

The Condition of Probation

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Offender Respect...Does it matter?

By Matt Perry

The use of strength and evidence based tools in the field of probation work have become somewhat controversial and relatively new methods of interaction with offenders. One type of tool that is both strength and evidence based is the use of motivational interviewing when interacting with offenders placed on supervised probation in a case management setting. This type of communication style can foster dialogue that may be more respectful and elicit better results with the population being served.

Motivational interviewing (MI) is a way of communicating with clients about change that was initially developed for the field of addictions but has broadened and become a favored approach for use with populations in a variety of settings. Motivational interviewing aligns as an evidence-based practice, simply meaning it is backed with empirical science for support. The technique suggests that if you engage an offender in a more conversa-

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Chief's Corner:

By Michael Daly

Realignment update

I have written in previous newsletters about Assembly Bill 109, otherwise known as Realignment. This has been, and continues to be, an enormous shift in how California does business in the field of criminal justice. So far, things are going well in Marin County. I have to say without a doubt that because Marin's Courts and all of the County's criminal justice department heads, local police and community-based organizations have been forward thinking in terms of carrying out criminal justice practices, our transition into Realignment has been easier than others. In

short, it is all about being on the cutting edge of what works in the field of corrections, communicating that vision and implementing what is best for your community. Let's break that down by looking at efforts for alternatives to incarceration, programming for inmates who remain in jail, and services to defendants placed on probation in lieu of jail custody, and those individuals released through AB109.

Let's start with the beginning of the process, like a booking in our jail. Leaving someone in jail who is not a public safety risk yet can not make bail because of lack of finances is not a good practice. Through the coop-

eration of the Marin Superior Court, the Sheriff and Probation, a Pre-Trial release program has recently been initiated. People are interviewed and then given a rating of "risk for release" based on research that measured likelihood to re-offend and failure to return for a court date. The Marin County Sheriff has long been an advocate of alternatives to incarceration and as a result the County of Marin also provides a post-conviction release program whereby certain defendants who do not represent a threat to public safety are released, typically with a GPS monitor. This program has been in place for decades.

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Marin County Probation Department is to further justice and community safety and to hold offenders accountable while promoting their rehabilitation

Chief's Corner (from pg. 1)...

As far as the persons who remain in jail, all the literature will tell you that if a person just sits in jail with no rehabilitative efforts, the negative behaviors persist and arguably get worse. Marin has taken a real progressive approach of offering services inside the jail as well as providing alternatives to detention. Our Sheriff has been very open to providing educational programs, drug and alcohol programs and most recently "Thinking for a Change," an evidence-based cognitive behavioral program funded through realignment funds. In addition, the sheriff has spearheaded the development of a "Re-Entry Team," where staff from a variety of agencies meet and confer on developing strategies for releasing inmates from the jail to situations in which they are less likely to recidivate.

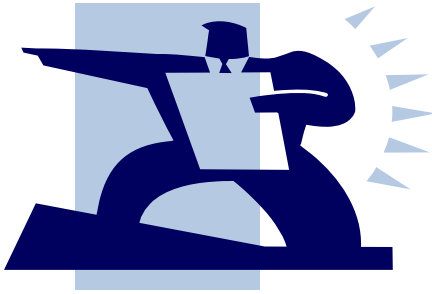
For those persons who require supervision in the community in lieu of custody time (in other words, defendants who are granted probation or have been released to the community through AB109) via a court order, the Probation Department employs another evidence-based practice of conducting risk assessments on every individual. We supervise people according to their likelihood to commit

more crimes. We identify criminogenic needs, create case plans, provide supervision in the community to monitor their compliance, and generally support these people to the best of our ability. The top issues with the high risk population are housing, employment, drug and alcohol issues, mental health issues and "criminal thinking." This last issue is the most difficult to address, as some of these folks have had to utilize "criminal thinking" to serve their basic needs of food and shelter. Appropriate skill training through cognitive behavioral approaches such as "Thinking for a Change," as well as providing support in key areas, can help turn things around.

The people responsible for making funding decisions for the realignment responsibilities in Marin are members of the Community Corrections Partnership, including a Superior Court Judge, the Sheriff, a local police Chief (Novato), the District Attorney, the Public Defender, Director of Health and Human Services and the Chief Probation Officer. After some basic decisions to fund some new employees for Probation and the Sheriff's Department to deal with immediate impacts,

almost all of our other funding requests have been oriented towards providing services. These funding proposals, all unanimously approved, have included funding for housing, drug and alcohol treatment, mental health needs, case managers who assist persons with everything from navigating SSI payments, employment searches, obtaining Medi-Cal or simply driving them to a job interview.

