

# Racially and Culturally Responsive Alternatives to Detention: Santa Cruz County

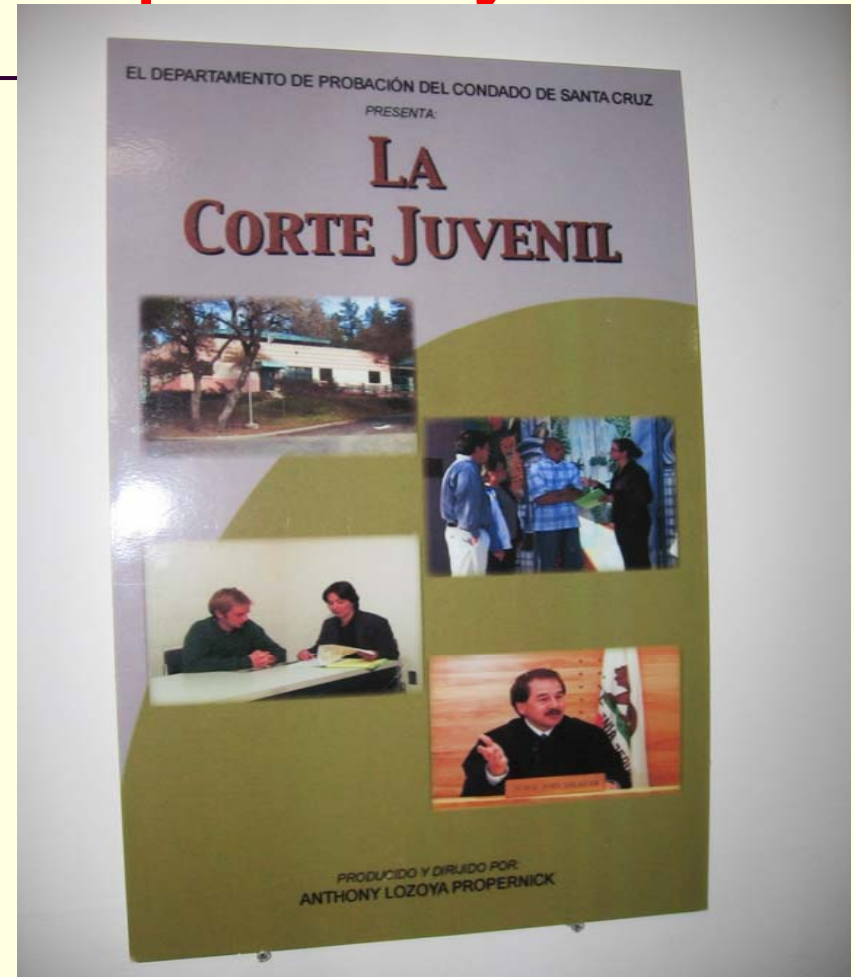
Models for Change  
DMC Action Network  
October 25, 2007

# Setting the Stage for Competency

- The foundation of the organization is your staff
- Who are you serving and does your staff reflect that?
- Santa Cruz County Probation: 44% Bilingual/Bicultural (26% for Santa Cruz County)
  - Deputy Probation I and II: 42%
  - DPO III: 15%
  - Administration: 38%
  - Probation Aide: 66%
  - Reception: 66%
  - Juvenile Hall: 50%
- Does your agency have Standards of Latino Accessibility?

# The Basics of Competency

- Are your forms in Spanish?
  - We have contracted out and have forms translated into Spanish
    - How do you translate technical court jargon?
    - Who is your audience
  - Program Brochures in Spanish
  - Juvenile Hall materials in Spanish
- Juvenile Court Video-English and Spanish



# Cultural Competency-It has to be intentional

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- Programs work towards being culturally competent by:
  - Staffing the program with adults who are bilingual and bicultural
  - Staffing the program with adults who have close community ties and life experiences that help them relate to youth
  - Working with several CBOs whose staff members are bilingual and bicultural and closer in age to the youth served

# Placement Screening-The gate to ATD's

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- Parents are not used to having a voice-this is especially true for our Latino families
  - We coach them before hand, explain process, etc
  - We have translators for Spanish Speaking families
  - We ask the families: “ Que es lo que necesitas de nosotros...Como te podemos ayudar?”
    - Families are very used to probation telling them what they are going to do
  - Utilize extended family as much as possible
    - Often through these meetings we learn about an uncle who lives in North Carolina who is willing to take the child

