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January/February 2009

Counties

JOURNAL OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

CORRECTIONS

Opinion:
Juvenile Offender Treatment

CDCR: State and County
Partnerships Critical

Three-Judge Panel
on Prison Overcrowding

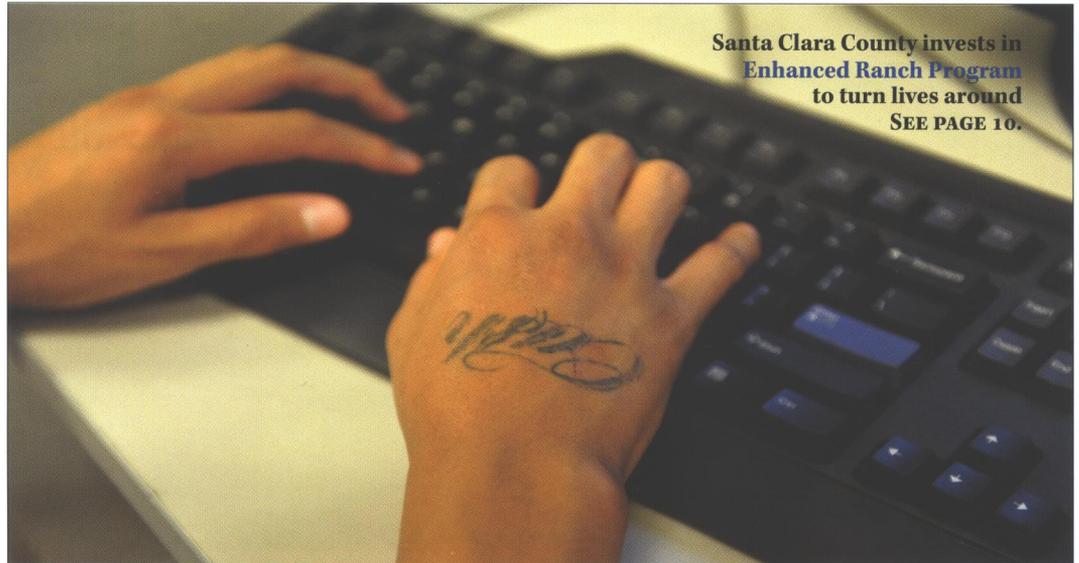
Placer County's
New Justice Center

COUNTY PROFILE:
Santa Clara

ALSO:
New CSAC Officers
Annual Meeting
Photos

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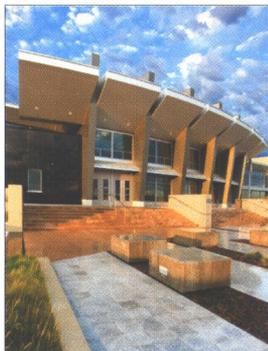


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The new Bill Santucci Justice Center in Placer County.

Photo by Steve Whittaker.

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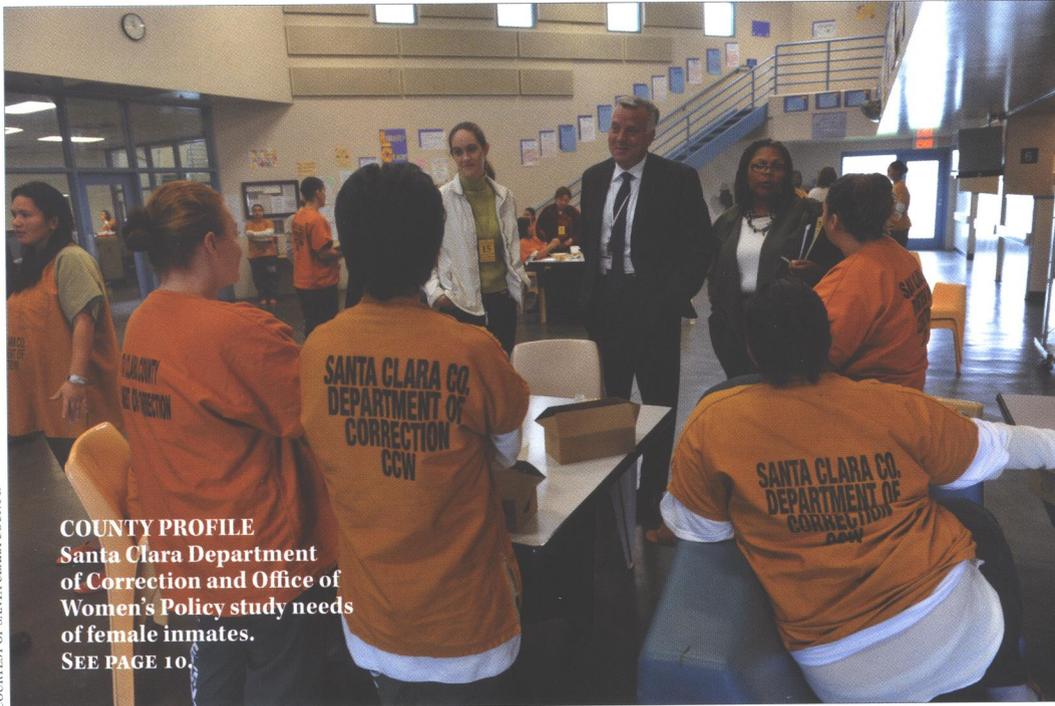
SUSAN HYMAN, EDITOR
1100 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916/327-7500, ext. 529
Fax: 916/321-5051
E-mail: shyman@counties.org

