

**2013**  
**Annual Report**



**William R. Zimmerman, Judge**  
**Shelby County Juvenile Court**  
**Sidney, Ohio**

# **2013 Shelby County Juvenile Court Report by Judge William R. Zimmerman**



2013 was a successful year for the Shelby County Juvenile Court. Despite the difficult economic times, the Court continued to provide valuable rehabilitative assistance to at-risk children.

The Shelby County Juvenile Court handles a variety of cases involving children, including child abuse, child neglect, delinquency charges, truancy complaints, traffic citations and unruly children. Child custody and child support cases involving children born to unwed parents are also handled in Juvenile Court. The Court also handles grandparent custody and visitation. New Court Magistrate, Jeffrey Beigel, handles the majority of the child custody and visitation cases.

In 2013, the Juvenile Court continued its partnership with the Shelby County United Way providing important services through its IMPACT (Imagine Making Positive Accountable Changes Together) program to Shelby County school-age children. This program is administered by the Juvenile Court/School Liaison Officer, Amy Simindinger, and targets younger children (8 – 12 years old) who may be experiencing problems at home or in school by providing counseling or educational services before the child becomes involved in the Juvenile Court system.

The Juvenile Court continues to partner with area agencies, law enforcement, schools and local businesses in developing opportunities and strategies for children to become good citizens. The Juvenile Court's community service partnerships with the Shelby County Animal Shelter and the Alpha Center highlight its 2013 accomplishments.

# Juvenile Court Staff



From L to R: (front) Amy Simindinger, Court/School Liaison; Aja Dugan, Probation Officer; Lorie Hurey, Intake Officer; (back) Ken Pirics, Bailiff; Dustin Snow, Probation Officer; McKenzie Lotz, Chief Probation Officer



From L to R: (front) Cheryl McCullough, Deputy Clerk; Jill Clem, Judicial Secretary; Patty Miller, Judicial Secretary; (back) Kim Rosengarten, Chief Deputy Clerk, Julie Stewart, Deputy Clerk; Dawn Bailey, Court Administrator

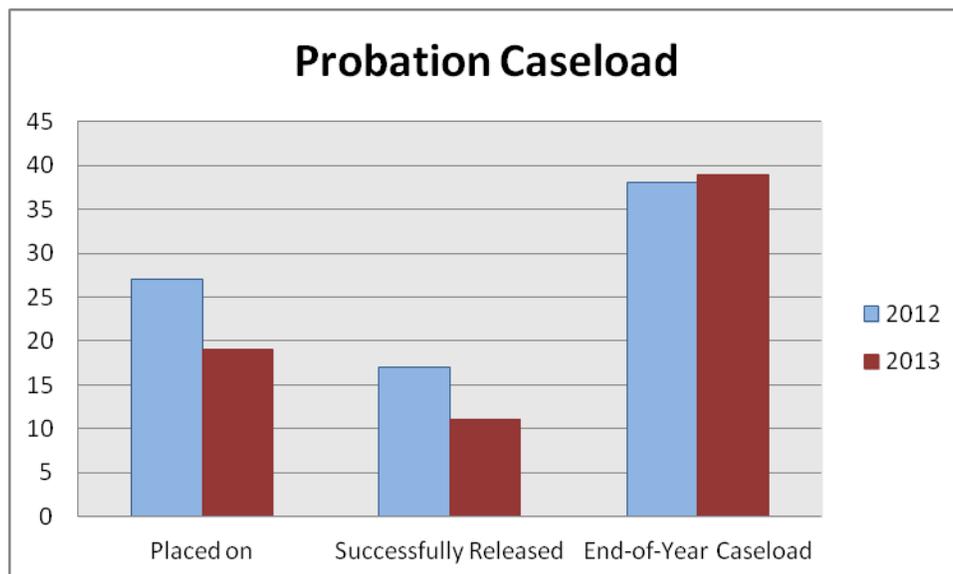
# Probation Services#

The mission of the Shelby County Juvenile Probation Department is to assist with the rehabilitation of delinquent/unruly youth and their families by implementing changes through programming, education, and community partnerships. Driven by this mission, Shelby County Juvenile Court Probation staff strives to make a difference in youths' lives and foster the changes necessary to give them a chance to a better life.

