

# Juvenile Justice Report

The official newsletter of the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

Fall 2003

Neil Hernandez, Commissioner



Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg greets Juvenile Counselor Stephanie Williams during DJJ Employee Appreciation Barbecue at Gracie Mansion. (Photo courtesy of Ed Birch)

## DJJ Employees Enjoy Barbecue with Mayor Bloomberg at Gracie Mansion

**Hundreds attend event thanking agency staff for their hard work and continuing commitment to New York City**

Hundreds of DJJ staff members turned out for an employee appreciation barbecue hosted by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg on August 11<sup>th</sup>.

The barbecue held at Gracie Mansion was designed to say "thank you" and express the Mayor's gratitude for the hard work and commitment on the part of DJJ and other city agency employees. The Mayor praised their efforts in ensuring that New York City continues to deliver the best possible service to its residents, visitors, and especially its young people.

Featuring traditional picnic fare and perfect weather for the gathering, the Mayor participated in games and trivia challenges with DJJ employees and posed for individual photographs with each and every staff member.

Commissioner Hernandez spoke about the commitment and dedication of DJJ staff. "Our Mayor supports the tireless effort and sacrifices made by DJJ staff during the past 19 months of fiscal difficulty," Commissioner Hernandez said. "This was an opportunity for him to personally say 'Thank you.'"

The event provided an opportunity for staff members to tour Gracie Mansion and gain insight into the home life of previous Mayors. Built in 1799, Gracie Mansion boasts a vast collection of artwork and items rich in historical significance from New York City's past. In 1942, Gracie became the official residence of the Mayor when it was first occupied by Fiorello H. La Guardia.

## Department of Juvenile Justice Celebrates 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Gala Event

On Wednesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, the NYC Department of Juvenile Justice marked its 24<sup>th</sup> year of service during a reception and celebration at the New York County Surrogate's Court. The event honored Department staff and reunited current employees with familiar faces from the agency's past.



Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott at DJJ 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event.

Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott served as the keynote speaker for the event, presenting DJJ Commissioner Neil Hernandez with a proclamation recognizing the agency for 24 years of continuing service to the people of the City of New York.

DJJ Commissioner Hernandez also  
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## New DJJ Logo Features Contemporary Design

On October 1<sup>st</sup> the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice unveiled a new agency logo that will be more readily identified with the agency and its core mission.



New agency insignia for DJJ

The logo features four stick-figure juveniles housed under one roof, above a solid foundation. The agency's initials "DJJ" are featured beneath the insignia.

The new logo will replace the seal of the City of New York on most official  
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## 24th anniversary –

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remembered slain City Council Member James E. Davis with warm memories and a moment of silence.

More than 200 past and present employees, family members, City officials and other friends of the agency attended the event.

“This celebration is an opportunity to recognize the important contributions DJJ has made during the past 24 years and honor the dedicated service of our employees whose effort has made all the difference,” Commissioner Hernandez said.

During the celebration a proclamation was presented and employees were recognized for their continuing commitment and dedication with an awards presentation. Certificates of Merit



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*Commissioner Hernandez with Teamsters President Carl Haynes, Citywide Director Gregory Floyd, and agency staff at DJJ's 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event.*

were also provided to DJJ employees who went above and beyond the call of duty to assure uninterrupted service and security during the power outage.

## DJJ Logo –

*Continued from page 1*  
documents, uniforms, vehicles and the agency's website. In developing the new logo, the agency sought to create a more contemporary design that best reflected the agency, its mission, and its approach to best serving the citizens of New York City.

Director of Public Affairs Scott Trent said, “DJJ's new logo best reflects our continuing commitment to making a positive intervention in the lives of juveniles entrusted to our custody and care.”

## DJJ Loses a Friend Agency remembers slain Council Member James E. Davis

DJJ lost a friend and juveniles lost a tremendous advocate with the senseless killing of City Council Member James Davis on July 24, 2003.

Davis was a passionate supporter of juveniles and an outspoken opponent of violence. DJJ Commissioner Neil Hernandez and other agency staff members frequently worked closely with

Davis, appearing at hearings and public events in which he was involved to discuss the needs of youth in the criminal justice system.

As chairperson of the City Council's Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice, James E. Davis visited several DJJ facilities. He was recently remembered at DJJ's 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemoration ceremony held at New York's Surrogate's Court.

The unexpected death of James E. Davis marks a loss not only for his family and loved ones, but for the people of the City of New York as well.

In memory of James E. Davis, a poem co-authored by him and Karen L. Lawrence appears below:

*When you fight against me...BROTHER  
You're allowing them to win  
When you fight against me...BROTHER  
You commit the ultimate sin*

*You don't only hurt me...BROTHER  
You hurt yourself as well  
You don't only hurt me...BROTHER  
Your sons will live in hell*

*I am not the enemy...BROTHER  
Take a look and see  
I am not the enemy...BROTHER  
You look just like me*

*Let us work together...BROTHER  
For can you not see  
That if you fight against me...BROTHER  
That's the end of you and me.*

*Love Yourself – Stop the Violence!*

*-by James E. Davis and Karen L. Lawrence*



*Council Member James Davis at group home in June 2003.*

*Photographs for Juvenile Justice Report –  
Fall 2003 provided courtesy of Ed Birch.*

## Mayor's Management Report: DJJ Performance Better Than Last Year

The release of the annual Mayor's Management Report in mid-September confirmed that the quality of services New Yorkers receive remains high, despite the City's tough fiscal challenges. Created in the 1970's, the MMR, as it is commonly referred to, has been substantially streamlined at the direction of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg so that it is more user-friendly for the public.

