



Legislative Priorities 2014-2015

PACE supports legislation that encourages expansion of gender-specific, community-based prevention and early intervention services in the delinquency and dependency systems, prioritizes quality education as an effective approach to preventing delinquency and dependency and provides for services for victims of domestic minor sex trafficking and tougher legal penalties for traffickers.

Expansion of Prevention and Early Intervention Services to Girls in Clay County

In 2012 there were 938 girls in Clay County referred to the Department of Juvenile Justice, a 3% increase over the prior year. Clay County was one of only three counties in the state that over the past five years has had an increase in the number of youth sent to residential commitment programs¹. Of these girls, 42% were victims of trauma, 11% experienced physical abuse, 10% were victims of sexual abuse, 16% had a parent with a mental health or drug problem, 24% were charged with drug related offenses, 13 % of girls had anger problems and 9% were living in out of home placement. Additionally, 63% had anti-social peers and 10% were not in school². With respect to school behaviors, last year 2,805 girls from Clay County were suspended from school; 28 girls were expelled and 136 dropped out of school. School failure and dropout are risk factors for multiple problematic outcomes among girls. Conversely, attachment to school and to teachers and expecting to complete high school or attain a GED are noted protective factors for adolescent girls. These protective factors are stronger for girls than for boys and have been found to attenuate the impact of other risk factors girls may encounter³. Further, in 2011-2012, Clay County reported 176 births for girls between the ages of 15-19 and 209 births to mothers with no HS diploma or GED. Approximately one-quarter of teen mothers go on welfare within 3 years of a child's birth⁴. The PACE model focuses on the intersection of social and emotional health and education to improve performance in school,

¹ DJJ, 2013

² DJJ PACT Profile, 2011-2012

³ Perkins & Jones, 2004; Zahn, et al., 2010

⁴ Kaye, K. & Chadwick, L., *The Lives of Teen Parents After Welfare Reform and the Role of TANF*, 2006, Unpublished manuscript, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation.

health and mental health outcomes and to prevent juvenile justice system involvement, teen pregnancy, substance use and dropping out of school. The PACE model also builds on protective factors that research has shown mitigates delinquency amongst girls. These protective factors include (1) positive interpersonal relationships, (2) coping skills, (3) self-advocacy/self-efficacy, (4) positive gender identification and (5) future outlook/ career orientation. These protective factors are aligned with the services identified as needed for girls in Clay County based on the risk factors identified above.

Girls in the Dependency System

Girls who are involved in the dependency system because of abuse, neglect or abandonment are also at risk of entering the delinquency system. Approximately 41%, or 879, of the girls PACE serves are in the dependency system, either in foster care or living in homes receiving services through the Department of Children and Families or its non-profit community-based care organizations (CBCs). PACE services to those girls extends beyond formal education to include intensive counseling and other monitoring of their personal wellbeing and resembles case-management services provided by the CBCs under their contracts with DCF.

PACE receives no state funds for these services. As part of PACE's goal of serving more girls at risk, PACE is evaluating taking on the formal role as dependency case manager for PACE girls in the dependency system. It may be more cost-effective for the state if PACE formally takes on the case management role for girls involved in the child welfare system that are also enrolled at PACE, as well as serving as a resource for girls in the child welfare system.

Ensuring Gender-Specific Prevention and Diversion Services

Girls at risk of entering the juvenile justice system share a set of common characteristics that include histories of emotional, physical, and sexual victimization, unstable family life, school failure, and mental health and substance abuse problems. Girls that have been abused or neglected are twice as likely to be arrested as those without a history of such trauma. Girls are most often arrested for non-violent offenses and are disproportionately arrested for running away, compared with boys. Girls often run away to flee violence, trauma or other abuse in the home.

PACE Center for Girls, Inc., has a demonstrated record of success for more than 25 years as a prevention and early intervention model specifically responsive to the needs of girls. PACE is recognized as being among the most effective programs in the country for keeping girls out of

the juvenile justice system⁵ and supports legislation that further ensures gender-specific prevention and diversion services.