This year, in collaboration with the Family Resource Center, Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) was introduced in Shelby County. MRT is a cognitive behavioral counseling program that combines education, group and individual counseling, structured exercises, and prescribed homework assignments to improve youth's moral reasoning. MRT includes 16 defined steps with these goals in mind: improve young people's moral reasoning and assist them in making better judgments in regards to behavior, increase the youth's awareness and understanding of the consequences to their actions, and alter how youth think and make judgments about what is right and wrong.

The Court once again applied for and received a Federal grant that provides funding for the Probation Department to conduct evening home visits of Court-involved youth. Through our partnership with the Shelby County Sheriff's Department, the probation department staff conducted 548 evening home checks or approximately 8 visits per shift worked.

The Juvenile Probation Department was also able to hold their Annual Probationer Party again this year. The party was held at Rolling Hills Skate, which was a big hit with the youth. The Probation Department staff provided lunch for everyone in attendance. This annual gathering has been held since 2009 and began at Tawawa Park.



# **Court/School Liaison#**

Shelby County Juvenile Court and the Shelby County School systems continue to utilize a Court/school liaison. This position serves as a coordinator between the Court and school system and works to better coordinate services provided by both the Court and school systems, as well as ensure the completion and compliance of Court orders related to school performance. Responsibilities for the liaison fall into three major categories: monitoring, consultation, and transitioning of students.

Each week the liaison meets with the Juvenile Court Judge and probation staff to review and discuss cases set for hearing that week. Students who will be appearing before the Juvenile Court Judge and who are also struggling academically, with attendance or who are experiencing behavioral issues at school, may be placed on the liaison caseload. These students are monitored closely through a specific Court order to ensure improvement in the areas of attendance, academic achievement, and appropriate school behavior. The liaison visits students at school to provide support and guidance, as well as communicate with school staff to address any specific concerns. The liaison also works with the students' parents/guardians to provide support and to ensure that they are following through with expectations that are spelled out in their Court contract such as ensuring their child is attending school and that the parent(s) contact the school on a regular basis to maintain continued communication between the parent(s) and school.

The liaison serves as a consultant for school administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors to assist with legal questions regarding student issues such as no-contact orders, custody clarification, and truancy issues. She also serves as the truancy officer for the county school systems. The liaison also serves as a coordinator to keep school districts updated on students coming out of long term placements, students who must miss school due to fulfilling Court orders such as being placed in detention, having a hearing or to attend a rehabilitative program. The liaison is often asked to attend expulsion hearings for students, or to consult with the expulsion officer in advance to provide resources and services for the student and family.

The liaison works to find alternative educational environments for students as needed. Shelby County is fortunate to have alternative options for students who are attempting to recover credits or require a smaller, more specialized educational environment. These include an alternative school program, an online program, and an evening high school program. The liaison utilizes all these options in order to give each student the best possible program for success. The liaison is consulted by local school systems that have a student move into their district who is in need of an alternative setting or program, or who may have had previous involvement with a Juvenile Court system.

In addition, the Court refers students to the GED program and the liaison facilitates the process of student enrollment in that program. The liaison increasingly works with the Shelby County Sheriff's Department to deliver work to inmates still working toward a high school diploma and also works with the Sheriff's Department GED coordinator to assist inmates in the process for requesting assistance with payment for the GED, permission from the local superintendents, etc.

The liaison also coordinates requests from the local school districts for the Juvenile Court Judge and probation staff to speak to groups of students on current concerns in the school environment. In 2013, the Judge, liaison and probation staff spoke with students in multiple school districts on the subjects of bullying, cyber bullying, underage drinking, age of consent and other issues as requested.

In 2013, 52 students were directly served by the Court/school liaison. In addition, the liaison provided consultation or supportive services in multiple situations through Shelby County school districts or Juvenile Court.

