

# The Condition of Probation

## The Condition of Probation

<b>Chief's Corner</b>	1
<b>A new Day Dawns in the Field</b>	2
<b>Where Did They Go?</b>	3
<b>Mr. Roary goes to New Jersey</b>	4
<b>Making Probation Work for High Risk</b>	6
<b>Nicki Kuhn Retires</b>	7

## Juvenile Probation Reaches Out

By Selina Johnson

The Juvenile Division, in conjunction with Community Mental Health and other social service providers that work in the Canal area of San Rafael, recently conducted an informational session on juvenile justice with members of the community. The idea was to de-mystify the world of probation by inviting people to a presentation on how the juvenile justice system operates. On September 28, at Health and Human Services' Canal campus in San Rafael, Probation Department staff described the different units, programs and services one encounters in juvenile justice. The presentation was conducted in Spanish, with translation to English for those in need of that service. A significant portion of the presentation focused on providing audience members with information about the gang issue in Marin County, which has become very serious in the last few years. After the presentation, there was time allotted to questions and answers, and general discussion. Probation staff who presented included myself (Selina Johnson), Yuliana Valenzuela, Jeana Reynolds, Mariano Zamudio, Hugo Araica, Nuvia Urizar and John Dury.



During the event, the Probation Department also recognized Angela Are-

**Mariano Zamudio listening to the presentations**

Continued on pg. 3

## Chief's Corner

By Michael Daly

On October 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> this year, the Marin County Probation Department's Managerial Team met for a two day workshop to review and address the internal and external issues this Department is facing. I also felt that some guiding principles should be established now that a new Chief, Chief Deputy, Juvenile Division Director, Business Manager and four new Supervisors were promoted within the last year. I believe our Department has accomplished many goals going back a number of years that have served to ground us for the future. Because of this, I also believe we are on our way to becoming a great organization, one that will be viewed as one of the very best in the

state. During the recent retreat, the Management Team examined ourselves from a number of different angles, scanned the external and internal challenges facing the Department and came up with some guiding principles we can all hold ourselves accountable to as we move the Department forward. The objectives of the workshop were clear. We were to:

- a) Enhance communication within the management team, between management and the rest of the Department and between the Department and our "customers."
- b) Develop a common understanding of the challenges, opportunities, strengths and areas of need for improvement for

the Department .

c) Create a work plan to facilitate the Department's becoming a "High-Performance Correctional Organization."

I started the day by addressing the team with three of the attributes that I believe will help us to get to where we need to go. The first was "**Attitude.**" We are in charge of this and therefore we have total control of it. We need to lead by example, be positive, mission-driven and put service to the community and to our Department employees first and at the forefront. The power of attitude can not be understated, and it can be a

Continued on pg. 5

## Mission Statement

*The mission of the Marin County Probation Department is to reduce the impact of crime in the community by providing accurate and comprehensive information to the courts, by providing community based sanctions and treatment for offenders, and by working cooperatively with law enforcement agencies and community organizations with similar objectives.*



Our Department has evolved from one that allowed, even encouraged, a variety of strategies and approaches for working with probationers, to one that now seeks to standardize and employ best practices and then ensure that all staff are using them. One example of this is field work, where staff engage with their probationers outside of the office, whether that be the home, job site, counseling program, or just a neutral site in the public. In the past, our Department had a variety of definitions of “field work.” In the Adult Division, this was frequently done through the Parole Unit, which conducted home visits often and well. In the Juvenile Division, most of the field work took place in schools, which created an excellent partnership between the schools and our Department. Today, however, the Department has taken field work to a new level, and is seeking to standardize how it is done, not only across Divisions, but staff as well. There are four key areas in which field work is becoming both more consistent, and more effective.

#### *Reduced Caseloads*

As has been done in many jurisdictions, our Department has re-organized caseloads and emphasized the need to create high-risk probationer caseloads that allow staff to conduct meaningful work with people. This not only indicates alignment with the risk principle of evidence-based practices, it also creates

capacity to do the type of intensive work we expect of our staff.

#### *Improved Training and Safety Equipment*

The days of walking out of the office and into the field, carrying only a cell phone, a good set of inter-personal skills, good intentions and the best of luck, are over. The reality that we are now supervising only high risk offenders, and we expect more of that supervision to take place outside the safe confines of our office rather than inside, means we are compelled to prepare for the unlikely event of a threat to officer safety. Our Department has invested heavily in this effort, purchasing equipment such as personalized (ballistic) vests, equipping staff with OC, using field radios, and training in weaponless defense.