PUBLISHER
California State Association of Counties
1100 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814
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Fax: 916/321-5051
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COUNTY PROFILE
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of female inmates.
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CSAC ANNUAL MEETING
Governor receives President's
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this and other conference
photos on pages 34 and 35.



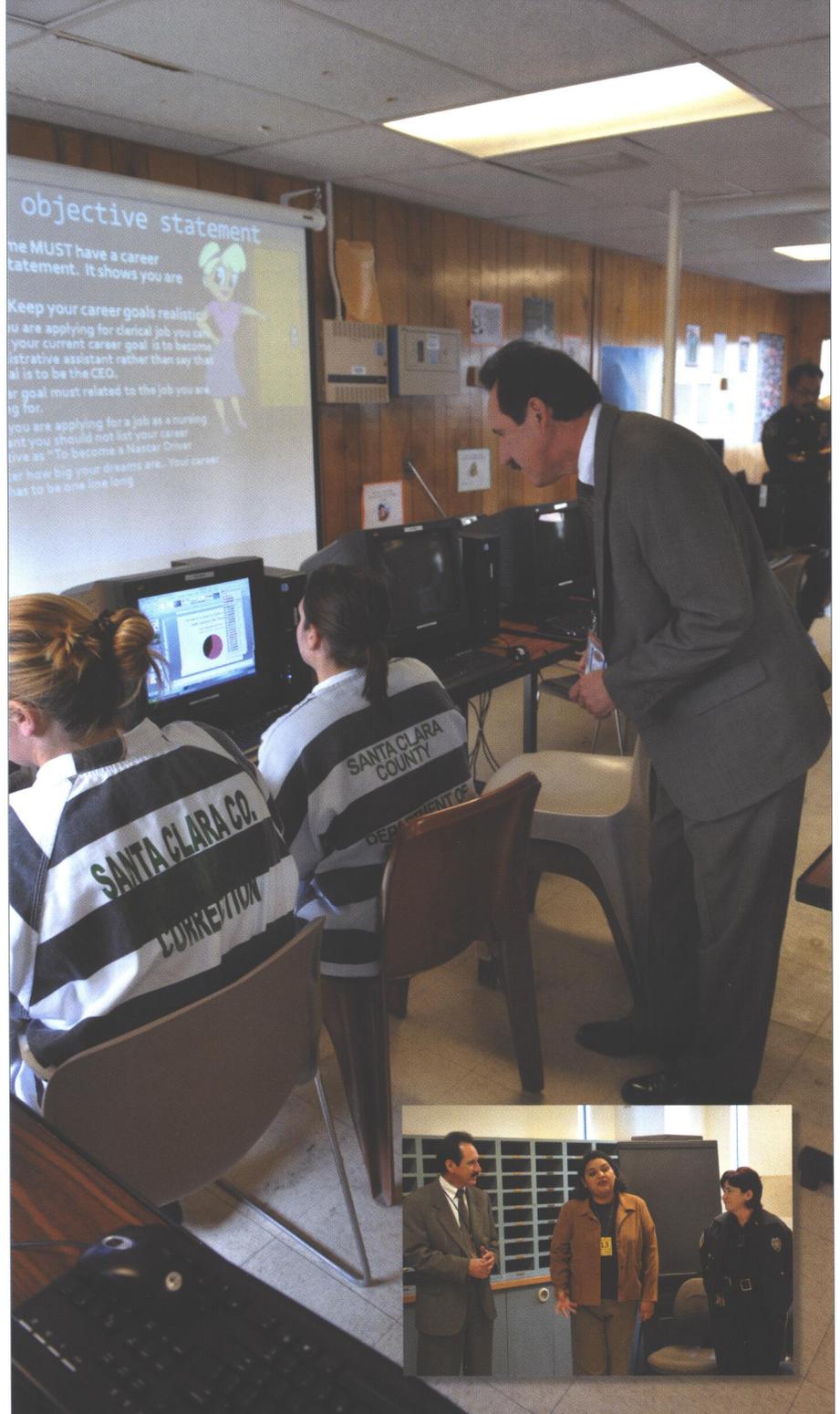
Santa Clara

Department of Correction and Office of Women's Policy study needs of female inmates