I am proud of the collective efforts from Marin County to tackle Realignment and the progressive thoughts and actions by policy makers. I am equally proud of the persons, particularly in the Probation Department, who are doing the bulk of the work supervising these people and really trying to make them successful. Public safety is part of our Mission Statement and certainly a focus of the tax paying public. Just remember, a rehabilitated person is no longer a threat to public safety. That is what we do and I think we are doing a good job and following the best practices in the field of corrections.



The County of Marin, in collaboration with Dominican University, has created a "Leadership Academy" for County staff from all levels of the organization. Lee Lancaster, a Group Counselor in our Juvenile Hall, and myself had the good fortune to be selected to take part in this latest class of this ongoing effort to enhance staff growth and performance through exposure to leadership concepts (Teresa Torrence Tillman was a graduate of the initial offering of the Academy).

Participating in the Leadership Academy was professionally and personally enriching. This was a 10 session course spread out over four months. The class included 24 colleagues from different departments within the County, including but not limited to, the County Administrator's Office, the Fire Department, County Counsel, Health and Human

Leadership Academy

By Janene Conner

Services, Human Resources, Sheriff's Office, Parks and more. The Leadership course covered a variety of topics with different and dynamic professors. Some of the concepts covered were "Leading Change," "Building Trust for Team Commitment," "Engaging and Inspiring Others," and "How to Build a Business Plan," all of which were excellent classes. Close to my heart and by far the most inspiring classes were the concepts of "Emotional Intelligence (IQ)" and "Coaching for Accountability."

This course was highly interactive and challenging. We read two books and many articles on leadership and related issues. The professors forced us out of our everyday thinking and pushed us to open our minds around new and some not-so-new but still important ideas. Many County Department heads and managers attended the graduation day, and they observed the final presentations that the participants had worked very hard to prepare and then deliver. This was a very exciting and rewarding day for all of us and was a

great culmination to the program.

This was an intense yet very rich experience that has forced me to grow and stretch in new ways. I have gained much insight to myself and others, and it has been both inspiring and humbling. I am very excited about many of the ideas and skills I have obtained since attending this course, some of which I am already practicing. In such a short period of time, I feel as though I have stretched myself and am more compelled than ever to challenge myself in new ways. Most gratifying was getting to know fellow colleagues from the County. I formed new relationships and friendships with people I may have otherwise not have met in my career with the County. What was drilled into all of us during this course is that everything we do is about the relationships. I am so grateful for all the new relationships I have attained because of this opportunity. It was an amazing journey with amazing people. If anyone is thinking of taking this course in the future, I highly recommend it.

Offender Respect...Does it matter? (from pg. 1)...

tional style or approach in regards to their treatment plan that they will have some greater level of interest and participation with the probation officer. Greater interest equals better results. The Marin County Probation Department was an early-adopter to this type of communication, and has trained all of our sworn staff in MI.

The Probation Department has also been interested for years in conducting a survey of adult offenders placed on supervised probation to gauge what their experience has been. A survey has been in place for years at the Juvenile Hall to measure similar themes. While treating those we serve with respect is nothing new to the Department, having some sort of direct feedback from our clients would be for us.

In 2011, the Federal Probation system conducted a satisfaction survey of a group on individuals on active supervised probation. Our Chief, Mike Daly, shared an article discussing this survey and the results with our Department. The Federal survey boasted results of a 96% satisfaction rate when asking their clients, "My Probation Officer is firm but fair?" The survey was framed in such a way that only five answers could be provided by the respondent: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. These were some very impressive results.

I was intrigued to imitate a similar type of survey as part of a graduate study project. The questions used in the Federal survey applied mainly to our adult field services staff and the population they serve. I decided to replicate the federal

survey but to also add a "comments" section to allow those on supervision to provide further information or feedback.

The questionnaire, in Spanish and English, was mailed to those on very high or high risk supervision caseloads. It also would include persons supervised on AB109, community supervision, as well. This would represent 180 persons out of an average daily population of approximately 2,000 that Probation provides some form of supervision to at any one time. A total of 38 responded (21% response). The graphs represent a sampling of some of the survey results. While the results of the survey were quite satisfactory, the comments provided were extremely significant. Below in italics is a sampling of some:

This is the best I've ever done on probation! [officer] is the best probation officer I've ever had! Maybe because this time I'm doing what I am supposed to do?? She helped me get into CenterPoint and that was the best thing I've ever done was to stay and complete it!! So thank you!