Improving Juvenile Justice Education as an Effective Approach to Preventing Delinquency

Education is the single most important factor in preventing delinquency amongst girls and girls in the juvenile justice system must be afforded the opportunity to obtain a high quality education. Educational failure, particularly during the middle school years, is the most statistically significant risk factor for girls' delinquency, including serious offending. Girls who report problems at school are four times more likely to be repeat offenders and three times more likely to have more serious charges, including person offenses than girls who did not have academic school problems.⁶ Statewide, in FY 2013 26% of the girls entering PACE were not enrolled in school at the time they enrolled in PACE.

Protecting Girls from Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

Children who are victims of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking often have histories that include sexual assault, physical abuse, and runaway behavior, as well as involvement in the child welfare system and/or juvenile justice system.

Running away from home is a common characteristic of sexually exploited girls and girls who have run away from a foster care placement 3 or more times have an 80% increased likelihood of becoming victims of trafficking. Traffickers prey upon runaway girls because of their mental, physical and financial vulnerability.

PACE supports further efforts to provide services and treatment to victims of trafficking and to prevent more children from being sexually exploited. These includes efforts that provides victims of trafficking access to specialized treatment and services, removes victims of trafficking from delinquent status, combats demand for child exploitation and increases penalties for those convicted of human trafficking.

⁵OJJDP Girls Study Group, 2008; Annie E Casey Foundation, KIDSCOUNT Report, 2008

⁶National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2010

THE GIRLS OF PACE LEE



Executive Director
Meg M. Geltner

3760 Schoolhouse Road West
Fort Myers, FL 33916
Tel: 239-425-2366

CURRENT STATS

- 116 girls served in 2011-2012
- 15 average age of girls entering PACE
- 57% live in neighborhoods with higher than average crime rates
- 12% reported substance abuse prior to coming to PACE
- 18% had run away prior to coming to PACE

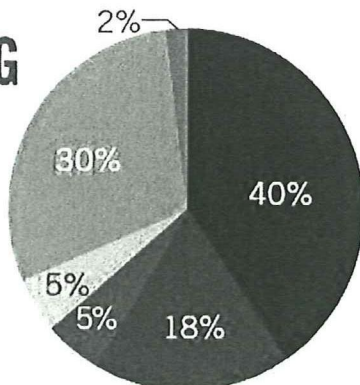


OUTCOMES

- 94% had no involvement with Juvenile Justice within six months of leaving PACE
- 91% were placed in appropriate education settings after leaving PACE
- 88% improved their academic performance
- 80% were in school or employed three years after leaving PACE



SOURCE OF FUNDING



- DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
- OTHER PUBLIC SUPPORT
- IN KIND CONTRIBUTIONS
- PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS
- PRIVATE GRANTS





Portrait of Risk for PACE Lee A Snapshot of PACE Girls Using Gender-Specific Risk Factors