#### *Coordination with Law Enforcement*

For many years, COPE (Coordination of Probation Enforcement) was the primary vehicle offering collaboration between the Probation Department and the major police jurisdictions of the County. The Probation Department initially helped to staff COPE with a deputy probation officer, but, until recently, had not done so since 1998. Presently, using grant funds obtained by the Sheriff’s Department, a deputy probation officer is co-located with this Unit. This is simply the clearest, but not the only, example of the increased efforts at coordinating with local law enforcement. Now better equipped and trained to work in the field, deputy probation officer staff have been conducting operations in tandem with law enforcement agencies. These operations often involve compliance efforts for high risk offenders, such as gang members, sex offenders, and drug sales. The purpose of the effort is to ensure accountability and public safety.

## **A New Day Dawns in the Field**

**By Kevin Lynch**

Although there has been a learning curve for some staff in these new activities, the operations have been very successful to date.

#### *Balancing Field Work with Evidence-Based Practices*

While new to parts of our Department, much of what has been described to this point is actually fairly common place for other agencies that have recognized the importance of being a presence in the community. However, where our Department expects to cover less-charted territory is in ensuring balance in this new effort. Simultaneously moving down the path towards developing competency in both field work and research-supported strategies for supervising offenders is a tricky task, and one which will require constant feedback. One of the key elements of an evidence-based strategy for working with high risk offenders is the notion of establishing a relationship of trust between the probationer and probation officer. Contacting people in the field, whether during a search coordinated with local law enforcement, on a home visit, or over a cup of coffee at Starbucks, are an opportunity to establish and maintain a relationship in a more natural environment than an office.

Our Department believes staff must be equally capable of assessing a high risk probationer’s criminogenic needs, as they are in conducting a search of their residence. Staff must feel equally comfortable conducting a cursory search for weapons as they would be developing a case plan addressing criminogenic needs. These are difficult, complex, but not exclusive, sets of skills.

I’m 10-70D (radio lingo meaning “done for the day”)!

## Juvenile Probation Opens Dialogue with Local Communities (from pg. 1)...

nas, of Community Mental Health, for her tireless and inspiring efforts in helping youth and families in Marin County.

The Probation Department expects to conduct similar meetings in other neighborhoods of Marin County. Reaching out directly to communities to explain what services the Department offers will go a long way in improving collaboration, and outcomes for youth and families.



**Hugo Aracia presenting**



**Nuvia Urizar presenting**



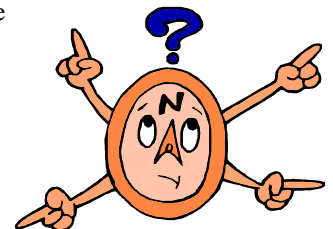
**Angela Arenas, being presented with her recognition award by Mariano Zamudio and Selina Johnson**



**Selina Johnson, Angela Arenas, Nuvia Urizar, Jon Dury, Mariano Zamudio, Jeana Reynolds, Yuliana Valenzuela, Hugo Araica presenters at the Canal Outreach**

## Where Did They Go?

Abby Dennett and Melissa Davis switched positions. Abby now represents the Probation Department in Family Violence Court, and is part of the Field Supervision Unit of the Adult Division. Melissa has transferred to the Intake Unit of the Juvenile Division.





## Mr. Roary Goes to New Jersey

By Kevin Lynch



OK, most people reading this article have never heard of the movie "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," and it probably has very little to do with the content of this article anyway. I needed a catchy lead in title, and this is the best I could do!

Darnell Roary, the Juvenile Division Director, represented our Department at the 2010 conference on Disproportionate Minority Contact, or DMC. The conference, titled "Fundamental Fairness: Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice," brought professionals from around the country to New Jersey to share and learn about this important issue. Using funds from our technical assistance grant, the Department sent a team of staff from a variety of partner agencies to this event:

- Roy Leon, San Rafael PD
- Gerald Jones, Marin County SO
- Lisa Schwartz, Marin County Of-

...fice of Education

- Commissioner Harvey Goldfine, Marin County Courts
- Yvette Martinez-Shaw, Marin County DA
- Ladell Dangerfield, Marin County PD

Our Department is approaching the end of its first year in this grant. We are preparing to begin the second year, in which the focus will be on inviting staff from partner agencies such as those indicated above to look at DMC in their agencies as well and consider how they can contribute to the solution. The hope was that these agencies could begin to understand the issue most easily by taking part in a conference that provided many opportunities for learning about DMC from a variety of perspectives.

The Department's DMC workgroup has been meeting regularly, and one of the primary products of this has been the realization of the need to replace some of our existing decision-making instruments (including both the detention and violation of probation scales). The workgroup, coordinated by recently retired Division Director Nicki Kuhn, will soon prepare a presentation on the progress achieved this year, and develop a work plan for the second year of the three year grant.