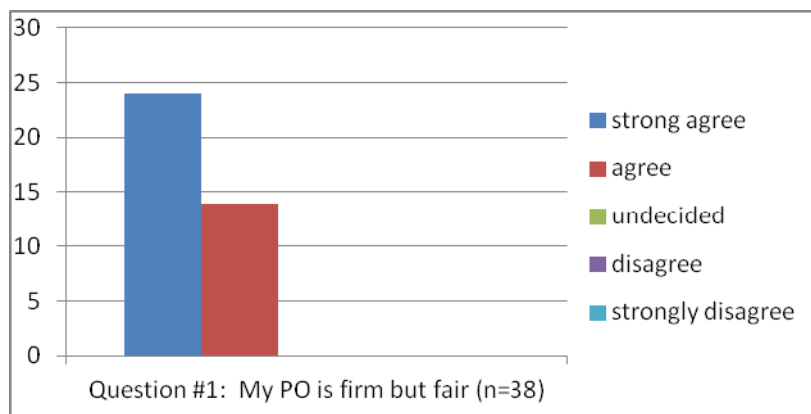
[Translated from Spanish] The DPO [officer] is very respectful and is a good DPO. He does his job very well and he is on top of (as in "aware of") my program

[officer] is a good role model to me.

In the pass [sic] I was on parole and they were working against me now that I am on probation they are working with m [sic] My probation officer has supported me threw[sic] everything given me positive recovree pravided [sic] me with housing

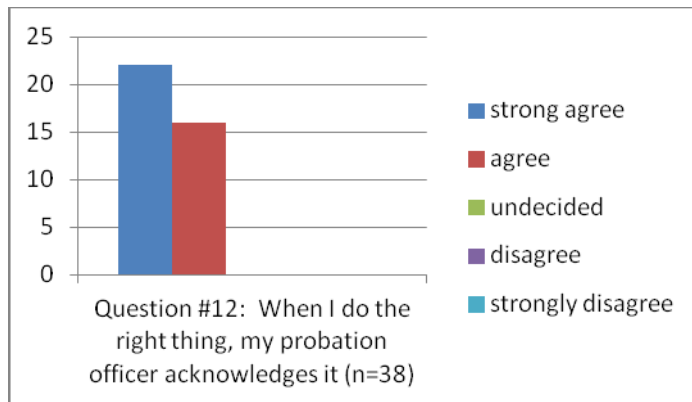
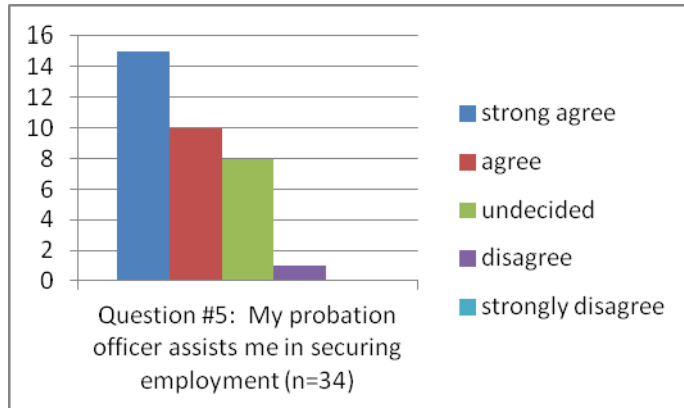
While the survey results demonstrate some very good feedback for the Department in terms of how we are communicating and working with our clients, I feel that the comments section further validate those results. Having worked for the Department since 1993, I have never seen this kind of firsthand feedback. It is clear that we have

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Offender Respect...Does it matter? (from pg. 4)...

some work to do in the area of assisting those on probation with employment, and the sample size for this survey is small. However, I have never been more proud to be a part of such a professional and committed team as I am today. Looking toward the future it is my hope to incorporate this type of a survey into a more regular sequence, perhaps once every year for those on supervised probation. This continues our commitment to manage for results and track outcomes, and to consider how we are treating our clientele. So to answer the question, offender respect does it matter? It appears to be a resounding yes.



