

2015
Annual Report



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

2015 Shelby County Juvenile Court Report by Judge William R. Zimmerman

In 2015 the Shelby County Juvenile Court was a very busy court, handling over 1,200 cases involving our youth in Shelby County.



Juvenile Court handles a variety of child related cases, including delinquencies, traffic violations, unruly children, paternity cases, truancy charges and Children Services matters (abuse and neglect cases). Juvenile Court also handles custody cases involving children of unwed parents. Magistrate Jeff Beigel continues to handle the bulk of these custody cases as well as the grandparent visitation and child support enforcement matters.

McKenzie Lotz remains the chief probation officer for the Juvenile Court and is assisted by Dustin Snow, Aja Dugan and Lorie Hurey. Our staff remains active with area youth programming including partnerships with the Family Resource Center (counseling), the Shelby County Animal Shelter (community service work), the Alpha Center (victory garden) and the Salvation Army (Bridging the Gap).

With funding from the Shelby County United Way, the Juvenile Court will start its fifth year with its IMPACT (Imagine Making Positive Accountable Changes Together) program. This prevention program excels in assisting at risk youth and reduces their future involvement in the juvenile justice system. Amy Simindinger, the Juvenile Court liaison officer, remains the director of this excellent program.

Our 2015 successes include:

- We partnered with The Ohio State Highway Patrol and The Ohio State Extension Office by implementing a CARTEENS safety program that provides juvenile traffic offenders with a safer and more responsible approach to driving.
- We started our "Girls Group", a mental health counseling program for young girls to help them with self-esteem issues;
- We continue our tutoring program for at risk kids through our partnership with area teachers. This will keep these children on task with school work during school suspensions.
- We received several state grants to assist with our probation services for children.
- We completed the installation of our new case management system designed to create greater on-line access to Juvenile Court.

I am in my 8th year as Juvenile Judge, and look forward to continued partnerships with law enforcement, schools, social service agencies and community leaders to ensure that children in the Shelby County juvenile justice system will become better citizens and, ultimately, more accountable adults.

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

This year the Shelby County Probation Department served 16 youth in the Resource Room. This allows students to complete school work while serving an out-of-school suspension or to meet with a tutor to recover needed credits. Four youth received tutoring and completed a total of 34 hours.

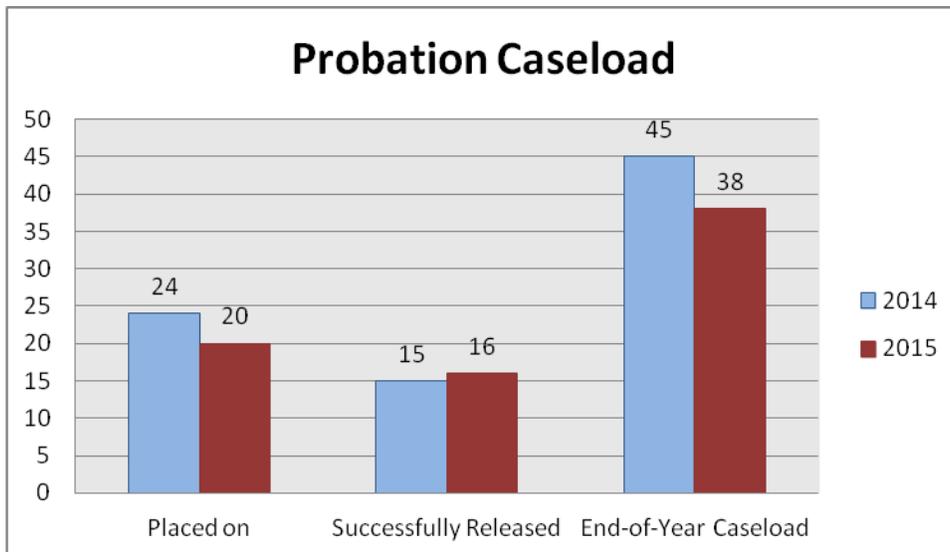
In January, 2015, Shelby County Juvenile Court partnered with Victim Services and their therapist, Michelle Dickman, to provide individual and group counseling services for our female offenders. The participants are taught how to improve social skills, how to form healthier relationships, increase assertiveness, emotional regulation and self-esteem through the use of cognitive behavioral activities. Three groups were held in 2015, and 11 youth completed the program successfully. Michelle also provided individual counseling services to 4 youth.