BY GWENDOLYN MITCHELL
Gwendolyn Mitchell is director of public affairs for Santa Clara County.

LARGE PHOTO:
Chief of Corrections Edward Flores observes female inmates in class.

INSET PHOTO:
(L to R) Flores with Esther Peralez-Dieckmann, director of the Office of Women's Policy, and a correctional officer.



At any given time, approximately 600 women are incarcerated at the Elmwood Correctional Center for Women in Santa Clara County. Since 2003, the number has increased 27 percent. In an effort to better understand the impact of incarceration and establish actions to assist women in their rehabilitation, the County's Office of Women's Policy and Commission on the Status of Women joined the Department of Correction in a 16-month in-depth study of female inmates.

Published in 2008, "Breaking Cycles, Rebuilding Lives" is believed to be the first formal in-depth gender analysis of its kind at a county jail. The study, a recipient of a 2008 CSAC Challenge Merit Award, was financed through a grant of nearly \$175,000 from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Study findings offer a rare profile of women incarcerated at the local level.

Three out of four women at Elmwood are mothers, and more than a third reported having children under the age of 5. One in five children witnessed his or her mother being arrested and taken away by law enforcement. Young children already exposed to violent behavior are likely to be further traumatized by their mother's incarceration, with devastating and long-lasting effects. For example, 38 percent of the women interviewed had one or more parents who also had been incarcerated.

Esther Peralez-Dieckmann, director of women's policy, asserted that the study would help county officials to connect the dots for meaningful change. "Many of these women have a history of being victimized," she said.

"We want to help break the cycle."

Seventy-six percent were victims of childhood physical abuse; approximately 85 percent of female inmates in Elmwood are victims of domestic violence; and 47 percent reported they were victims of sexual abuse. Education and employment also may be factors. Sixty-five percent had at least a high school diploma, 35 percent reported dropping out of high school. Sixty-eight percent reported they were not employed when incarcerated.

Eighty-three percent self-identified as repeat offenders and 46 percent of these women reportedly had been in jail five or more times, a startling number given that most were in their 20s and 30s. Just under one-third had been involved in the juvenile justice system.

SEE "FEMALE INMATES" - PAGE 12

**Young children already exposed
to violent behavior are likely to be further traumatized
by their mother's incarceration, with devastating
and long-lasting effects.**