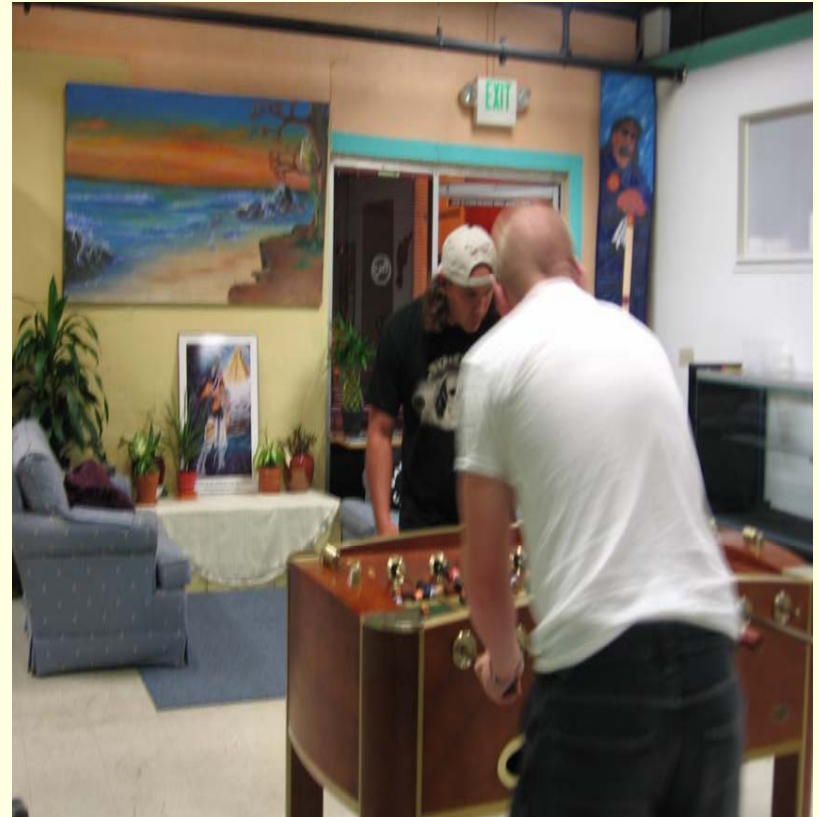
# Good Intentions=Cultural Competency?

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- The rice and beans situation
  - Needed a catering service for EC
  - The “food subcommittee” began holding meetings- Young UCSC student was the lead
  - Several vendors were contacted
    - Indonesian
    - Vegan
    - Vegetarian
    - Where’s the tamales, arroz y frijoles?
- “Rice and beans are so bad for you...all the fat and lard...these kids need to be exposed to a healthier diet..”
- Staff and kids grew up on rice and beans - were insulted
- Balanced approach - health education

# Youth Competency-Youth is a culture in itself

- Research their taste-music, hobbies, ways of thinking- Don't forget that all of us were youth
- Having advocates that are “youthful”
  - Not necessarily in age, but in their perspective and service delivery
    - Meet youth in public places
    - Buy them a smoothie
- Youth advocates should promote youth development, involvement and leadership
- Include youth every step of the way in program design



# Targeting Issues Impacting Youth of Color

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- Health education
- Obesity is a health issue among some Latino Youth
  - Fast food is cheap and fills you-Talks about sugars, lard
  - Food stamps-buy tons of food at beginning of month and then are out with 1 week left to go
- Talk about importance of exercise
  - Poor youth don't have money to sign up for sports teams
  - Not many parks
  - Not Lots to do
- Immigration Rallies
- Talk about current events that impact them
  - No one is talking to them about entrepreneurship
  - The environment
  - Natural resources
  - Basic conflict management
- The youth are smart, they can understand the issues

# Use of Language

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- During groups keep language accessible to youth
  - English is a second language for many of our clients
  - Some youth feel more comfortable speaking Spanish
  - When you speak Spanish, remember to speak the Spanish that our clients speak
    - Not necessarily “Castillian” Spanish.