The annual probation outing was held at Belmar Lanes. Probationers were treated to lunch and spent the afternoon bowling and interacting with probation staff and Judge Zimmerman.



P.O. Dustin Snow gives bowling tips

Our continued partnership with the Shelby County Sheriff's Department enabled the Probation Department to conduct 541 home checks or approximately 8 visits per shift worked.



Court/School Liaison

Shelby County Juvenile Court and the Shelby County School systems continue to utilize a Court/School Liaison. The Liaison serves as a coordinator between the two systems, ensuring those working commonly with a student or family are informed of court orders, educational plans, disciplinary issues, and that both entities work together toward end goals in each situation. Amy Simindinger has served as the Liaison for five years.

Mrs. Simindinger monitors a caseload of students assigned by the Juvenile Court Judge. These youth have come into court on various charges but through a records review, it is also determined they have difficulties in the areas of school attendance, academic achievement, school behavior, or in many cases, a combination of all three. In 2015, the Liaison directly served 44 youth from the Fairlawn, Jackson Center, Sidney City, Botkins, and Anna School Districts, the Upper Valley Career Center and the Mac-a-Cheek program.

Mrs. Simindinger also serves as the truancy officer for 7 of the 8 school districts in Shelby County as well as the Upper Valley Career Center, and provides consultation to all 8 school districts upon request. These consultation services have included assisting several school districts with obtaining custody documents and/or birth certificates due to an increase in adults attempting to enroll youth in school without proper documentation. She continues to attend expulsion hearings upon request of school districts to ensure communication between the court and schools when charges are also filed, as well as provide access to resources for the youth and their family.

The program saw new challenges in 2015 with several agencies seeing referrals for youth at the elementary level. Mrs. Simindinger provided consultation to several districts, attending RTI/IEP meetings, planning sessions and other meetings upon request to provide services to these youth and their families.

Mrs. Simindinger continued to assist Sidney City Schools in the development of a team of internal staff members and external agency representatives. The SCAT team (Sidney City Assessment Team) met regularly in 2015, working to identify students who are facing court involvement, struggling with home challenges, or experiencing behavioral issues in the school setting.

Mrs. Simindinger collaborated with the Shelby County Prosecutor's office to develop an informational presentation on sexting. The Juvenile Court Prosecutor and Liaison spoke to youth and staff in Shelby County schools on the legal and social ramifications of sexting activities. The presentation was very well received and continues to be available to schools as needed.

In 2015 Judge Zimmerman and Mrs. Simindinger met with every Shelby County District Superintendent to review available services, address any new needs or issues and develop a plan for presentation of information to the student population. They also provided consultation on the Court/School Liaison program to Van Wert, Logan and Paulding Counties.

Mrs. Simindinger attends the Shelby County Diversion Assistance Team meetings, Family and Children First meetings, and Community Services Council meetings.

IMPACT Program

December 2015 marked the fourth year of the IMPACT program, a unique and proactive collaborative program in Shelby County. Partnership between the Shelby County Juvenile Court, Shelby County School Systems and the United Way continues to be the driving force behind the success of the program. The Court/School Liaison serves as the director for the IMPACT program.

The program goal is to identify students in the preschool through middle school age range who are facing obstacles which have the potential to have a negative impact on future success. These issues can include academic, social, or mental health challenges and students are often struggling in multiple areas. Referrals for the program are received through the school systems in Shelby County as well as Juvenile Court. Administrators, guidance counselors and classroom teachers are the typical starting point for referral into the program. Expulsion officers also have the opportunity to utilize the program in lieu of expulsion for youth who require intense intervention.

Juvenile Court continues to contract with Family Resource Center of Northwest Ohio to provide services to families enrolled in the program. Families currently participating in the program are receiving individual and family counseling, case management, drug and alcohol counseling, anger management, and psychiatric services. In some cases, the situation becomes so complex that in-home coaching is provided to the family.

