



# Neighborhood Justice

February 2012  
Volume 4 Issue 10

Newsletter of the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office Youth Aid Panels  
R. Seth Williams – District Attorney

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 YAP and Auto Theft
- 1 From the Juveniles
- 2 Victim Awareness
- 2 Curfew Update
- 3 New Year Resolutions
- 4 Announcements

## Youth Aid Panel and Auto Theft

In 2011 the Youth Aid Panel program granted contracts to 30 juvenile offenders who committed auto related offenses. During this past year Youth Aid Panelists invested a total of 203 combined volunteer hours, dedicated solely to auto related offenses. Your dedication, coupled with scheduled auto theft outreach visits by DA staff, has helped us to effectively address auto related offenses. Thank you for your time and dedication in ensuring the juveniles who commit auto related offenses are afforded an opportunity to change their lives for the better.

*\*Auto theft arrests made during the last 4 months of 2011 are carried over into 2012*

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011*
Accepted	54	18	67	88	43	36	30	30
Completed	34	9	32	38	21	29	18	12
Relisted	5	3	17	41	21	19	24	15
FTA	4	0	2	2	1	4	0	3
Restitution	\$0	\$0	\$350	\$100	\$1,550	\$596.77	\$260	\$1,117
Recidivist	11	1	3	16	8	7	9	7
Status N/A	0	5	13	2	0	1	0	0

## From the Juveniles

By A Youth Aid Panel Juvenile

“How I felt being locked up...”

“Disappointment: The feeling of dissatisfaction that follows through failure of expectations or hopes to maintain, similar to regret. I started with the definition of disappointment because disappointment and regret is what I felt the day I got locked up. I was disappointed in myself for my actions. Most of all I was ashamed. I wondered what my family would think of me, because I let them down the day I got arrested. I set a bad example for my younger siblings. The day I got locked up was to me ‘being selfish.’ I say this because I did not think about how I would make my family look in this situation. I embarrassed my family and gave them a bad look. Before my arrest I only thought about myself. I absolutely regret stealing. It’s not cool and it’s not worth the criminal record. I know what I did was wrong. Stealing was not how I was brought up or raised. There is no one to blame for my actions, so I cannot point fingers at those who I was with. I had the choice to walk away when the idea was brought about. I could have said no, but instead I went along with it being a dummy. Jail is not a place I could see myself at for long. It was cold and I felt bad staying overnight in a cell. I am very disappointed in myself for actions, but writing this I can honestly say I have learned a great deal from my mistakes. The day I got arrested was the day I got my act together.”

## Victim Awareness

As an extension of the Youth Aid Panel Staff, Faith Harris will lead the movement to better integrate the principles of Victim Awareness and Community-Based Diversion for juveniles. She will act as the advocate who supports victims and helps them understand the important role they play in restorative justice. Whenever a case involving a victim is accepted, a letter and questionnaire will be sent the victim. From there, Faith will follow up with a phone call to encourage / request the victim’s participation. The call will also be an opportunity for victims to ask questions, gain clarity about YAP and share concerns about the defendant. When appropriate, Faith will inquire about and request restitution for damages resulting from the crime. It is anticipated that these calls to victims in school cases will help create a better relationship between School Officials and the YAP program.

Faith’s work will go beyond victim outreach. The YAP Victim Advocate will also assist in the continual training of Panelists about the importance of victim awareness. The training will enhance Panelist sensitivity to victims and increase their effectiveness in victim cases. Defendants will also be addressed by way of victim impact questionnaires. The details provided on each statement will help defendants understand how their crime has affected the victim and the community at large. As we move forward this year, please join The District Attorney’s Office and the Youth Aid Panel Program in supporting the mission of our Victim Advocate. Remember to look out for upcoming trainings on Victim Awareness.

- Panelist should aim to give victims a **BATCH** of Justice
- Be open minded when reading victim statements
- Actively listen and provide feedback when speaking to victims
- Take the time to utilize contract suggestions.
- Create a welcoming environment for victim who attend hearings
- Hold offenders more accountable by awarding restitution, where necessary

## Curfew Ordinance

On October 12<sup>th</sup> 2011, City Council amended Bill No. 110633 to provide earlier curfew hours for minors.

See chart below:

	EVENING CURFEW TIME	
	SCHOOL YEAR	SUMMER
	<i>Monday - Sunday</i>	<i>Monday - Sunday</i>
Minors 16 years and older	10:00 PM	11:00 PM
Minors 14 years - 15 years	9:00 PM	10:00 PM
Minors 13 years & under	8:00 PM	9:00 PM

Source: <http://www.phila.gov/pdfs/curfewBill.pdf>

## Making Your YAP New Year's Resolution a Success

*By Randy Duque, Managing Director, Good Shepherd Mediation Program*

As the fireworks fill the midnight sky of January 1<sup>st</sup> and millions celebrate as the brightly illuminated ball finishes its decent above Time Square, we make vows to improve something about ourselves in the New Year. Most commonly, resolutions involve living a healthier lifestyle physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually; and what better way for the Panelist to live healthier than to resolve to continue affecting youths' lives positively through renewed mindsets.