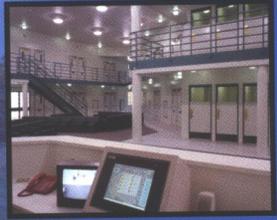
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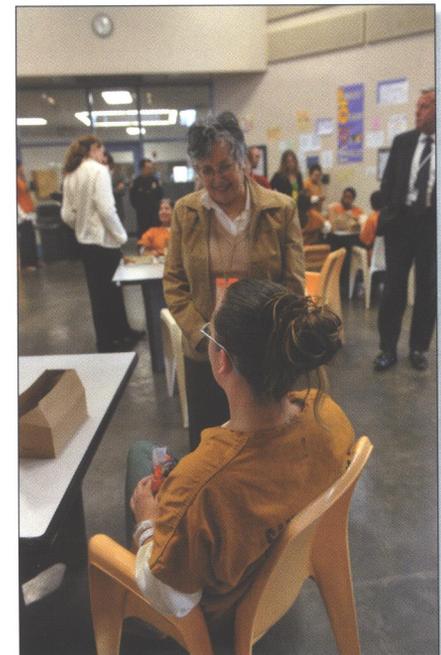
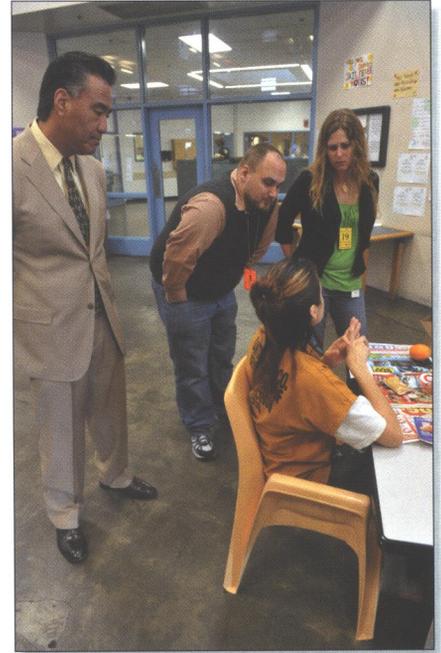
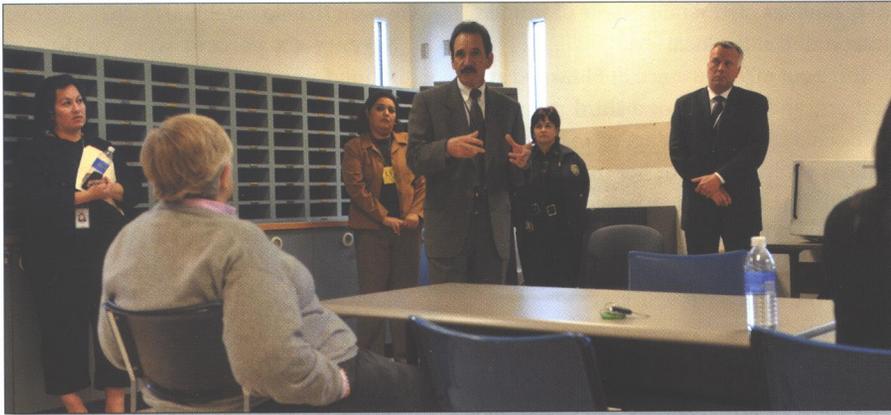




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ALL PHOTOS:
Gender Analysis Stakeholder Group hears from various members of the women in WINGS, a 90-day sobriety program.

"FEMALE INMATES" - FROM PAGE 11

Chief of Correction Edward Flores welcomed the report. He called it "a vital tool in the department's efforts to learn about the needs of female offenders and to remain a leader in offering programs to support rehabilitation." Santa Clara County Department of Correction is recognized as one of the best in county jails in California. "We don't just warehouse people," Flores said.

SEE "FEMALE INMATES" - PAGE 28

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A key element of the centers is the programming. The programs are cognitive behavioral treatment programs operating under evidence-based principles. Group classes at the Merced County Day Reporting Center include a cognitive skill-building class, employment readiness, substance abuse treatment and education, life skills, anger management and other classes geared to changing negative patterns and stabilizing the person in the community.

In 2008, the county juvenile day reporting center managed up to 25 individuals. In 2009, the county would like to expand this option for a lower-risk group — juveniles on probation and not referred from detention. It has many of the same elements of the adult day reporting center, with adjustments for 13- to 18-year-old population. Each day, the juveniles go from home to Valley Community School, a program for juvenile offenders. The juveniles are picked up by center staff and transported to the day reporting center in the early afternoon, where they stay until 6 p.m. They begin afternoon programming with a "home room." The participants receive Social Responsibility Training, a cognitive behavioral training class geared to youth. Merced County is applying this program within its detention center also.

All juvenile day reporting center participants are on electronic monitoring to monitor for compliance to curfews and schedules. As in the jail, both juvenile and adult day reporting center participants earn points based on a "points system" that rewards compliance to program guidelines.

"We want to work with young offenders before they have been in the criminal lifestyle too long," said Patricia Carter, program manager who oversees the adult and juvenile centers. "Local judges who have toured have been impressed that this is not a 'feel good' program, but includes strict supervision and behavior change components."

Tackling a difficult challenge

Merced County is taking important steps toward reducing jail and juvenile hall overcrowding and trying to get young offenders out of the system early in their lives at a huge cost savings to taxpayers, if achieved. Today, with jails in California hovering around 96 percent of capacity — the same as nationwide levels — solutions are being sought for a problem that has many impacts. In fact, Ken Kerle, a leader within the American Jail Association, says when a