# **IMPACT Program**

Shelby County Juvenile Court has developed a unique and innovative approach to proactively identify and serve students at the elementary level who were facing obstacles to academic, social, and community success. Developed in collaboration with Shelby County United Way, the Community IMPACT program has become a valuable and often requested resource for the Court and school systems in Shelby County. The school/Court liaison serves as the director for the IMPACT program.

The program goal is to reach students in elementary to middle school age range who have been identified by school personnel as needing assistance to overcome issues that may have a negative impact on future success. These issues can impact academic, social, or society success, and are often impacting all three areas.

Juvenile Court has contracted with Family Resource Center of Northwest Ohio to provide services to families enrolled in the program, and in 2013, the IMPACT program received 83 referrals for students in Shelby County. Of those, 54% opted to participate in the program. Families that do not respond or are hesitant to participate continue to be contacted on a regular basis to determine if they are ready to begin the program.

While the program was originally designed to target students who are 8-12 years old, 2013 saw an increase in requests for students in the preschool and kindergarten range to begin receiving services through IMPACT. Amy Simindinger presented information on the IMPACT program to staff of Shelby Hills Early Childhood Center, a preschool program in Shelby County that serves both children with and without disabilities. This program has satellite classrooms in several local school districts, so the IMPACT program benefits both the immediate needs in the preschool program and the long term success of the student in the residential school district. Students in high school have also been screened into the program when a diagnosed developmental delay or cognitive disability exists in combination with other concerning factors. The majority of referrals continue to fall in the middle school age range. Seven of the eight school districts in Shelby County have referred students to the IMPACT program. The feedback from administrators, teachers and guidance counselors continues to be outstanding.

Families currently participating in the program are receiving individual and family counseling, case management, drug and alcohol counseling, anger management, and psychiatric services. Because the program provides services to the entire family, parents can see the benefit of participation in the program. The major identified needs of the students currently participating in the program fall into one of several categories: ADHD, conduct issues, depression, anxiety, autism, and anger issues. A small number of students are identified as having multiple needs.

In 2013 the IMPACT program also provided the Teen Screen program to two local school districts. This voluntary screening program, developed by Columbia University, screens middle school students and identifies those at risk for anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts or other concerns. Staff members from Family Resource Center implement the screening during the school day. As it was the first time the screening was provided, the actual numbers of participants was fairly low. However, of those that did participate, 17.1% screened positive for some type of mental health concern. The Teen Screen program will be offered to Shelby County School Districts on a rotating basis.

# **Rehabilitative Programs – Incarceration - Placements**

## **Rehabilitative Programs**

**Gateway Youth Program** – This program is a 12-week program which the Court refers adjudicated and at-risk youth. The program helps youth with school attendance and performance, social skills and getting the youth and their families to the appropriate services. 4 youth referred in 2013

**Juvenile Justice Work Program** – Youth perform community service at various work sites throughout the county. The program teaches youth responsibility for negative actions and a basic work ethic. 186 days completed in 2013

**Community Service** – Youth perform community service for charitable organizations, school and churches. 430 hours completed in 2013

**West Central Juvenile Day Treatment** – This program provides alternative schooling, GED preparation and living skills to adjudicated youth. 2 youth completed in 2013

**Bridging the Gap** – This program is facilitated by The Salvation Army. The youth participate in various life skill lessons that enable them to better handle issues that young people face today. 14 youth completed in 2013

**STAR (Start Today Accepting Responsibility)** – This program, which is run by the West Central Juvenile Detention Center, shows youth what it is like to be placed in a secure facility for a few hours. 37 youth completed in 2013

**Parent Project** – This nationwide effective program presented twice a year by the Shelby County Educational Service Center educates parents while reducing juvenile crime and improving school attendance and academic performance. While parents are in one class room, teens between the ages of 11 and 17 are in a separate class, which helps teens explore positive alternatives to destructive behavior. 14 youth and 18 parents completed in 2013

