/Belonging

### Develop Key Assets through participation in Practice Areas:

- Work
- Relationships
- Health
- Education
- Community
- Creativity