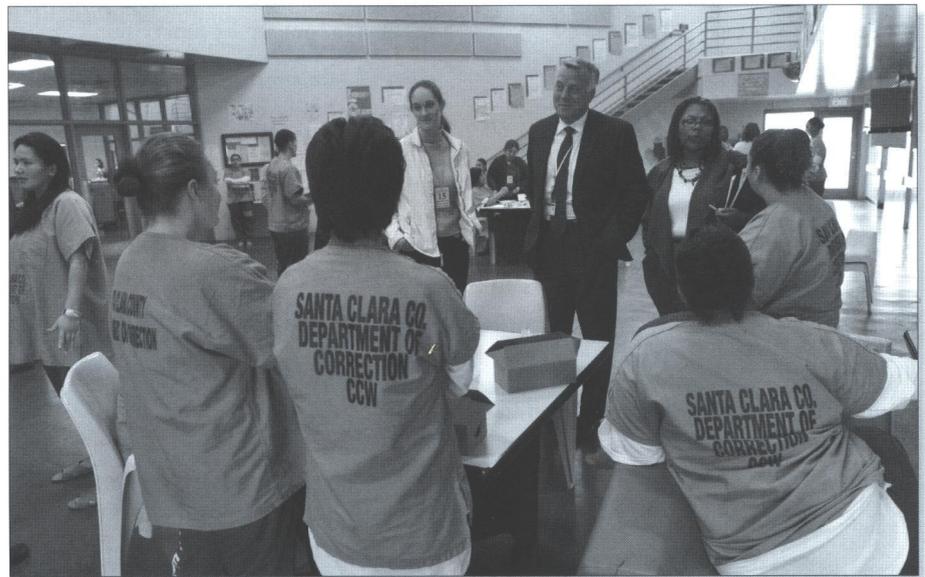
jail hits 90 percent of its rated capacity, the results can manifest in many ways, such as premature wear and tear on the jail, unsafe conditions for staff and inmates, high

Group classes at the Merced County Day Reporting Center include a cognitive skill-building class, employment readiness, substance abuse treatment and education, life skills, anger management and other classes geared to changing negative patterns and stabilizing the person in the community.

operational costs, even high staff turnover due to burnout.

"In California, to cope with our problems we have moved toward a law enforcement style of probation, which adds pressure on jails. I could have feathered my nest by adding a bunch of officers with the block funding from the state, but I felt we needed to change our thinking and develop our community corrections capacity," said Chief Cooley.

"Counties and probation have been very creative with less money and fewer resources," said Pank. "They have learned to squeeze every last penny out of the dollar to get better outcomes. If this catches on, people will see that this is a good way to manage a difficult population." ❖



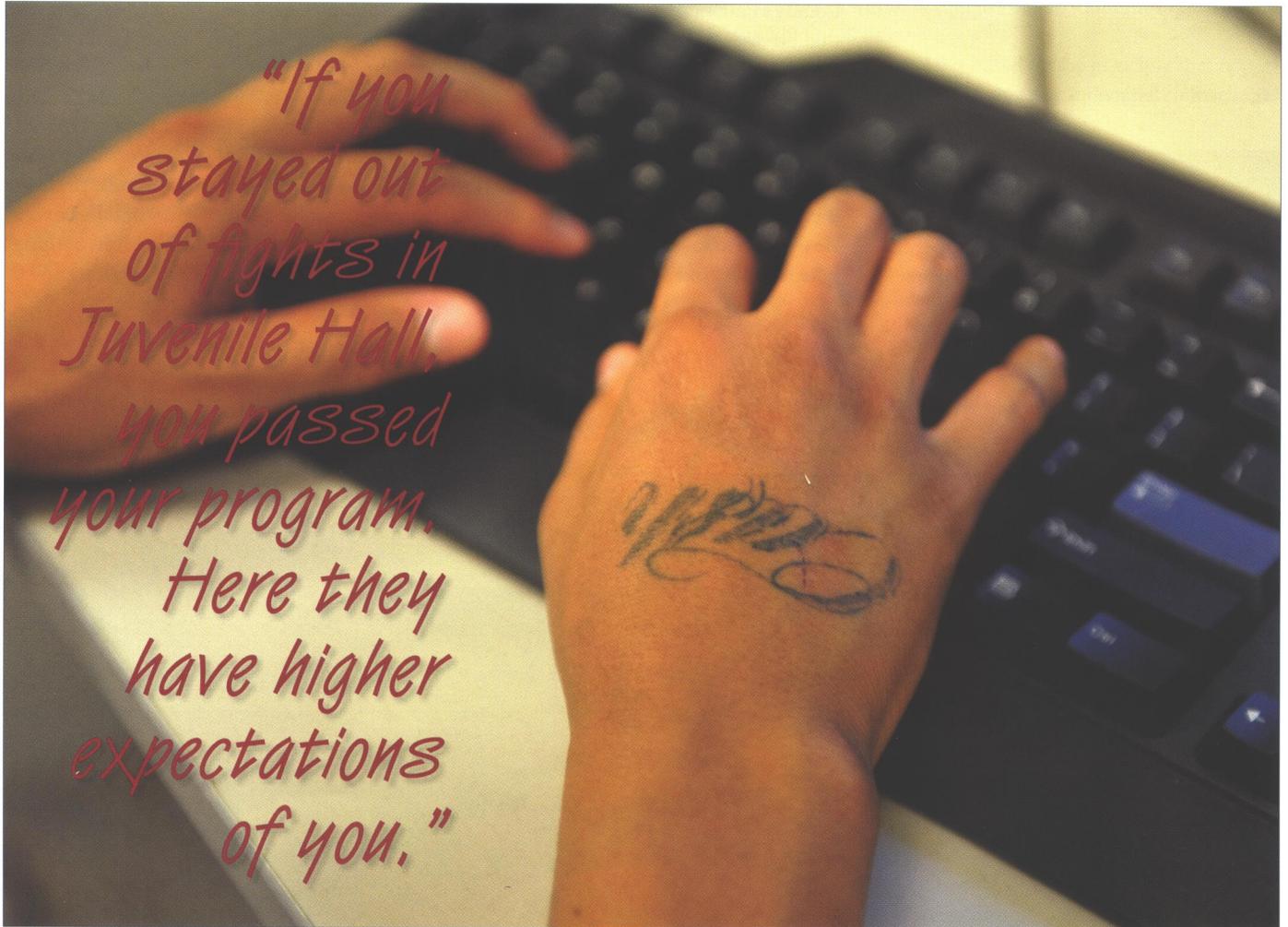
ABOVE: More participants in WINGS program.