**Mental Health Counseling/Alcohol & Drug Services** – The services of the Shelby County Counseling Center, Catholic Social Services, Victim Services, The Family Resource Center and other counselors are utilized to address youth with mental health, behavioral and/or alcohol and drug problems. 26 youth completed alcohol & drug counseling and 20 youth completed mental health counseling in 2013

**Diversion** – Youth in this program admit to the offense without a formal hearing, and the youth must comply with the contract established with the diversion officer and parent(s). If the youth completes the program successfully, he/she will not have a juvenile record. 9 youth completed in 2013

## **Placements**

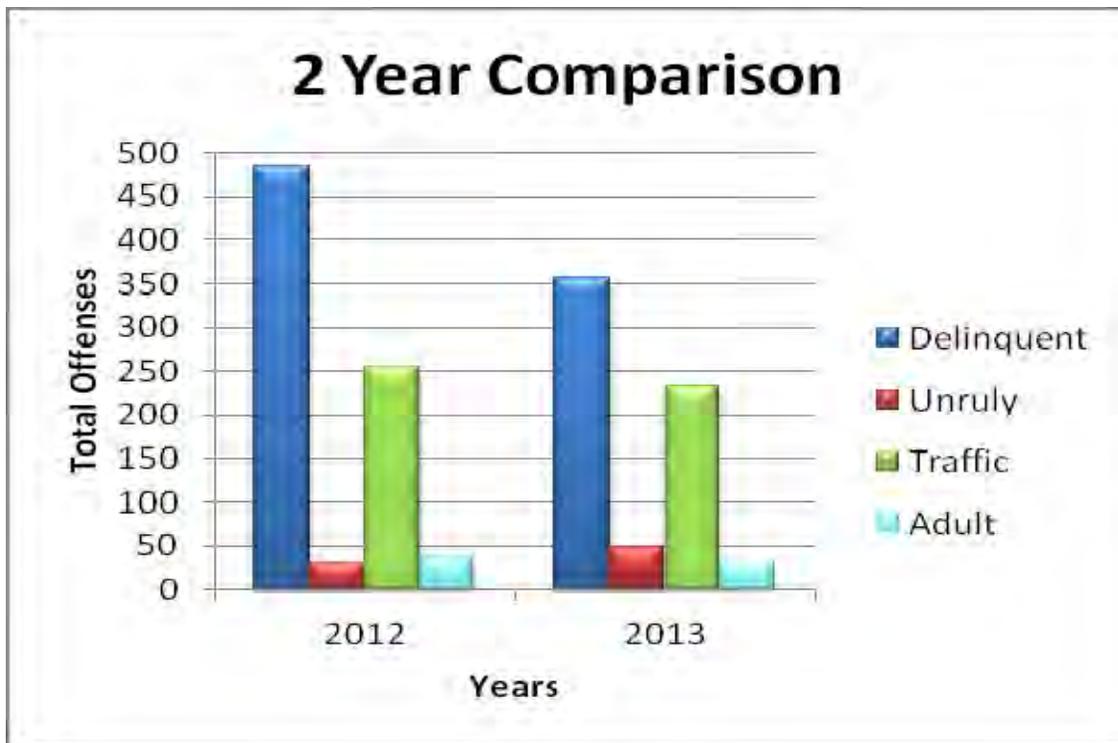
**Clear Creek Farm** – Children placed with this agency live in family-styled units, residence for 8 to 10 kids cared for by house parents 24 hours a day. Children are expected to participate in the family unit by doing chores and sharing responsibilities, helping with meals, doing their own laundry, and grocery shopping. They enjoy spiritual as well as recreational activities together as a family and learn to support one another. 3 youth were placed into Clear Creek in 2013

**Incarceration**

**DYS** – The Department of Youth Services is the juvenile corrections system for the State of Ohio operating four juvenile facilities with four regional parole offices. 1 youth was placed in 2013

**Rehabilitation** – The West Central Juvenile Rehabilitation Center treats male juveniles and Miami Valley Juvenile Rehabilitation Center treats female juveniles aged 12 to 18 who are referred to these facilities to receive cognitive behavioral therapy with the focus on thinking errors. 8 youth were placed in 2013