# Who, What, Where and Why

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- The Luna Evening Center
  - Developed as a response to:
    - Gap in continuum of services
    - Need for intensive services
- Nuevo Camino/New Path
  - Probation youth in the northern part of the county cycled in and out of detention for:
    - non-violent charges
    - probation violations
    - Youth were escalated onto more intensive caseloads

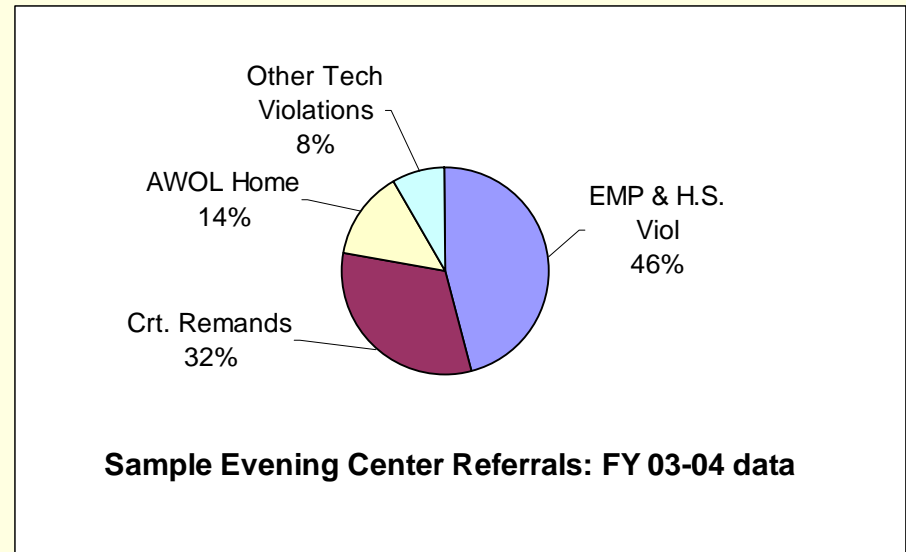
# Who, What, Where and Why- Camino Nuevo/New Paths

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- Questions: Who would the programs serve?
  - Who are the youth – age, ethnicity, gender, drug and alcohol involvement, gang issues, geographical location, economic status?
  - What services are currently available?
  - What services are being utilized?
- Tracked probation violations that resulted in detention
  - Probation violation petition study: examined reasons for violations
  - Used data to identify and respond to a gap in the continuum

# Support the need for a program with facts

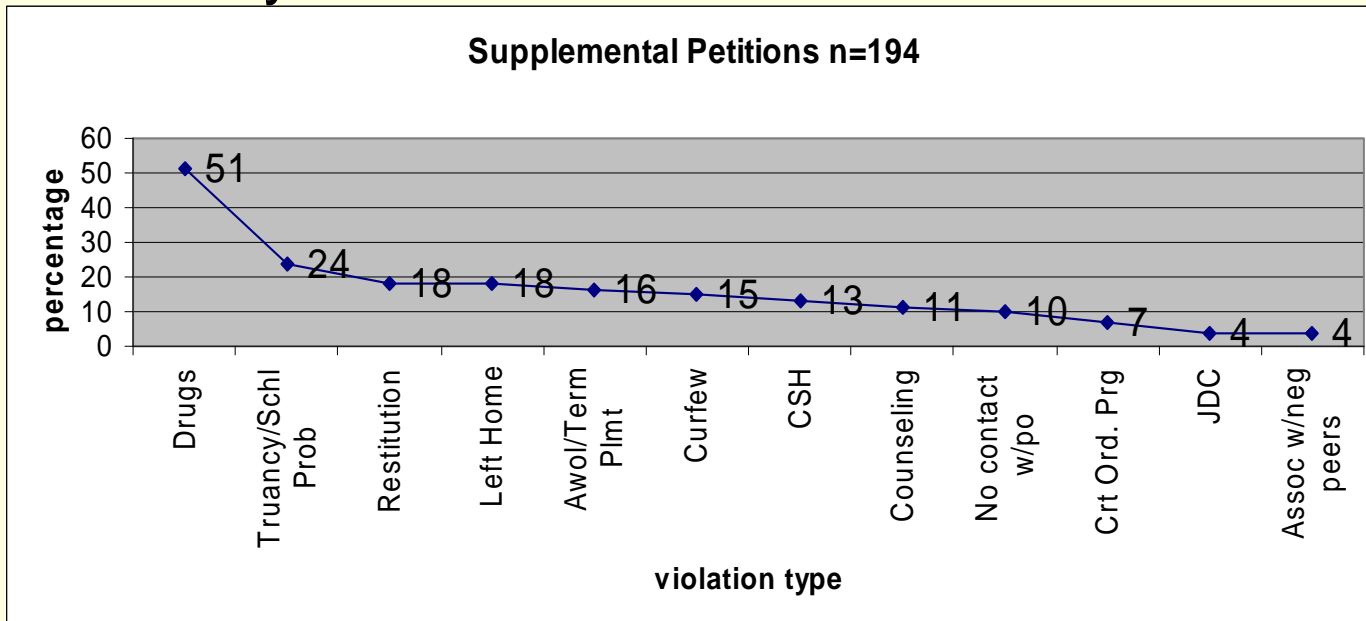
- 892 FY 03-04 detentions
- 144 or 16% could have been diverted.
  - Court Remands
  - EMP and Home Supervision Violations
  - Violations for non compliance (drug use, failure to comply with special programs, etc)
  - Return on warrants for absconding from home