Among the programs already offered for female inmates are Parents and Children Together, a program to maintain family ties. After attending a Positive Parenting workshop each week, women have voluntary two-hour visits with their children. Mentoring You — Successful Transition of Recovering Individuals (MY-STORI) is an eight- to ten-week program that includes substance abuse counseling, therapy, health goals, computer classes, co-dependency and trauma recovery. Women Investigating New Gates for Sobriety (WINGS) is a 90-day collaborative with Superior Court and Milpitas Adult Education. The current and former inmates who are

the consumers of these services gave highly positive feedback about the programs. ❖

Mentoring You — Successful Transition of Recovering Individuals (MY-STORI) is an eight- to ten-week program that includes substance abuse counseling, therapy, health goals, computer classes, co-dependency and trauma recovery.

County invests in Enhanced Ranch Program to turn lives around



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY.

BY GWENDOLYN MITCHELL
Gwendolyn Mitchell
is director of public affairs
for Santa Clara County.

PICTURED ABOVE:
A youth offender uses
the computer lab at
Enhanced Ranch Program.

If you stayed out of fights in Juvenile Hall, you passed your program. Here they have higher expectations of you.” These are the words of J., a lean, 18-year-old Hispanic male with sparkling eyes who is in the third month of a six-month stay at James Ranch in Santa Clara County. “J.” describes himself as a young man who has a long history with the criminal justice system.

On a recent sunny afternoon, J. took a few moments away from the computer screen where he was writing a paper on the humanitarian crisis in Somalia. The paper was for a college-level political science course. “I wish I would have had this opportunity before,” he continued.

SEE “ENHANCED RANCH” - PAGE 14



PICTURED ABOVE, (L TO R):
The program features a computer lab, auto shop and welding classes.

PICTURED BELOW:
The Enhanced Ranch Library.

"ENHANCED RANCH" - FROM PAGE 14

The opportunity J. referred to is the County's Enhanced Ranch Program, a model that stresses accountability, rehabilitation and responsibility.

When asked to describe how the program differs from juvenile hall, J. said there are a lot of differences, starting with where the youths live. "When you put a person in a cell, it puts you in a mood. It gives you attitude." He went on to say, "There is always someone here to talk to you to help you work through

your problems. You feel like they really care about you. There's a lot more counseling and constant redirecting of negative behavior. They show you how you can do things better."

J. was describing key elements of Santa Clara County's Enhanced Ranch Program, which is patterned after a successful program in Missouri. The youth live in pods. The living quarters resemble college dormitories, except for the military like order of everything-in-its-place. The pods are decorated with

*"When you put a person in a cell,
it puts you in a mood. It gives you attitude."*





LEFT: Outgoing Supervisor Blanca Alvarado, served as chair of the Public Safety and Justice Committee and Juvenile Detention Reform Planning Committee.

comfortable living room furniture, bunk beds to sleep 12, and art created by the residents. One of the young men in Pod C had drawn a picture of a sports tennis shoe with the words "Yes We Can" etched in elaborate lettering near the heel (see below).

