

Juvenile Del.

County Probation Department Tries New Delinquent Rehabilitation Plan

By Wallace Wood
Sentinel Staff Writer

An experimental juvenile delinquency program aimed at keeping a youthful offender at home instead of locked away in a hall, a foster "home" or an institution has been announced by the county probation department.

Some 10 youths who were in foster homes, juvenile hall, or the like have been taken out and put in the demonstration project, the department said in revealing the new Community-Based Treatment Program.

Under court order, the youths spend half a day in vocational training at Goodwill Industries, and the other half-day attending a special school on the Goodwill grounds operated by Tony LoBue of the County Office of Education.

At the same time, deputy probation officer Robert Wandruff is working with the families of the youths, trying to bring out the changes that will redirect the downhill lives of delinquents. Wandruff is chief supervisor of the program.

In short, these professionals are trying to short-circuit the

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explosive cycle that leads from crime to hall to "youth camp," to home, and back to crime again. Substitute the word "prison" for hall or youth camp in the cases of many repeat offenders and you have the vicious circle.

As a lucky side effect for the citizen who bears the cost of such training, the probation department says the program costs less — dramatically less — than the usual foster home or institutional routine.

Even the youths get something besides a new set of teachers and a chance to stay home: they are paid a minimum of \$1.35 per hour, partly subsidized by the Neighborhood Youth Corps.

Of course, most of it goes for lunches, clothes, haircuts, and

to help their parents pay back the cost of the vocational training they get.

"For some time, workers in the field of juvenile correction have understood that the greatest contributing factor to delinquency are the inability of parents to understand their child's problems, the lack of available alternatives for juveniles to make constructive use of their time and to earn money of their own," probation officer Wandruff says. School problems usually grow out of these other problems, he adds.

The program is named "The Community - Based Treatment Program" because it keeps the training in the community and not in some state institution.

Delinquents attend the Goodwill school five days a week,

working under the staff there and under the Rev. Duane Adamson for individual counseling.

Then they attend a half-day of school under LoBue. On Saturday, Wandruff and adult volunteers have set up a work and recreation program. Sunday is a day at home.

The 10 youths involved in the pilot project were screened first by psychologist Dr. Catherine Field and Martin Rappaport of the county's Mental Health Services outpatient clinic. Dr. Field helped design the project and will be a consultant to the Rev. Mr. Adamson, LoBue and Wandruff.

On the money side, Wandruff estimates the program costs about \$156 a month per student. This compares with the state

institutional rate of about \$275 per month and \$100 to \$110 for foster homes.

"When it is considered that this cost includes the costs of supervision, counseling and guidance programs, classroom maintenance, transportation, and other items ordinarily added to the cost of institutional placements, it will be noted that a dramatic savings of public money is realized here," Wandruff says.

Of course, parents who can afford it are expected to help repay the county.

It's another way of trying to break the delinquency chain that destroys a youth. Current juvenile correctional practices are costly, and the risk is high — too high — in terms of youth and society, the department admits.

HAPPY VALLEY MEETING

Happy Valley School trustees will discuss purchase of a new bus and hear a report on the new Robert English series when they meet Monday at 7:30 p.m. at the school, 3125 Branciforte Drive.