For those of you still curious about the 1939 movie "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," it turns out it is pretty relevant to what we are talking about with DMC. Watch this clip, and just try to picture Darnell Roary in Jimmy Stewart's role.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWyEc7FAMTg>

## Today's Draw....Lynn Estrada

By My Tran

Lynn Estrada was born in San Francisco and has lived in the Bay Area her whole life. She started her career with the Probation Department in September 1998 and currently works as an Office Assistant III in the Juvenile Division. Lynn has an extensive list of job duties that include e-mailing court and police reports, maintaining the file room, processing arrest paperwork and citations, purging files, reviewing police reports, sealing of juvenile records, transfer of cases, and communicating with Law Enforcement, Department of Justice and the District Attorney's office.

Lynn is one of two clerks in the Juvenile Division that is the "To-Go" person. Whenever you are in need of assistance she either knows the answer or is willing to help you. Lynn at many times in her career has generously assisted by taking on extra du-

ties, filing reports for Probation Officers at the last minute, etc. She also has a good, warm heart and ear to listen to you when you need someone.

During Lynn's free time, she enjoys spending time with her grandchildren, Jack, age 14, and Andy and David, 9 year old twins. Her grandchildren are the love of her life. She is very close to her grandchildren as the twins usually have sleepovers at her house and spend a lot of time with her and her husband. Lynn's grandchildren have taught her so much about herself and she could not imagine her life not being a grandmother. She enjoys spending the holidays with her grandchildren who bring her so much joy and happiness.

Lynn also enjoys making her famous Toffee candy which is a Christmas tradition. She cooks up batches of candy to give away as gifts. Not only is Lynn famous for her Toffee candy, the Pro-

bation staff mouth's water while eating her Chili Relleno Casserole (see recipe on page 8). Lynn is a wonderful culinary cook who loves to bring joy to many. She also enjoys reading and gardening. Lynn is a wonderful asset to have in our Department.



## Chief's Corner (from pg. 2)...

weapon against some of the big challenges that loom ahead for us. My second important attribute was "Leadership." We need to be knowledgeable, supportive, consistent and responsive to each other and the people we serve better than they ever expected. Lastly, I explained the need for our team to have a dedication to "Continuous Improvement." Being committed to being the best and having the courage to be measured and held accountable for our performance and responsibilities is a quality that will be vital to our efforts.

Leading up to this workshop, the Marin County Probation Department did in fact examine itself. Staff from throughout the Department had participated in surveys such as Probation and Parole Strategies Questionnaire, the Likert Organizational Climate Survey and the Employee Satisfaction Survey. All of management underwent a 360 assessment in which they received feedback not only from their supervisors, but also from peers and direct reports in an anonymous 98 question survey instrument. Each manager had the opportunity to process the results from their 360 evaluation with either their direct supervisor, or with Suzie Cohen, our consultant overseeing this initiative. In addition, many staff in the Department have participated in "Colors" training, which is a personality assessment training that is conducted by a few of our in-house trainers. In addition, we contracted with Suzie Cohen to conduct a focus group with line staff to review results of the surveys.

During the retreat, the management team processed the group profile data that was developed from the individual 360 evaluations. We discussed the group profile's relevance to the Department and noted that two common issue areas arose from the surveys and the 360s – communication and decision making. We began action plans to capitalize on collective strengths and work on collective development needs with regard to those areas, as well as man-

agement styles, and strategies for consistent, productive and effective interactions throughout the Department. Managers also reviewed external issues posed by State and County Budgets, legislative activity and internal issues raised by the Focus Group and others related to the Department's operations. Particular attention was focused on issues of accountability, communication, decision making, buy-in to the Department's mission and direction, and increased positive interactions between management and staff. As a final team commitment that day on October 15<sup>th</sup>, the Department Managerial staff created a charter to adhere to going forward:

*We, the Probation Management Team, strive, through continuous improvement, to make the Department a High Performing Correctional Organization. We hold ourselves accountable to maintain the highest levels of service, professionalism and integrity.*

I am proud of all the work done by our Department to openly address issues, develop a commitment to work on them and always strive for continuous improvement. These issues are intended to serve as the basis for a 2-4 year strategic planning effort which will involve staff at all levels and will incorporate action steps, measurable outcomes and time lines for achieving them. We will soon re-instate our Organizational Development process with Suzie Cohen and include staff to work with the Management Team in making the Marin County Probation Department the best in California.

Have a wonderful Holiday Season everyone!