Troubled by a high rate of repeat offenders, county supervisors spent \$3.2 million to cover the cost of the Enhanced Ranch Program. The funding enabled the Probation Department to reduce the staffing ratio at James Ranch and Muriel Wright Ranch. Before, staffing ratios were 1 for 15 minors during the day and reduced to 1 for 30 at night. Under the new rehabilitation program, the staff ratios increased to 1 for 6 minors during the day and 1 for 12 during sleeping hours.

Outgoing Supervisor Blanca Alvarado, chair of the Public Safety and Justice Committee and Juvenile Detention Re-



RIGHT: A Yes We Can Air Jordan sneaker, Enhanced Ranch student art.

form, said it best, "Funding the Enhanced Ranch Program was not only good public policy, it also was a strategic business decision," she said. "We had a 40 percent recidivism rate that had a huge price tag."

Four out of 10 youth failing juvenile rehabilitation had an annual cost of more than \$2.5 million. By making a slightly larger investment, the county could put in place an evidence-based program that for many youth could break the cycle of a revolving door to juvenile hall and later county jail or state prison.

A side-by-side comparison of the old behavior management program and the new Enhanced Ranch cognitive behavior management model reveals the stark differences in the focus on rehabilitation. Under the former program, youth offenders received one hour of individual behavior modification counseling and one hour of group counseling on a weekly basis. Treatment plans were developed by ranch counselors within two weeks of entry and the typical length of stay was 120 to 150 days.

The Enhanced Ranch model is based on the principle that opportunities for learning amount 24 hours per day. Individual counseling is provided as needed. Group counseling sessions are scheduled daily — morning, afternoon and evening. The sessions, led by a probation counselor and team facilitator, are positive and peer-based. Instead of being lectured to, youth learn to think critically.

According to Mike Simms, pro-
SEE "ENHANCED RANCH" - PAGE 16

RIGHT: Board Chair Liz Kniss served as vice chair of the Public Safety and Justice Committee.



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LEFT: The accommodations before Enhanced Ranch were notably less appealing.

"ENHANCED RANCH" - FROM PAGE 15

bation manager at James Ranch, "They are learning to understand why they do what they do and how their behavior affects others in the group."

Peer reinforcement is important. Circle Intervention Groups are scheduled as needed. All youth offenders undergo aggression training using TIPS (Teaching Pro-social Skills). Case plans are developed by multidisciplinary teams that include a ranch counselor; mental health, educational, and substance abuse counselors; probation officer; and parents. The length of stay is six to eight months.

Families and communities are viewed as resources. At the outset, families are brought

SEE "ENHANCED RANCH" - PAGE 40

"I have met with youth while in the program, and after completion, they tell me it truly made a difference in their outlook."



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Santa Clara County

County Supervisors:

- Dave Cortese
- Donald F. Gage
- Liz Kniss
- George Shirakawa
- Ken Yeager

County Seat: San Jose

Year Established: 1850

Population: 1,837,075

Size: 1,316 Square Miles

Origin of County Name:

The county is named after Mission Santa Clara.



Find out more about Santa Clara County at www.sccgov.org.

into the treatment process. The objective is to engage the families so the youth have stronger support systems when they return home.

Transition planning for six months of aftercare begins 60 days prior to release and includes home visits, as well as family reintegration counseling. Reduced caseloads permit probation officers to have contact with youth three to five times a week during the initial ten-week intensive supervision. The community-based aftercare program includes: intensive case management; substance abuse counseling services; mental health services; social/recreation skills; life skills/communication skills; school placement/alternative school transitioning; family counseling; additional aggression redirection training; and health and outpatient mental health services.

"We are setting an example worth emulating," said Supervisor Liz Kniss. "I have met with youth while in the program, and after completion, they tell me it truly made a difference in their outlook."

The good news is that during the first year, 110 youth were committed to the Enhanced Ranch Program and 75 percent successfully graduated. The trend continued through Ranch aftercare supervision, with 70 percent graduating. Simms said that there also are intangible payoffs that are hard to measure, such as the number of people who don't become victims, and the productive contributions to society that rehabilitated youth will make over the course of their lives.

"Our goal is to reach a success rate of 100 percent," said Chief Probation Officer Sheila Mitchell. "We're not there yet but we are on our way."

A newly released "County Probation Camps and Ranches for Juvenile Offenders Report" prepared for the California Assembly's Public Safety Committee, shows that Santa Clara County is the only county in California using the Enhanced Ranch model. ❖

"REHABILITATING" - FROM PAGE 8

guidance from the state, all counties must implement the effective programs used by model counties.