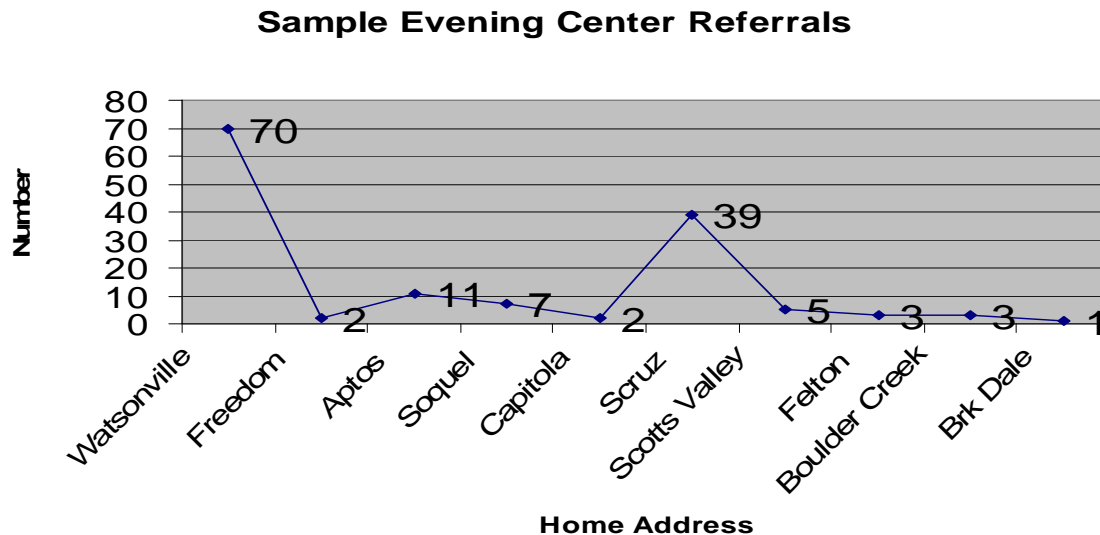
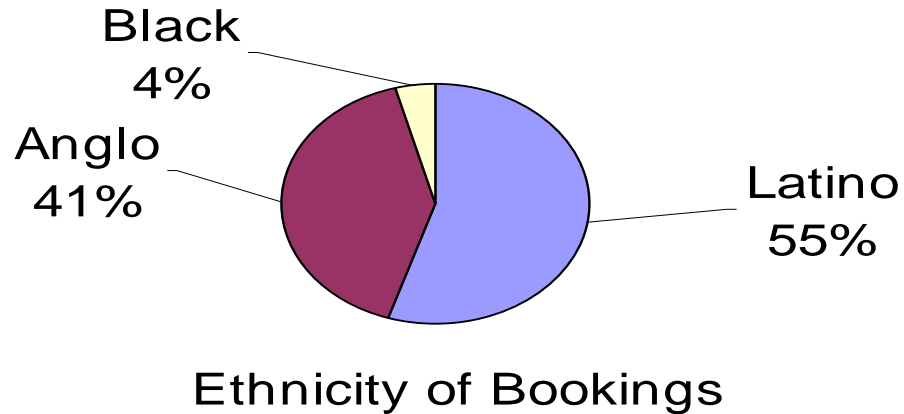
*Always asking ourselves:  
“where are they from,  
what is ethnicity...?”*

