

The

Civic Forum



Spring 2003
Volume 1, Issue 3

Directions, II Coming in May

Recent Publications:

- Juvenile Offenders & Crime in Erie County
- Mercyhurst College Civic Institute Annual Report 2001-2002
- Analysis of Police Stops & Searches, City of Erie
- Erie County Drug Treatment Court Program: 18 month Status Report
- Modified Adult Probation Sanctions: Evaluation of Probation Supervision Sanctions Systems
- Teen Pregnancies & Births

Publications are available
on our website at:

civicinstitute.mercyhurst.edu

Directions, II, the update and expansion of the original *Directions* published in 1998, is being finished and should be available in early May.

Compiled by Amy Danzer of the Mercyhurst Civic Institute and designed by members of the graphic design department at Mercyhurst College, the new edition has a different, more colorful look, but it is definitely the offspring of the original version containing information on the well being of children and families in Erie County. Information is presented by municipality or school district and compared to the US, state and comparable counties. Where available, information is presented by the census tracts in the City of Erie, comparing the City of Erie to comparable cities and presenting information by racial and/or ethnic breakdowns.

Building on the foundation established with the earlier version, the latest edition expands on the demographics now available through Census 2000 including racial and age breakdowns. Similarly, the single parent household indicator now contains information on male and female heads of single parent households as well as information on children living with grandparents.

As in the first edition, economic information about those living in poverty and those receiving TANF, medical assistance and free or reduced price school lunches is included. The largest addition to *Directions, II* is the section on education. This includes the high school dropouts as in the 1998 edition but information on school expenditures, standardized test scores and retentions in first grade and kindergarten

have been added.

In addition to these indicators: lack of early prenatal care, low birth weight births, births to single teens, infant mortality and child deaths; the health section will now have information on tobacco use during pregnancy and children receiving SSI due to disability. The low birth weight births indicator will include very low birth weight information.

In the services section, information on juvenile arrests is being added to the other indicator in the section.

Through generous underwriting by the Erie Community Foundation and the Erie County Office of Children and Youth, the cost of the book will be \$15. You can reserve your copy by e-mailing Sue Johnson at sjohnson@mercyhurst.edu or by calling 824-2327.

Teplin to Speak at 2003 Kinnane Conference

Dr. Linda Teplin, Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Psycho-Legal Studies Program at Northwestern University Medical School, will be one of the featured speakers for the James V. Kinnane Annual Criminal Justice Conference which will be held at Mercyhurst College on June 4. The 2003 program is entitled **What**

Works? Successful Innovations in Criminal Justice: Collaborative Strategies. Dr. Teplin is currently studying the incidence of mental disorders among delinquent youth and is assessing the ability of the juvenile justice system to provide mental health services to youth with psychiatric disorders.

Other presenters will

discuss successful strategies in therapeutic jurisprudence, collaborative policing, and drug policy.

There is no registration fee and the conference includes the James V. Kinnane Criminal Justice Awards Luncheon. For additional information contact Sue Johnson at sjohnson@mercyhurst.edu or (814) 824-2327.

Mercyhurst Represented at the 2003 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Conference

The ACJS has made significant contributions to the theory and practice of criminal justice.

Dr. Peter Benekos received the McNamara award for the best article published in an ACJS journal during 2002.

Mercyhurst was well represented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Conference in Boston the week of March 2nd. Several members of the Civic Institute staff presented on specialty topics, along with many members of the Criminal Justice Department. This was the 40th Annual Meeting for the ACJS, which has made significant contributions to the theory and practice of criminal justice.

Dr. Thomas Gamble, Director of the Mercyhurst Civic Institute, and Anne Laux, graduate student, presented on their study of gender bias in juvenile

justice and explored implications for juvenile justice practices and policy. Art Amann, Associate Director, and Emily Reitenbach, Research Analyst, participated in a panel discussion and presented information on the evaluation of criminal justice advisory boards. In addition to the Civic Institute staff, Dr. Peter Benekos, Director of the Criminal Justice Program, participated in a roundtable discussion on criminal justice education as well as presented on juvenile justice policy and cross-cultural comparisons, while Dr. Frank Hagan presented on sub rosa crime and white

collar crime. In addition to the Civic Institute and Criminal Justice Department, two criminal justice students presented at the conference. Ashley DuBose spoke on her paper that examined the re-entry of prisoners into society and those programs that increase successful adjustment. Tim Nave presented on his preliminary study of student opinions on whether age and mental capacity should play a role in death sentences.

The 2004 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Conference is scheduled to be held in Las Vegas.

The Incurrigibility Initiative of Erie Working Towards Delinquency Prevention

The efforts of these individuals have led to a stronger collaboration among the individual programs.