Disproportionate Minority Contact Initiative Takes a Big Step

By Kevin Lynch

The Juvenile Division has been working on its DMC initiative since 2008, even before receiving a State grant that provides technical assistance for this purpose. Nearly all of that work to date has been an internal process in which we have developed systems for capturing data relevant to DMC, analyzed the data we can produce, and reviewed our own processes for decision making on cases involving detention. The Department has always been aware, however, that at some point we would need to partner with other stakeholders in order to make any real change in the overwhelming overrepresentation of youth of color in our

system.

The first attempt to make that step took place on May 4, 2012, when the Department invited as many stakeholders as possible to the Four Points Hotel in San Rafael for a “kick-off” event. The goal of this event was to accomplish the following:

- Explain what DMC is, and how pervasive it is, both nationally and locally
- Describe the Probation Department’s efforts to date, including an explanation of the DMC grant, the collaboration of The Burns

Institute as the consultants providing the technical assistance, and the process prescribed by this grant for addressing the issue

- Encourage and invite pertinent stakeholders to begin a system-wide analysis of what can be done to reduce DMC in Marin’s juvenile justice system

Over 80 people from a variety of positions, agencies and view points attended this event. There was lively discussion of the issue, and it is obvious that it will not be dif-

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Disproportionate Minority Contact Initiative Takes a Big Step **(from pg. 5)...**

difficult to find a group of people in Marin County interested in participating in a working collaborative addressing DMC. Despite the diversity of experience and philosophies on how to help youth, there was a common bond of interest in fairness and improving outcomes for youth of color. The Probation Department has received interest from nearly half of the attendees of this event to take part in this effort on an ongoing basis. The next steps will be to convene this group and begin to discuss how we will work together, and to acquaint collabora-

tive members new to the DMC initiative with the work completed so far.

DMC is a complex and difficult issue that will not be resolved quickly or easily. Efforts such as the ones made to date by the Probation Department have started the process, and those efforts have had some impact already. The average daily population in Marin County's Juvenile Hall, for example, has decreased from a high of 25.9 in 2008 to 16.4 in 2012 (to date), a decrease of 37%. However, despite the over-

all reduction in the number of youth in detention, those benefits are not being enjoyed equally across ethnicities, and the degree of DMC has not improved.

Participation in this effort from a variety of stakeholders, including court, law enforcement, school and community, will add momentum and perhaps creativity towards developing solutions for addressing DMC. The Probation Department looks forward to this effort to engage with our partners in improving outcomes for youth of color in the juvenile justice system.



The County of Marin has brought back the "Thrive Across America" program (<http://countyof-marin.thriveacrossamerica.com/welcome> links), in which employees form teams of four or more people to encourage exercise and healthy activities... and just a *little* competition. Starting in June and continuing for a period of two months, members of teams will log their minutes of exercise in to a database, which is then posted and compared with other teams. The team whose members average the most minutes of daily exercise during this period win the competition. The Probation Department had two teams participate last year, but inter-

est in it is much greater this year. The buzz around the office is palpable, and it reflects the growing importance in improving physical conditioning. The Department's interest in this issue is primarily to ensure that staff are in sufficiently good physical shape to be able to endure the increased responsibility with field work and to support good physical health for all of the staff.

In order to support this effort, the Probation Department is encouraging wellness across the agency, not just with this event. The Department has mandated training in weaponless defense which requires a level of physical fitness. In order to support that requirement, the Department has invested in exercise equipment for staff to use, will provide the opportunity for fitness testing and has facilitated groups of staff to participate in wellness ac-

tivities such as walks, runs and hikes. This effort is expected to continue well past the "Thrive Across America" event, and hopefully will become a mainstay of the agency's culture.

Whatever the motivation, the teams from the Probation Department that have signed up for the "Thrive Across America" program have some imposing names:

"Can't Touch This" (my team, by the way)

"Team PC 186.22"

"Slimpossible"

And, the team that keeps me up at night in fear

"Tenacious Ten"

Wellness in the Marin County Probation Department is Alive and Well (ha ha ha)

By Kevin Lynch

Newly Hired Juvenile Hall Group Counselors



Thabiti Terry

Thabiti Terry was born in Oakland and was raised in Santa Rosa, California. He graduated from Montgomery High School where he was a two-sport football/basketball athlete under Coach Tom Fitchie and Coach Jason Franci. He continued his sports career playing both sports at the junior college level at San Diego Mesa Community College and Santa Rosa Junior College. Thabiti concluded his sports career playing arena football for the Duluth-Superior Lumberjacks of the IFL in 2000. He returned to California and finished up his Bachelors degree in Sociology from Sonoma State University. He worked as a Group Home Counselor and Fugitive Recovery Agent prior to being hired as a Group Counselor for the County of Marin. Thabiti recently had his first child (Payton, after Walter Payton) and loves every aspect of being a father. During his free time he enjoys cycling, working out and spending time at the beach with his family. He is looking forward to starting his career with the County of Marin and working with his co-workers.