### **Marin County Probation Department** **2010 Employee Recognition Holiday Party**

**The festivities will be held at**  
**Stonetree Golf Club**  
**Novato, CA**

**The Probation Department promises you will**  
**have a good time. Come and Join us for**

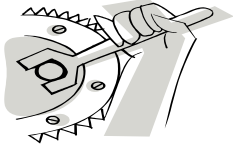
**dinner and dancing!!**

**6:00 p.m for Drinks**

**7:00 p.m For Dinner**

**\$25.00 per person.**

**RSVP to Giuliana at 499-7841**



## Making Probation Work for High Risk Offenders

By Kevin Lynch

Not all people on probation represent the same risk to commit another crime. That seems like a fairly uncontroversial and mundane statement, and it yet it bears repeating: ***not all people on probation represent the same risk to commit another crime.*** The ramifications of that fact have been significant in community corrections, and it is what has driven our Department to re-structure supervision services in both the Adult and Juvenile Divisions over the last few years. Cases that have been determined through an actuarial risk assessment instrument to constitute a greater threat to public safety now receive more attention than all others. However, what our Department needs to do next is to improve the effectiveness of the services we provide to these high-risk probationers. Not all high risk probationers need the same type of intervention. Please allow me to repeat that statement as well: ***not all high risk probationers need the same type of intervention.***

Research in community corrections has indicated that traditional "Intensive Services Units" in probation departments not only do not reduce recidivism, they actually may contribute to it (this fact has led our Department to decide to re-name the "ISU" to "Field Services Unit" to disassociate ourselves as much as possible from what has been an unsuccessful practice). Simply identifying high risk probationers, placing them on reduced caseloads, and then supervising them with traditional monitoring of compliance, and sanctioning violations, is not an effective use of resources. This has become known as the role of "terms and conditions cop," where a probation officer is obsessed with ensuring that a probationer knows and completes their terms and conditions of probation, but consequently, spends very little time addressing the reasons for why the offender was arrested in the first place. What is likely to work better is identifying the crimi-

nogenic needs that are contributing to a probationers' criminal behavior, and addressing those needs. However, not all criminogenic needs are equal. Yes, I am going to repeat that statement: ***not all criminogenic needs are equal.*** Some have more impact on criminal behavior than others. Although many other ideas occur to people intuitively (e.g., poverty, mental health, self-esteem), the eight most "powerful (meaning, if you make an impact in these, you are more likely to change behavior and reduce recidivism)" are the following:

1. Anti-Social Personality
2. Anti-Social Attitudes and Values
3. Pro-Criminal Peers
4. Poor Impulse Control
5. Family/Marital
6. Substance Abuse
7. Recreation/Leisure
8. Education/Employment

What is interesting about the list shown above is that the first four needs are more powerful than the others, and yet there are few programs or interventions established to address those. We all know of referrals that could be made to address substance abuse, or help getting a job. However, what do we do with an "anti-social attitude?" While some programs are starting to appear (such as those that utilize a cognitive-behavioral approach), the expectation has to be that the work to address these issues falls to the probation officer supervising the offender. Our staff will be acquiring a new set of skills designed to help them address these drivers of criminal behavior. It is now incumbent on community corrections professionals to 1) identify the criminogenic need(s) driving the criminal behavior of a pro-

bationer, 2) select 1 - 3 needs that can be addressed, considering both the likely impact and the capacity of the offender to respond and 3) create a case plan that seeks to reduce the probationer's need in this area. By taking these steps, probation officers will have a chance to see better results in their work.

Now for my final "let me repeat that" statement, not all probation departments are created equally. I said, ***"not all probation departments are created equally."*** Some will continue to do business the old-fashioned way, relying on simply referring offenders to treatment programs, keeping close track of compliance with terms and conditions of probation, and sanctioning the inevitable violations as they arise. Those agencies that do not find the time to adopt new approaches to how we conduct our business, will likely never achieve great outcomes. Other departments will align their supervision practices to incorporate research into their day to day work, and they will have better outcomes as a result.

I have heard more than a few times from people that using evidence-based practices takes too much time, and they are too busy doing their tasks (likely, terms and conditions police work) to find the time to change tactics. The sum of this argument is they can not afford to learn and adopt the use of these strategies; I would respond strongly that we can not afford **not** to make this adjustment. Our Department is committed to improving our outcomes, and we will be persistent in our efforts to ensure we are providing service that is effective in changing the behavior of high risk probationers.