In 2015, 73 youth were referred to the program, with 56 of them moving forward to be enrolled in the program. Of the referrals received, two-thirds was for males. We also saw an increase of referrals in the kindergarten through 5th grade range, with 37 of the 73 youth referred falling in that category.

Throughout the later months of 2015, multiple agencies in Shelby County saw an increased request for assistance and services in youth at the elementary level. In order to best support the school districts and students, the IMPACT program made the decision to develop and implement an in-school social skills groups. Each quarter, a group of up to 8 students per building will participate in a weekly group program designed to address common classroom behavioral issues such as personal space, listening skills, coping with distractions and frustrations. This program is being piloted in 3 Shelby County elementary buildings during the final quarter of this school year, with plans to offer the program county wide as funding allows.

The IMPACT program is provided at no cost to families; the program is fully funded by Shelby County United Way. Insurance status and income are not factors when determining eligibility for the program. Youth and their families may receive services for one year or until the end of the child's 8th grade year, whichever comes first. In 2015, 768.2 hours of service were provided to Shelby County families through this program.

Rehabilitative Programs – Incarceration - Placements

Rehabilitative Programs

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. 199 days completed in 2015

Community Service – Youth perform community service for charitable organizations, school and churches. 504 hours completed in 2015

West Central Juvenile Day Treatment – This program provides alternative schooling, GED preparation and living skills to adjudicated youth. 2 youth placed in 2015

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. 10 youth completed in 2015

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. 24 youth completed in 2015

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. 15 youth and 14 parents completed in 2015

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. 19 youth completed alcohol & drug counseling and 62 youth completed mental health counseling in 2015

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. 13 youth completed in 2015

Placements

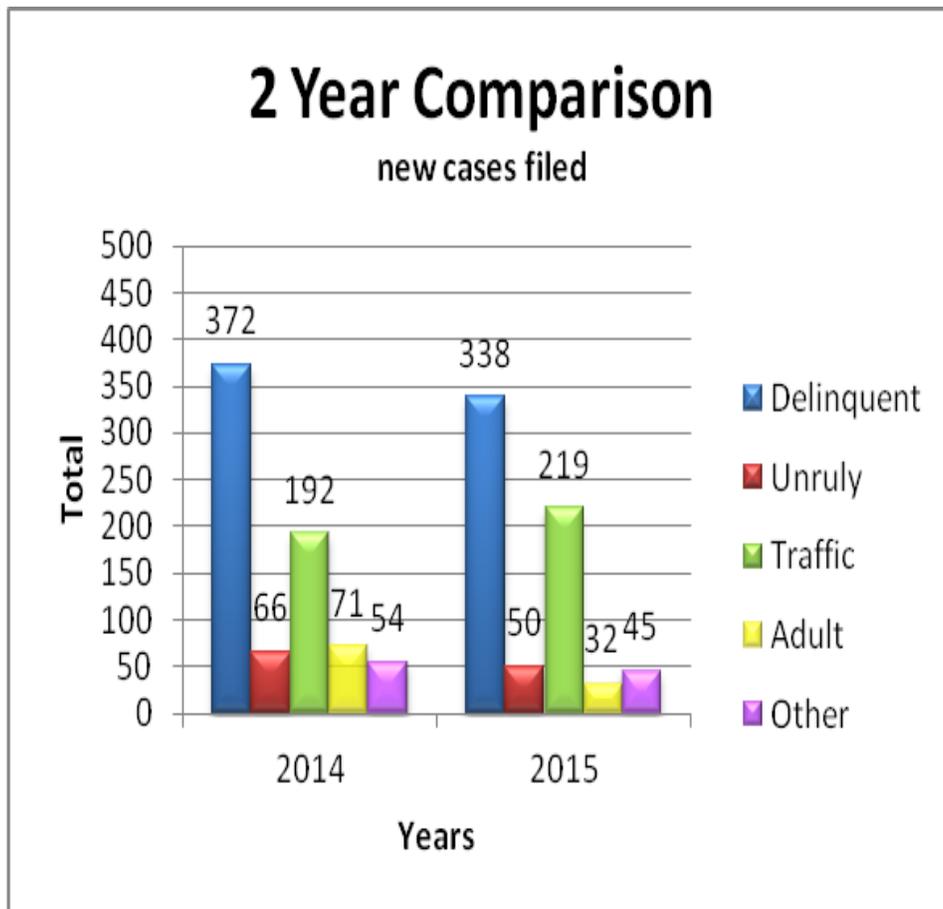
Clear Creek Farm – Children placed with this agency live in family-styled units, residence for 8 to 10 kids cared for by house parents 24 hours a day. Children are expected to participate in the family unit by doing chores and sharing responsibilities, helping with meals, doing their own laundry, and 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 2015