As a YAP volunteer, you are dedicating your time and efforts—not only to give juveniles a second chance—but, to impact youths in ways that they will become productive young leaders and citizens of Philadelphia. Remember the good work that you do as you are a valuable member of an exclusive group that makes a difference!

Now, whether we decide we want to be healthier, more fiscally responsible, or swear less; something happens throughout the weeks or months that follow which prevent us from keeping our goals. Working with juvenile offenders can be rewarding, but can also be challenging at times and in turn; can affect how you work with them. When this occurs, remember the skills of the Panelist, such as, active listening and non-judgmental questioning to break through seemingly uncooperative personalities. Interacting in ways that show helpfulness and curiosity can go further in getting to underlying issues and accountability than by feeding into negative behavior.

Also, recognizing that each case is unique despite identical charges can help keep your resolution. No matter how many times you may have heard similar stories from various youths and parents, treating each case as if it were the first time you are hearing it can not only give you a fresh perspective on the matter; but also improve your core skills of active listening and non-judgmental questioning. Similarly, if your Panel was fortunate to receive Panelists from the newest graduating class, integrate their thoughts and experiences into discussions as they may provide innovative ideas in questions and creating contract terms.

When deciding on terms for a juvenile to complete, remember to combine the information you gained from listening to the juvenile and their charges as this will aid in making the contract unique to the individual. Doing this also gives you the challenge of balancing accountability and behavioral development, which in turn; keeps you working towards your resolution goals.

Finally, to keep your YAP resolution going, always remember the support you have. From your Officers to the DA's Office, you can always rely on them if you have questions or concerns.

Keeping your New Year's resolution as a YAP Volunteer can be a challenge. Regardless of how long you have served on YAP, by following these tips, you will see the benefits and rewards throughout the New Year!

## Welcome

We would like to welcome the following Crime Prevention Officers:

**Officer Rosati** replaces **Officer Terrell** at the **8<sup>th</sup>** Police District

**Officer Canada** replaces **Officer Garner** at the **17<sup>th</sup>** Police District

**Officer Campbell** replaces **Officer McDaniels** at the **18<sup>th</sup>** Police District

We are proud to introduce the newest addition to the Youth Aid Panel staff, **Faith Harris**. Faith was hired on October 24, 2011 as the first Youth Aid Panel Victim/ Witness Coordinator. Faith received her BS in Crime, Law, and Justice with a minor in Sociology, from The Pennsylvania State University. Before joining the office, she worked as an Assistant Investigator for the Philadelphia Warrant Unit. Faith was also an intern in the Juvenile Division of the District Attorney Office during the summer of 2010. We are happy to have her and we wish her much success in her new role.

On December 14<sup>th</sup> 2011 District Attorney Seth Williams swore in a class of **82** diverse, well-rounded, and concerned citizens to the Philadelphia Youth Aid Panel. To date, this is the largest class to successfully complete training. Please join us in welcoming them!

### The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office

3 South Penn Square  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

**Phone:**

215-686-6310/6305/7600/7620

**Fax:**

215-686-7683

**E-mail:**

Erica.Baiocco@phila.gov  
Adara.Combs@phila.gov  
Faith.Harris@phila.gov

## Friendly Reminders

- Please make sure the paperwork from your panel's cases is sent to our office in a timely manner, preferably by the end of each week.
- Please leave the duty of rescheduling cases to the District Attorney's Office. This prevents over-scheduling and cases getting lost in the mix. Keep the lines of communication open with us. We are here at all times to answer any questions.
- The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office is always seeking adult neighborhood volunteers to serve on Youth Aid Panels. We are looking for special people who are willing to give their time to point first-time juvenile offenders away from the criminal justice system and toward more productive life choices.

## In Memoriam

**Thomas Smalls**, Chairperson of the **22<sup>nd</sup> (A)** district panel recently passed away. Thomas served as a dedicated panelist for 5 years. We send our condolences to his family for their loss, and are forever in his debt for his dedicated service to Philadelphia's youth.

The same folks who administer the Youth Aid Panels bring NEIGHBORHOOD JUSTICE to you:

**R. Seth Williams, District Attorney**

**George Mosee, Deputy District Attorney**

**Michael Cleary, ADA Coordinator**

**Erica Baiocco, Law Clerk**

**Adara Combs, Law Clerk**

**Faith Harris, Victim Witness Coordinator**

**Michelle Yarnell, Secretary**