## **Nicki Kuhn's Retirement**

**By Michele Boyer**

After 21 years with our Department, and 34 years with the County of Marin, Nicki Kuhn has retired from her position as Director of Juvenile Services. Nicki's career began after her graduation in 1970 with a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology. Her initial professional experience was in Seattle, Washington, where she worked as a social worker in impoverished inner-city communities. She then moved to Houston, Texas in 1972, and went to work for Harris County Child Welfare as a child welfare worker. In 1975, she moved to Marin County, where she initially worked in the District Attorney's office helping collect child support from absent parents, and then later became a welfare fraud investigator. In 1989, Nicki was hired as a deputy probation officer in the Juvenile Division. She began her career in probation supervising the Drake High School caseload, and then moved to Intake and became the Juvenile Division's primary court officer. In 1999, Nicki became supervi-

sor of the Intake Unit, and in 2005, she was promoted to Director. In this role, Nicki was responsible for implementing many important changes in Juvenile Services, including the use structured decision-making instruments, strength-based approaches, and evidence-based practices such as motivational interviewing. She was also instrumental in addressing the issue of Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC), and she will continue to work with our Department part-time as the DMC Coordinator for the foreseeable future.

When asked to reflect on her career, Nicki said that her fundamental interest was working with youth. She has been grateful that our Department has had the benefit of small caseloads, which allow probation officers more time to work with the youth they serve. While Nicki enjoyed the impact she had as a

Director to institute changes in policy, her heart was always in casework. She needed to know what kinds of cases her staff were dealing with and what resources were needed, so she frequently met with them to ask for details about individual cases.

Nicki also made a point to credit former Probation Chief Mike Robak and former Chief Deputy Anne Wooliever, who she feels were catalysts in the progress of our Department. Nicki said she "has had the best career in the Probation Department with great supervisors and wonderfully caring and smart co-workers. It really has been an honor to work in the Probation Department."

Nicki's commitment, enthusiasm, and passion for her work were tremendous assets to the Probation Department, and her impact will remain with us for a long time. We wish her all the best in her retirement!



**Nicki Kuhn and Mary Jane Burke**



**Nicki Kuhn and Ron Ravani**



**The Cultural Responsiveness Committee recognized Nicki for all of her work**

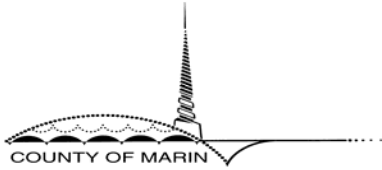


**Teri Taketa-Graham expressively describing her initial thoughts of working for Nicki :-)**

**MARIN COUNTY PROBATION  
DEPARTMENT**

3501 Civic Center Drive Rm. #259  
San Rafael, California  
94903

Phone: 415-499-6599  
Fax: 415-499-3787  
E-mail: Probation@co.marin.ca.us



*The Condition of Probation*

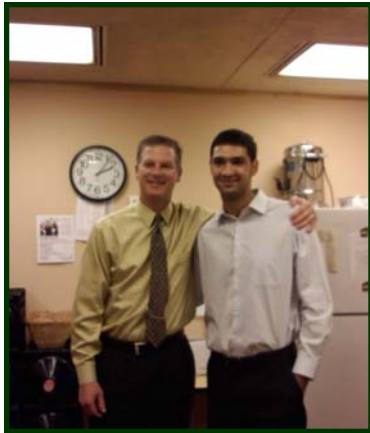
*Marin County Probation Department Newsletter  
Editorial Policy*

*The Condition of Probation* is published quarterly by the Marin County Probation Department. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a forum for communication and the sharing of information. *The Condition of Probation* publishes articles and information related to Mission and Departmental operations & activity. Articles submitted may be edited for content, clarity, or length.

Editorial Board Members

Michael Daly, Matt Perry, Nancy Hillman, Abby Dennett, and Alisha Krupinsky

**Congratulations to our new United States Citizen  
Jesus Contreras!!!!**



**Mike Daly congratulating  
Jesus**



**Jesus slicing the apple pie at his  
celebration ceremony**

**Recipe of the Quarter: Chili Relleno Casserole**

By Lynn Estrada

- 5 – 7 OZ. CANS OF WHOLE CHILIS
- 1 LB. CHEDDAR CHEESE
- 1 LB. MONTEREY JACK CHEESE
- 8 EGGS
- 3 TBSP. FLOUR
- 3 CUPS MILK
- Rinse chilis and remove seeds. Open chilis and layer in glass baking dish. Sprinkle on grated cheeses, and continue layering chilis and cheese.
- Beat eggs, flour, and milk. Pour mixture over the chilis and cheese and bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.
- Towards the end, you may want to put foil over the top so that the cheese doesn't burn. enjoy!