Suzanne Ruby was hired as a Group Counselor at Marin County Juvenile Hall. Suzanne has worked as an extra-hire Group Counselor at Juvenile Hall since July 2011. Her career interest began with an internship at United States Probation in Oakland, California. Suzanne graduated from California State East Bay in 2010 with a degree in Criminal Justice Administration and Sociology. Suzanne was born and raised in Marin County and enjoys working with a population that she is familiar with.



Suzanne Ruby

A Relaxing Retirement to Lynn Estrada

By Nancy Hillman



Lynn receiving her plaque



Maggie
Turner, Lynn
Estrada and
Mo O'Connell



Kevin Lynch and Mike Daly

On March 30th, the Probation Department bade a fond farewell to Lynn Estrada, who worked at Juvenile Services for 13 years. Lynn's retirement party at Embassy Suites in San Rafael was attended by approximately 50 co-workers, family and friends. Unbeknownst to Lynn until her arrival, the theme for the party was baseball, baseball and more baseball with special attention to Lynn's favorite team, the San Francisco Giants. Everyone was encouraged to wear their favorite baseball attire and the room was decked out in black and orange and black and gold Mardi Gras beads were adorned by all. Mike Daly and Kevin Lynch presented Lynn with a beautiful sunburst crystal sculpture engraved with the Probation Department's star logo, Lynn's name and a quote, "Life Begins at Retirement." Then, Tori Creighton presented Lynn with a gift of tickets for Lynn and her family to attend a Giant's game. What a fitting blast off for Lynn to start her retirement years. We will all miss her helping hand, smiling face and infectious laugh (not to mention her famous toffee!).

Today's Draw....Beverly Hodges

By Beverly Hodges

There are usually faces I don't recognize when I attend Department meetings. I'm sure my face may be unfamiliar to others, as well. What a fun way for us to begin to know one another, one newsletter at a time.

I was born and raised in Marin County, the second of a large family, of whom most still live in Marin. Our family has lengthy history here, so it was always fun for me to hear stories about how life and places were "way back when."

From fairly early in life, I became involved in caring for, engaging with, and tutoring younger siblings and other family members, as well as neighboring children, which launched a life-long interest and joy in creating and telling children's stories. I had little difficulty in encouraging good behavior among my siblings. All I needed to do was promise a story.

I graduated from Drake High School and began a secretarial career in San Francisco immediately afterward. Within a few years, I chose to work in Marin. Most of my career has been secretarial, bookkeeping, word processing, and clerical. Before coming to the Probation Department in 1993, I worked for Big Brothers/Big Sis-

ters of Marin. A wonderful group; wonderful volunteers. I also co-led cub and boy scouts for many years. As far as I know, my co-leader and I were the first women to lead boy scouts in Marin. The troop was unable to find fathers interested in volunteering at the time, so we women took it on. We had a blast.

I am married to a wonderful and very interesting fellow, Bob, and we have one grown son, Darrin. A frisky, black miniature poodle brings us plenty of laughs and encourages us to get exercise, whether we're ready for it or not. Being with and caring for family members (that includes our 10-year-old "puppy") has been and continues to be a very important part of my life.

I'm very adventurous. I love camping, backpacking, swimming, and working with animals (especially dogs). I'm passionate about gardening (especially with roses, berries, and fruit trees; espaliering) and garden design. I tried skydiving with friends who were as crazily like-minded and found it thrilling. It was at once the most euphoric and dizzyingly terrifying experience of my life. I loved it!! Oh, to be a bird! I'm always interested in something new; and whatever I do, I never do it half-way. I take it on with my whole heart.



I feel very passionate about working with an organization like the Probation Department, whose mission goes beyond protecting the community, and includes helping people to help themselves; recognizing that for many, involvement with Probation is perhaps the first, and possibly the most significant self-improvement venture they will ever encounter, and which can affect not only themselves, but their families, as well. Beyond this, I have both witnessed and been the recipient of incredible generosity on the part of the Probation Department community. It's truly heartwarming to work among people who care so much about others.

On the Look Out!