The report card illustrates such notable City-wide accomplishments as a:

- ? 6% overall crime reduction;
- ? School violence decreased 7%;
- ? 5% drop in new adult AIDS cases;
- ? Improved reading scores in grades 3 through 6 and 8, from 39.3% to 42.3%;
- ? 46% more previously homeless families placed in permanent housing; and
- ? 43% reduction in assaults on staff in juvenile detention facilities.

Mayor Bloomberg said, "Despite weathering the worst fiscal crisis in a generation, our administration continues to provide high quality



*Commissioner Hernandez earns a smile from Mayor Bloomberg during Employee Appreciation Barbecue at Gracie Mansion*

services to our citizens. It is a testament to the hard work of our agency heads and employees who have managed to do more with less through these challenging times."

For DJJ, the dramatic reduction in assaults on staff was combined with a 13% drop in fights between youth across secure and non-secure detention. These performance improvements were accomplished through a strategic approach. First, the agency's use of a performance measurement system named GOALS - Group Oriented Analysis of Leadership Strategies like the NYPD's Compstat, has allowed agency managers and supervisors to focus on and respond to current trends. Second, the implementation of the Learning Enhancement and Adjustment Program (LEAP) with federal dollars has provided specialized training for juvenile counselors and mental health social workers who care for youth in their living areas, and increased staffing levels. Third, the addition of a new mental health provider whose expertise is the provision of mental health services.

The reduction in violence across the detention system also produced a 50% drop in the rate of injured staff out of work, resulting in significant cost savings. Deputy Commissioner Andrew Gonzalez said, "GOALS has helped us manage the agency better, from ensuring that our residents receive the best social services to maintaining a safe environment for our committed staff to do what they do best – counsel young people with the goal of making a positive intervention in their lives."

### Commissioner's Message

*By Neil Hernandez*



In my last bulletin, I shared with you news of DJJ's continued success in keeping our facilities safe and our residents well cared for despite our budget challenges. I also touched upon the City's declining crime rate, which new FBI crime statistics show New York City continues to be the safest big city in America. While it was a good summer and fall for the City, DJJ has also achieved accomplishments we can all be proud of. Like the City's crime rate, the number of fights in our facilities continued to drop since July, a 31% reduction.

July 1<sup>st</sup> marked the 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of DJJ by then-Mayor Ed Koch. On August 27<sup>th</sup> we celebrated this special occasion at Surrogate's Court in Manhattan. We were joined by Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott, who presented a proclamation from Mayor Bloomberg recognizing our agency's 24-year commitment to young people, as well as the many contributions you have made to advance our mission. Also in attendance were Criminal Justice Coordinator John Feinblatt and many judges and distinguished City officials. Mayor Bloomberg had earlier personally thanked DJJ employees at a barbecue he hosted at Gracie Mansion.

In September, we implemented a discharge planning model to our Community Based Intervention Program to better meet the needs of youth who leave our custody, especially those with medical or mental health concerns.

Just last month, we received the best news we could have asked for as our residents did well on their first report cards, scoring an average ten points higher than passing. Your efforts and those of our Department of Education staff paid off handsomely.

We have accomplished much, but we have much more to do. Let's finish off the year strong and enjoy our holiday party next month.



## DJJ Co-hosts State Juvenile Justice Forum

Event assembles experts from across New York

On October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, DJJ hosted the fall meeting of the Juvenile Detention Association (JDA) for juvenile detention professionals from across the state. Held at the Holiday Inn on Broadway, the conference was designed to share the latest news, information and strategies in addressing juvenile detention issues.

The event featured several high-profile speakers, including Deputy Criminal Justice Coordinator Michele Sviridoff and JDA President Michael Marinan. The event's keynote speaker was NYS Supreme Court Justice Francois Rivera. DJJ's own Deputy Commissioner Crystal Monge also appeared, discussing the Department's Learning Enhancement and Adjustment Program (LEAP).

Commissioner Hernandez opened the conference with a welcome to all who traveled from across the state to take part in the event. He spoke of the Bloomberg Admini-



Judge Francois Rivera speaks at juvenile justice forum hosted by DJJ and the New York State Juvenile Detention Association.

stration's success in reducing crime and violence in our juvenile detention facilities.

The event also provided an opportunity for managers and line staff to share information with colleagues from across the state.

DJJ Deputy Commissioner Crystal Monge said, "The JDA conference is a meaningful way for detention professionals from across the state to get together and talk about the issues facing the juvenile justice system. This year, the conference included presentations centered around new initiatives in placement alternatives as well as programs that deal with youth facing mental health issues. This is especially important since mental health issues have been widely identified as one of the biggest challenges facing prisons, jails, and detention

### EEO Protects All DJJ Employees

Discrimination in employment practices can take many forms and is strictly prohibited by law. EEO Counselors are stationed at each facility to provide you with information about EEO-related issues and concerns.

EEO Officer Tonia Haynes encourages employees with questions about EEO issues to contact her in confidence at 212-925-7779 x229.

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First-ever Multi-Cultural Parade held at Crotona Park in the Bronx organized by S.E.E.D.S. Executive Director Migdalia Cortes.

facilities. Overall, the conference was a big success, and DJJ looks forward to continued partnerships with jurisdictions across the state."

Staff members who attended the conference praised it for its insight and effectiveness in promoting awareness about juvenile issues and effective strategies in addressing problems in detention situations.

Rene Belafonte, a Juvenile Counselor on the night tour at Horizon said, "I thought the conference was very informative and enlightening. We were brought together to exchange ideas. We all had one goal – the children."

Horizon School Liaison Lesley Estrella said, "Very informative! It helped me understand the true meaning of detention and why it is needed."



DJJ staff celebrate opening of the library at Horizon Juvenile Center with New York Supreme Court Justice Michael A. Corriero.