The mission of the incurrigibility project is to work toward the development of a system of services for incurrigible youth in Erie County that is accessible, coordinated, effective, and accountable, minimizing the need for formal child welfare or juvenile probation involvement with affected children and families. A Management Team consisting of representatives from the Erie County Department of Human Services, Erie County Office of Children and Youth, Erie County Juvenile Probation Department, and the School District of the City of Erie provide direction to an

Implementation Team composed of program supervisors. The Implementation Team has met regularly in order to coordinate effective and efficient services for incurrigible youth in Erie County. Representatives from the After School Support Program (ASSP), Alternative Education Program (AEP), Delinquency Prevention Program (DPP), Families Together, Intensive Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Program (IJDPP), Project Intercept, Student Assistance Program (SAP), Erie County Juvenile Probation, School-

Based Probation, Truancy Services from the Erie County Office of Children and Youth, and the Mercyhurst Civic Institute comprise the implementation team. The efforts of these individuals have led to a stronger collaboration among the individual programs. Due to its success, the Incurrigibility Project will be highlighted at the Building Partnerships Conference during the Regional Outbreak Sessions. For more information on Erie's Incurrigibility, contact Amy Eisert at (814) 835-6795 or aeisert@mercyhurst.edu.

Civic Institute Assisting Eight Counties with Criminal Justice Advisory Boards

The work that the Institute has begun in Erie County regarding criminal justice advisory boards has spread to eight counties, including Erie. The Mercyhurst Civic Institute conducted a survey of twenty-five advisory boards across the country and found only two had completed evaluations measuring their own effectiveness. Erie County has just completed

their first self-evaluation to provide direction to assure that the board is serving its intended purpose.

The work in Erie County has resulted in requests for assistance from CJABs outside of Erie County. This initiative consists of surveys assessing the readiness of local officials to initiate a collaborative planning board, facilitating meetings of key criminal justice

officials, and performing evaluations and research as required by the county. The counties presently working with the institute include: Mercer, Butler, Cumberland, Lycoming, Mifflin, Westmoreland and Venango. The primary staff assigned to this project are Emily Reitenbach, Policy Analyst, and Art Amann, Associate Director.

Criminal justice advisory boards (CJAB's) are county criminal justice planning groups.

Changes in Leadership at the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency

In February of 2003, Governor Edward Rendell replaced James Thomas as executive director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) with Carl Anderson, formerly the director of Pennsylvania's Weed & Seed Program. Currently, Mr. Anderson is serving as the acting director of PCCD. While Mr. Thomas has been a consistent friend to Erie's criminal justice community,

supporting the development of programs as diverse as juvenile justice to the development of a criminal justice advisory board, Mr. Anderson has also been a strong supporter of local initiatives, and was in Erie to kick off the Weed & Seed program in October of 2002.

Another leadership change occurred when Governor Rendell replaced PCCD Chairperson Thomas Corbett with James Eisenhower, a former federal prosecutor and 2000

Democratic candidate for Pennsylvania Attorney General.

Locally, individuals who are appointed members of PCCD include State Senator Jane Earll, Judge Shad Connelly of Erie County Court of Common Pleas, Erie County Prison Warden Charles Barber, and Art Amann, Associate Director of the Mercyhurst Civic Institute.

Civic Institute Welcomes Back Julie Bush-Miller

The Civic Institute is pleased to announce the return of Research Analyst, Julie Bush-Miller. Julie had left the Institute in the fall of 2002 to join her husband, a physician in the United States Air Force, in

Mississippi. With the possibility of her husband's deployment to the Middle East, Julie has made the decision to return to the Institute on a temporary basis.

Julie will be working with Judge Bozza and Erie

County Adult Probation on the Sanction Certainty Project in addition to assuming the role as coordinator of the AID Team for the Weed and Seed Initiative.

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DIRECTIONS, II
available after
May 1, 2003!

Details enclosed.

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About Our Organization...

The Civic Institute is a college community partnership dedicated to the social, health, educational, and civic well-being of the Erie region. As an interdisciplinary initiative of Mercyhurst College, the Institute seeks to promote an engaged and informed citizenry within the Erie region.

The Civic Institute seeks to evaluate, understand and improve public policies and processes, which affect the region's citizens. It serves as a central repository for published information regarding the social and civic challenges, as well as opportunities facing Erie. In addition, the Institute seeks to provide Mercyhurst

College faculty, undergraduate and graduate students with applied social policy, research and evaluation experience related to child, family, health, and justice issues.

"We will ever strive for the ideals and sacred things of the city, both alone and with many; we will unceasingly seek to quicken the sense of public duty; we will revere and obey the city's laws; we will transmit this city not only not less, but greater, better, and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us."

-From the oath of the Athenian City-State

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

civicinstitute.mercyhurst.edu

Questions or Comments?
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