To all of those who will be enjoying vacation adventures this summer we need your stories! We will be compiling tales/photos of your jour-

neys and explorations for the next newsletter. Please email any photos and stories to: akrupinsky@marincounty.org.



The team is off to a great start this year, with a record of three wins and one loss. The Violators have some new faces, familiar faces, and some returning faces. With a steady and consistent line-up, the Violators will be a tough team to beat. We have signed some big bats at the plate and some vacuum like gloves in the in-field. The outfielders have battled with some windy evenings, but have been able to track down the ball and make some great catches. Not only has the team been playing some great softball, they have looked professional sporting their new Violators team hats, courtesy of the Probation Department. Games start at 6 p.m. at McGinnis Park and all are welcome to come out and root the Violators on to victory!!

News from the Bleachers

By David Cole

Date	Day	Playing
June 12	Tuesday	CDA
June 19	Tuesday	Assessor
June 26	Tuesday	District Attorney
July 10	Tuesday	DPW
July 16	Monday	Parks / HS
July 25	Wednesday	Public Defenders
Aug. 2	Thursday	Sheriff
Aug. 8	Wednesday	CDA
Aug 15	Wednesday	Assessor



David Cole, Summer Cole and Scott Dumont



The Juvenile Division has officially begun its "Probation Works Program," where we have contracted with the County's Marin Employment Connection (MEC) to provide assistance in both developing job skills and searching for employment for youth on probation. Using funds from the State's Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act grant, MEC has hired an Employment Development Counselor who is assigned exclusively to working with youth in the juvenile justice system. This person will have a variety of tools to use in their effort to assist youth interested in obtaining employment.

Deputy Probation Officers will refer youth to the Employment Develop-

ment Counselor when they believe the child is both interested in and able to obtain and keep a job. The Counselor will then conduct an assessment of the child's "job readiness," and determine what needs to occur for them to get work. This assessment will identify the barriers to employment and develop a plan to eliminate them. In some cases, the child may only need some assistance in completing applications and getting some guidance in where to go to apply for employment. Other situations might require more preparation, and the Counselor might have the child attend a 10-week "soft skills" program called "Workin' It Out" where they learn and practice inter-personal skills vital to being successful in a work environment (see <http://www.workinitout.com/3atriskiyouth.html> for more details on this curriculum). If any of the barriers include issues such as access to transportation, clothes, tools or training, there is a fund

established to pay for these expenses. Finally, the program also sets aside funds to incentivize employers to hire youth from the program by subsidizing their employment for a period of time. This is a critical element that we are hoping will expand the pool of employers willing to provide an opportunity for youth in the juvenile justice system.

Becoming employed is not the answer to all youth who are struggling to find success in the juvenile justice system. Issues such as substance abuse, gang involvement and mental health will obviously preclude many of the youth we serve from participating in this program. However, for a subset of youth on probation, we believe participation in job-readiness programs and obtaining employment can have a positive impact on diverting them from further delinquency. We look forward to tracking the outcomes for participants in this program !

Tribute to Millhaus Creighton

By Teri Taketa-Graham

We bid farewell to Tori Creighton's dog, Millhaus. He was her loyal companion for over nine years. If you met Millhaus, you would instantly know he was not your average mutt. He was goofy, fun-loving, always the party animal, and perhaps some would think he had "special needs". Millhaus was the mascot for the Probation Department's softball team, the Violators. He took that job of team mascot very seriously allowing teammates to pat his head and get covered with his drool before going up to bat. His drool better known as "Agggggggh, I've been

slimed by Millhaus." Thinking of Millhaus will always make my heart smile. He was the best doggie Godson I could ever have. Tori, thank you for sharing Millhaus with us.



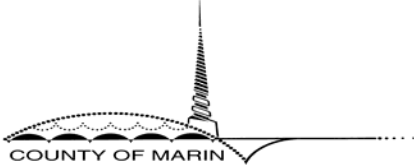
Millhaus supporting his Violators

Millhaus swimming

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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

Abby Dennett, Nancy Hillman, Alisha Krupinsky, Kevin Lynch and Mike Daly

Farewell to Jessica Fort



In February 2012, our very own Jessica Fort was selected to become a Supervising Probation Officer for the County of San Francisco. Staff from numerous departments attended her farewell party, a true testament to the excellent work she did in her ten plus years with the County of Marin. Congratulations, Jessica!



Jessica Fort and Mike Daly



Jessica Fort and Judge Kelly Viera Simmons