

Message from the Director

Greetings from the Justice Center! As always, it is quite busy at our center with numerous projects underway. I recently returned from a workshop in Washington, DC where I spoke about corrections and rehabilitation to a group that targets Central American prison system directors. This was a great opportunity to share research findings with an international audience.

PENN STATE JUSTICE CENTER FOR RESEARCH

Doris L. MacKenzie, Director
Gary Zajac, Managing Director

Another highlight of this semester will undoubtedly be a visit from Dr. Cathy Spatz Widom as part of the Justice Center's Distinguished Lecture Series. Dr. Widom is an expert on child abuse and neglect. See below for more details on her lecture.

We are also excited to begin a new project that follows up on our work from the Child Sexual Abuse Conference. We hope to prepare a series of online lectures from the Conference material to re-engage with our conference attendees and continue our efforts to progress evidence-based research in the area of child sexual abuse. Please read on to find out what else is on *The Docket* this month at the Justice Center.

Professor Doris MacKenzie

Justice Center Director Speaks at Corrections Workshop

Justice Center Director, Doris MacKenzie, was invited to speak at a workshop hosted by The Capacity of the State Division of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Washington, DC on March 21st. The purpose of the workshop was to continue IDB's ongoing efforts to support the strengthening and reform of the corrections systems in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Professor MacKenzie spoke about "Measuring Success and Effectiveness in Corrections and Rehabilitation." This event brought together corrections experts with the goal of providing national prison system directors of South and Central America with valuable information for implementing effective prison and corrections systems in their countries.

Dr. Cathy Spatz Widom to speak at Criminology Forum

The Justice Center is pleased to welcome Dr. Cathy Spatz Widom as part of the Center's Distinguished Lecture Series. Dr. Widom, a distinguished professor in the department of Psychology at John Jay College, is a well-known expert on the causes and consequences of child abuse and neglect. Dr. Widom will be speaking on **April 15th at 12:00 PM at the Pasquerilla Center Memorial Lounge.**

Her talk will describe the long-term consequences of childhood abuse and neglect across a broad range of outcomes. This lecture is co-sponsored by the Penn State Network on Child Protection and Well-Being, SSRI, Child Study Center, Prevention Research Center, and the Crime, Law & Justice Program of the Department of Sociology. We hope to see you there!

Marcellus Shale research featured in PA County News

Excerpts from the Justice Center's report by Managing Director Gary Zajac on Marcellus Shale drilling and crime trends were recently featured in the March/April 2013 edition of *Pennsylvania County News* magazine. This publication from the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania serves as a source of information about county and local government issues to over 1,500 readers. The content of the article reiterates the findings of the Justice Center's study, which indicate that there is no clear association between Marcellus Shale drilling and criminal activity.

TED Talks: Moving Forward with Conference Material

In recognition of the six-month anniversary of the Child Sexual Abuse Conference as well as April being *National Child Abuse Prevention Month* and *Sexual Assault Awareness Month*, Justice Center researchers are in the early stages of a new project to re-engage with conference attendees and the general public. Research Scholar, Ian Elliott, proposes to develop a series of interactive online lessons related to child sexual abuse from the recordings of the talks given at the conference. He plans to disseminate the material through TED-ED, which is an online tool that can be used for interactive lessons, quizzes, and forums for discussion. Dr. Elliott plans to monitor the website's activity to determine the interest in the material and gather feedback for future development.

Rural Prisoner Reentry Challenges

Justice Center managing director, Gary Zajac, recently submitted the final draft report for the Rural Reentry project, funded by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania. This study looked at the challenges faced by prisoners as they return to rural areas of Pennsylvania. The Justice Center surveyed 44 county jail wardens to learn more about the services available to inmates upon their release back into the community. Results indicated that the most critical reentry needs for returning rural inmates were assistance with employment, housing, and transportation. There were also very few programs that addressed ex-offenders' thinking, decision making skills, and problem solving skills; all of which are strongly associated with recidivism reduction.

NAS Paper Update

Doris MacKenzie and Gary Zajac submitted their summary of the literature entitled: "What Works in Corrections: The Impact of Correctional Interventions on Recidivism" to the National Academies of Science.

This extensive review covers decades of research on a wide variety of correctional interventions as well as the history and theory of offender rehabilitation and the psychological and sociological aspects of rehabilitation. Next steps for this project will involve making revisions to their review once the first round of feedback is returned.

COSA – Sex Offender Reentry Program

Research Scholar, Ian Elliott and Research Assistant, Courtney Meyer have completed four out of the five site visits for the Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) evaluability assessment. During the visits, they have interviewed COSA program staff members as well as the volunteers who work directly with the offenders. The data collected from these interviews provide valuable information about each site's application of the COSA model, actual program operations, data management capabilities, and potential challenges to evaluation. The results of this assessment will inform NIJ as to which sites are best prepared for further evaluation.

Coming up on The Docket:

- Update on HOPE demonstration field experiment
- Justice Center launches new website
- Response to TED Talks

Justice Center for Research

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