**Detention** – The Shelby County Commissioners have contracted with the West Central Juvenile Detention Center for 6 beds per day. The facility is a locked facility serving male and female youth between the ages of 12 and 18. 77 youth were placed and 2,497 bed days were used in 2013

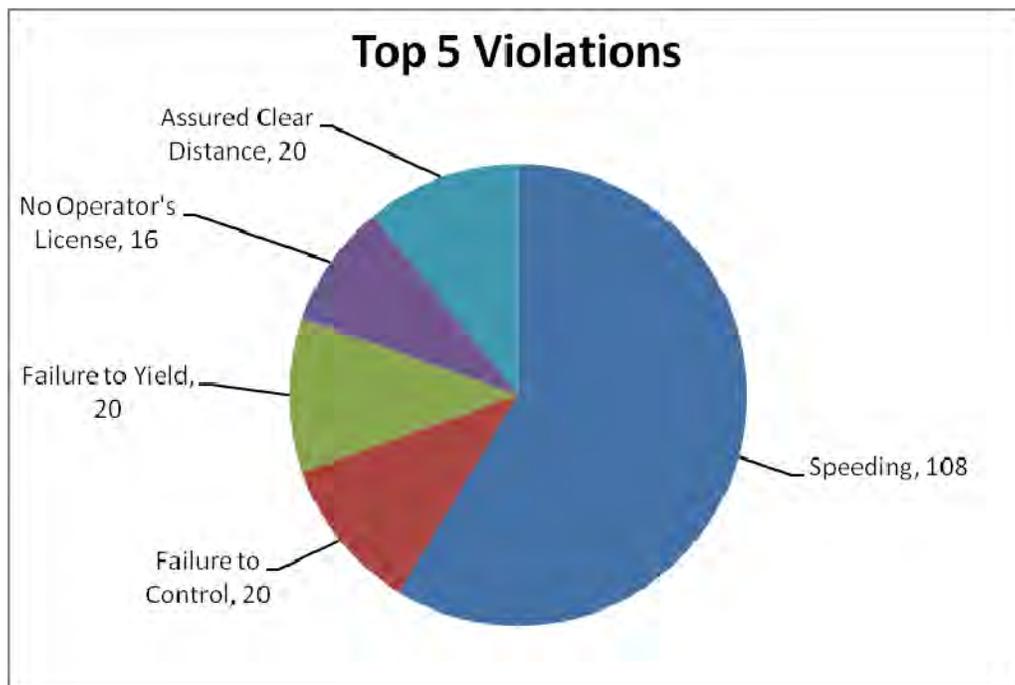


# Juvenile Traffic Cases#

The Juvenile Court is designated to hear all traffic cases of persons who are under the age of 18 when they are charged with a traffic violation. The violation could be a state statute or municipal ordinance.

The creation of the Court's traffic violations bureau allows juveniles to admit to a violation and pay their Court costs and fines without having to appear in Court. In 2013, of the 233 traffic violations filed with the Court, the bureau processed 37 cases. All juvenile traffic offenses may be disposed of by the violations bureau, except the following offenses:

- a) Indictable offenses;
- b) Operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol or any drug of abuse;
- c) Leaving the scene of an accident;
- d) Driving while under suspension or revocation of a driver's or commercial driver's license;
- e) Driving without being licensed to drive;
- f) Failure to stop and remain standing upon meeting or overtaking a school bus stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging a school child;
- g) Willfully eluding or fleeing a police officer;
- h) Drag racing;
- i) A second or subsequent moving offense;
- j) An offense that involves an accident;
- k) Any traffic offense, otherwise eligible to be disposed of by said violation bureau, that the Court, in its discretion and upon a case-by-case basis, determines should not be disposed of by said violations bureau.