# Petition Study: What needs to be addressed at the program?

- 5 month sample-194 petitions
- Predicting reason for referral
  - High rate of suspensions, expulsions in South County



# DMC-Where do you open a program?



# Analysis of Booking Data Through an “Ethnic Lens”

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- Of the 144 cases, 76 or 52% were from the South County area.
  - 6 square mile area (County is 600 square miles)
- Of the total youth from South County, 57 or 75% were Latino.
- The Evening Center in Watsonville could potentially serve a high number of Latinos, thereby diverting some of them from the Juvenile Hall.

# Setting up Your Program-Location

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- In a Community Setting-Nuevo Camino at Barrios Unidos is an established community center.
  - Youth come back to program when they are done and just hang out
- Neutral
  - Consider safety
  - Transportation
- LUNA EC is easily accessed by youth and families in Watsonville
  - Family meetings
  - Counselors can “find” their clients, connect with youth

# Now You Know Who to Serve, What Next?

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- Convene a group of stakeholders – not just the usual suspects. Include CBO's, schools, youth voices
- Agree on the desired outcome – be specific.  
Example: “We want north county probation youth to stop escalating in the JJ system for minor offenses and probation violations.”
- Agree on a menu of evidence based interventions.
- Agree that the service delivery must be culturally competent.
- Look at who is currently providing good services to this population.
- Have vision and explore who could provide more services to this population.

# Planning Process

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- Consensus process – interdisciplinary team met many, many, many times.
- People who received NO funding stayed at the table and helped design program
- Took inventory of realistic goals for all partners and determined what resources would be required. The process **MUST** be transparent. Everyone at the table knew what each partner was responsible for, what level of funding they would receive, and why.

# Once the needs are identified...

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- Where will the \$\$\$\$ come from?
  - Easy (and not so good for kids) way – Probation keeps most \$, gives some to the local mental health agency, creates a few small community based contracts and serves youth in a traditional correction and medical model.
  - More difficult (and better for kids) way – REALLY look at gaps in system and find out which youth need increased services to keep from escalating in the JJ system. DATA, DATA, DATA.

# Government Trap

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- Government agencies often “chase the money” without clearly knowing where services need to be targeted. KNOW your population and what their needs are. Make sure that funding streams are consistent with your agencies mission and values.

# Good Collaborative Process=Increase Chances of Funding

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- Over \$500,000 awarded to culturally competent community based organizations. Many people said this proposal would never succeed because of the large CBO contracts instead of the local mental health agency.
- Result: Grant ranked #2 out of 37 counties funded in California.
- The same people who were pessimistic are now asking for advice.

# Planning Committee Goals

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- The “team” had had a voice in developing the program from the ground up
  - Reviewed existing data to show who, what, and why
  - We recognized in South County that we serve high number of Latino youth
  - Defined each partners role in the program
  - Developed the schedule, polices and procedures
    - Formed subcommittees
  - Trainings
  - Mission statement

# Luna Evening Center

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## ■ **PURPOSE**

- The Evening Center Program serves a maximum of 10 probation wards at any given time.
- It is a response to probation violations for youth who are in need of additional supervision and structure for a brief period of time (between 12 and 30 days).
- A youth may be ordered to attend the Evening Center as often as the Court deems this alternative appropriate.
- Staffed by personnel from the Probation Department, Children's Mental Health/Alcohol and Drug Program and community based agency staff.
- The program targets youth who are struggling with drug and alcohol issues, failing to comply with conditions of probation and/or committing new offenses.

# Lessons Learned

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- Think outside traditional partnerships;
- Build and cultivate relationships;
- Keep the trust in the relationships – be transparent and honest;
- Truly understand and honor what each partner brings to the collective; Remember that what works best for kids should always be a path explored;
- TAKE A RISK !!! You might be pleasantly surprised.