PACE Girls Served 01/01/2013 to 06/05/2013

75 Girls

| School Failure | | Number | Percentage | Victimization | | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------|------------|---|--|--------|------------|
| Expelled / Suspended | | 49 | 65.3% | Physical Abuse | | 10 | 13.3% |
| Missed 6-20 days last year | | 2 | 2.7% | Sexual Abuse | | 14 | 18.7% |
| Missed 21-30 days last year | | 3 | 4.0% | Rape | | 17 | 22.7% |
| Missed 31 or more days | | 2 | 2.7% | Emotional Abuse | | 15 | 20.0% |
| Learning disabled | | 29 | 38.7% | Abuse Reports | | 10 | 13.3% |
| | | | | Abused at Home | | 13 | 17.3% |
| Family Instability and Conflict | | | | Health Risks: Physical, Emotional, Mental | | | |
| Neglect | | 7 | 9.3% | Serious Physical Health Problems | | 44 | 58.7% |
| Parent/Sibling Incarcerated/Probation | | 43 | 57.3% | Substance Abuse | | 24 | 32.0% |
| Seriously Ill Parent | | 5 | 6.7% | Alcohol Abuse | | 5 | 6.7% |
| Parent Substance Abuse | | 20 | 26.7% | Self Mutilation | | 20 | 26.7% |
| Parent Deceased | | 4 | 5.3% | Mental Health Disorders | | 15 | 20.0% |
| Parent(s) with Mental Illness | | 10 | 13.3% | Previous Suicidal Ideation | | 34 | 45.3% |
| Parent(s) History of Suicide Attempts | | 4 | 5.3% | Attempted Suicide | | 4 | 5.3% |
| Domestic Violence in the Home | | 16 | 21.3% | Unhealthy Eating/Eating Disorders | | 37 | 49.3% |
| Live in Out of Home Placement | | 10 | 13.3% | Cigarette Addiction | | 4 | 5.3% |
| Lives in Foster Care/Residential | | 3 | 4.0% | Runaway Behavior | | 17 | 22.7% |
| Moved 3 or More Times in Last 5 Years | | 29 | 38.7% | | | | |
| Single Parent Household | | 43 | 57.3% | | | | |
| Early Sexual Activity and Pregnancy | | | | Demographics: Race, Ethnicity, Age, Income, Household, Neighborhood | | | |
| Early initiation of Sexual Activity | | 28 | 37.3% | Race & Ethnicity | | | |
| History of Pregnancy | | 2 | 2.7% | White | | 26 | 34.7% |
| | | | | Black | | 31 | 41.3% |
| | | | | Other-Hispanic | | 18 | 24.0% |
| | | | | Income Level | | | |
| | | | | Very Low | | 28 | 37.3% |
| | | | | Low | | 38 | 50.7% |
| | | | | Other | | 8 | 10.7% |
| | | | | Mother Foreign Born | | 10 | 13.3% |
| | | | | Father Foreign Born | | 11 | 14.7% |
| | | | | Girl Foreign Born | | 4 | 5.3% |
| | | | | Mother Employed | | 17 | 22.7% |
| | | | | Father Employed | | 24 | 32.0% |
| | | | | Girl Employed | | 0 | 0.0% |
| | | | | Ages of Girls Served: 7 to 17 | | | |
| | | | | Median Age: 15 Years | | | |
| Arrest History | | | | | | | |
| Prior Arrest | | 21 | 28.0% | | | | |
| Prior Arrest for Domestic Violence | | 5 | 6.7% | | | | |
| Prior Adjudication | | 7 | 9.3% | | | | |
| Adjudications Withheld | | 11 | 14.7% | | | | |
| Currently on Probation | | 8 | 10.7% | | | | |
| Gang Involvement | | 0 | 0.0% | | | | |



dream **BIG**

Mission

PACE provides girls and young women an opportunity for a better future through education, counseling, training and advocacy.

Philosophy

PACE values all girls and young women, believing each one deserves an opportunity to find her voice, achieve her potential and celebrate a life defined by responsibility, dignity, serenity and grace.

2012-2013 Outcomes

- **86%** improved their academic performance
- **96%** had no involvement with the criminal justice system a year after transitioning from the day program
- **\$30,000** per year in taxpayer dollars is saved for EVERY girl kept out of the juvenile justice system



The power of a dream is an amazing thing. Nearly seven years ago, a group of community volunteers had a dream to open a PACE Center for Girls in Lee County. Reallocated state funding called for PACE Lee to open with just five weeks notice... but we did it! Since 2007, nearly 600 girls facing life's most heartbreaking challenges have found safety and love at PACE.

Now, to better serve the complex and growing needs of our girls, we are dreaming BIG for a new PACE Center. PACE Lee purchased the former Richard Milburn Academy on October 31, 2013! This facility offers a footprint of 15,000 square feet with green space for outdoor recreation. The location is close to the School District, our critical social service providers and other community partners. Projected move-in date is February 2014.

Enclosed you will find information on making a lead gift towards PACE Lee's capital campaign. The Kleist Family Foundation kicked off the Dream BIG Campaign in 2011 with a lead matching gift. The community quickly completed the match and PACE Lee has raised more than \$764,000 towards our Phase I goal. We must raise an additional \$400,000 by December 2013 to complete the necessary renovations on the building. In order to help PACE Lee complete this phase of the campaign, David and Cheryl Copham recently committed to match all gifts up to \$100,000. Please help us cross the finish line! Please call 239-425-2366 ext. 25 for information on how to make your gift!

We all have our own life to pursue, our own kind of dream to be weaving. And we all have some power to make wishes come true, as long as we keep believing.



- Louisa May Alcott