# Domestic Relations Division#



Jeffrey J. Beigel  
Magistrate

The jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court, Domestic Relations Division, is limited to resolving disputes concerning children of unmarried parents, deceased parents, or children that are not “a ward of another Court.” The Court issues decisions regarding paternity, custody, child support, and visitation. The Domestic Relations Division also enforces orders previously issued through the contempt of Court process. Juvenile Court Magistrate Jeffrey J. Beigel handles the majority of the cases filed.

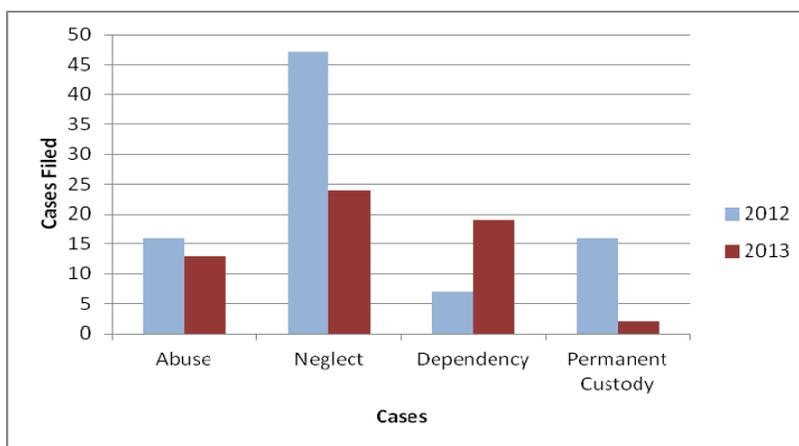
Custody and visitation issues are resolved by applying the legal standard of “best interests of the child.” Child support issues are resolved by applying the Ohio Child Support Guideline Calculation Statute. Modification of custody, child support, and visitation are routinely heard by the Court with the objective of protecting the best interests of the minor children. In 2013, of the 362 total cases filed in the Domestic Relations Division, 267 cases were reactivated and 95 were new cases. These cases consisted of 101 custody and/or visitation; 2 UIFSA; 16 paternity; and 243 involving support enforcement or modification.

## Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency#

The Children Services Division of the Shelby County Department of Job and Family Services is responsible for filing a complaint in Juvenile Court when the Agency discovers child abuse, child neglect, or child dependency. The Juvenile Court hears the cases filed by Children Services and determines whether or not the allegations are true. If the allegations are proven, Children Services must file a case plan that is designed to correct the parental problems. Juvenile Court must either approve or disapprove the proposed case plan.

A child may not be removed from the parental home unless the Juvenile Court is satisfied that the child is in danger. Following removal, the Court seeks to place the child with a relative, if one is available, before placing a child in foster care.

If the parents are successful in completing the case plan, the children are reunited in the parental home. If the parents perform the case plan unsuccessfully, or refuse to perform the case plan, or are unable to perform the case plan, the Juvenile Court has the authority to permanently terminate parental rights. Thereafter the child becomes available for adoption.



# FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Funding Source	Amount Received	Amount Used	Purpose
<b>Shelby County General Fund</b>	646,418	642,800	Court operations, detention, placements
<b>Computer Fees</b>	6,520	3,343	Computer hardware, maintenance & supplies
<b>Special Project Funds</b>	18,400	1,827	Training of staff and related travel expenses
<b>Probation Services Fee</b>	407	386	Probation Department training expenses
<b>Shelby County United Way</b>	17,500	39,541*	Impact Program
<b>State of Ohio Funds</b>			
510 Grant & Reclaim Funds	128,465	145,563*	Probation services
Juvenile Accountability Block Grant	8,729	8,666	Probation after-hours home visits
<b>Federal Funds</b>			
IV-D Funds	31,197	31,197	Child support costs related to Magistrate & Clerks' Office
Byrne Justice Assistance Grant	50,000	50,000	Computer software

**\*When receipts are less than expenditures, accumulated/carry-over funds from previous years are used.**

Revenue collected by Juvenile Court and paid into the General Fund - \$94,470

This report was produced by the Shelby County Juvenile Court a cost of \$1.97 per copy.