Incarceration

DYS – The Department of Youth Services is the juvenile corrections system for the State of Ohio operating three juvenile facilities with five regional parole offices. 1 youth were placed in 2015

Rehabilitation – There are twelve Community Corrections Facilities (CCFs) established throughout the State of Ohio to provide a dispositional alternative to Juvenile Judges when committing youth adjudicated of a felony offense to the Department of Youth Services. Youth receive cognitive behavioral therapy with the focus on thinking errors. 5 youth were placed in 2015

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. 80 youth were placed and 2,325 bed days were used in 2015



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 2015, of the 219 traffic violations filed with the Court, the bureau processed 26 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.

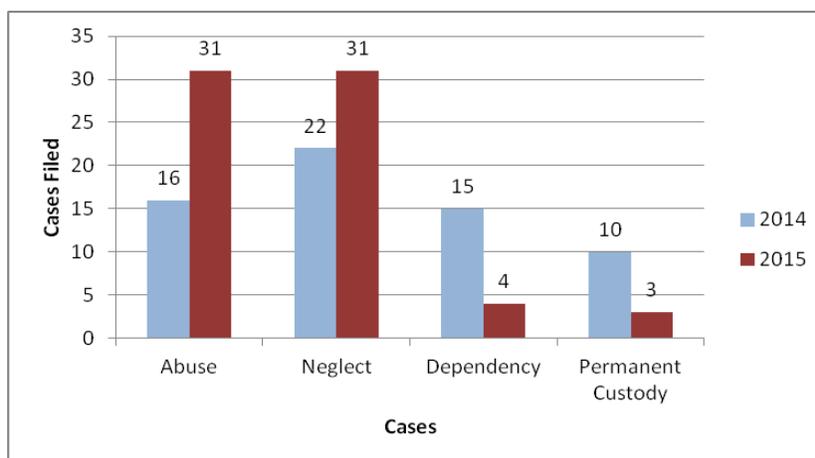
Custody and visitation issues are resolved by applying the legal standard of “best interests of the child.” Child support issues are resolved by applying the Ohio Child Support Guideline Calculation Statute. Modification of custody, child support, and visitation are routinely heard by the Court with the objective of protecting the best interests of the minor children. In 2015, of the 371 total cases filed in the Domestic Relations Division, 247 cases were reactivated and 124 were new cases. These cases consisted of 122 custody and/or visitation; 1 UIFSA; 16 paternity; and 232 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
Shelby County General Fund	679,721	653,276	Court operations, detention, placements
Computer Fees	6,362	13,557*	Computer hardware, maintenance & supplies
Special Project Funds	47,552	21,664	Training of staff, travel expenses, interpreter fees, computer hardware & software
Probation Services Fee	556	452	Probation Department training expenses, probationer activities
Shelby County United Way	55,000	30,481	Impact Program
State of Ohio Funds			
510 Grant & Reclaim Funds	203,875	237,047*	Probation services, residential treatment, GPS monitoring
Juvenile Accountability Block Grant	7,400	5,300	Group & individual therapy for female offenders
Supreme Court of Ohio – Technology Grant	37,821	37,821	Computer hardware & software
Federal Funds			
IV-D Funds	41,619	41,619	Child support costs related to Magistrate & Clerks' Office
*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 - \$54,484			

This report was produced by the Shelby County Juvenile Court a cost of \$2.10 per copy.