Counties cannot immediately take on the remaining juvenile offender population. And certain offenders — those serving lengthy or life sentences — may never be appropriate for county supervision. The state must decide how best to deal with this small subset.

The state must give counties time and resources to plan, develop and contract for programs and establish regional partnerships. The state must provide counties with dedicated funding, guidance and oversight. In return, counties must measure outcomes and document and replicate success. ❖

parole violations that will use risk factors to incarcerate those offenders most likely to commit a new offense, while referring some of the lower risk violators to alternative sanctions. This strategy should help to reduce the repeated churning of technical parole violators through our prison population, and improve parolee success rates.

Parole is also proud to announce that it has been able to place every High Risk Sex Offender and Jessica's Law registrant on global positioning system (GPS) supervision, and is very close to having every active sex offender under its jurisdiction on GPS. With more than 6,300 parolees on GPS, California's Parole Division is the worldwide leader in utilizing this new technology. CDCR is also partnering with local law enforcement agencies to pilot this technology on High Risk Gang Offenders, and are seeing great potential for reducing gang and violent crime.

These are just a few highlights of things that CDCR accomplished in 2008, in the midst of the ongoing debates over competing budget priorities, court interventions and policy initiatives. My staff and I are committed to keeping CSAC and its members informed every step of the way, and realize that having a strong partnership between the state and counties is imperative to our mutual success.

CSAC members are encouraged to regularly visit: www.cdcr.ca.gov, and to sign up for the free CDCR-STAR online publication for the latest news and updates on everything happening in the world of California corrections. ❖

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CDCR has started doing assessments on inmates at select reception centers, so that staff can tailor programs to meet their specific needs and better target rehabilitation resources.

A fresh voice: Sheila Mitchell, Chief Probation Officer

In 2004, Sheila Mitchell was named chief probation officer by former County Executive Pete Kutas, who said she would be a fresh voice. Prior to joining Santa Clara County, Mitchell was the assistant chief of probation for Alameda County. She



Sheila Mitchell,
Chief Probation Officer,
Santa Clara County.

had been appointed by the governor of Georgia to serve as deputy commissioner for the State of Georgia's Juvenile Justice System. Mitchell received national acclaim for her accomplishments as head of Georgia's voluntary compliance with the U.S. Department of Justice agreement regarding conditions of confinement.

Mitchell, who holds a bachelor's degree in behavioral science and a master's degree in conflict resolution from Antioch University, entered the criminal justice field following early retirement from a successful career at AT&T. She wanted to give back to the community.

When she accepted the Santa Clara County post, Mitchell, who also oversees adult probation, said: "My philosophy is that we should treat the children in our custody as though they were our own and provide them with the services and care they deserve.

"It is clear that the entire society benefits when youth and adults receive appropriate rehabilitative opportunities."

Fortunately, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors had identified a need for change. In 2002, under the leadership of then Supervisor Blanca Alvarado, chair, and Supervisor Liz Kniss, vice chair, of the Public Safety and Justice Committee, the county embarked on an ambitious mission to reform

its juvenile detention system. The county put a ballot measure before the voters in March 2004 to transfer probation oversight from the courts to county administration. Mitchell's task was to take the baton and move these initiatives to the next level.

Mitchell quickly earned the confidence of community members, families and policymakers. Her hands-on, out-in-the-community approach assured stakeholders that she valued their ideas. One of her early tasks was to implement best practices in juvenile rehabilitation.

"Our purpose is to rebuild lives, instill values and confidence, and prepare youth to be responsible and productive. However, the system was failing. Staffing patterns did not facilitate the level of counseling and treatment services that this high-risk youth offender population needed," Mitchell said.

Early achievements included gaining the agreement of all 15 county law enforcement agencies to use a new police booking protocol to reduce unnecessary confinement of youth. Probation also began using a detention risk assessment instrument to determine whether an offender poses a risk to public safety or risk of flight. Another innovative program is the evening reporting center, where certain youth on probation spend the hours between end of the school day and bedtime doing homework and participating in counseling.

"We have a complex challenge — to offer novel placements that increase youthful offenders' chances to turn their lives around, while at the same time ensuring that we are mindful of public safety," remarked Mitchell. "We're fortunate to have committed leadership from the Board of Supervisors and both system-wide and countywide support. We are all encouraged by the early program successes." ❖

Profile courtesy of Gwendolyn Mitchell, director of public affairs for Santa Clara County.