

FIGHTING CRIME and HELPING KIDS: It's all in a day's work



From the Sheriff's Desk

Sheriff
John
Rutherford

My note to you this month is about two different activities we're involved in. On the surface they are different initiatives, one dealing with crime fighting, and the other is about the youth of the community. But I think when you read between the lines you will understand the connection between our day-to-day core competency of fighting crime and our ultimate goal of eliminating the opportunities for criminal behavior to begin.

First, **Operation Foxx Den**. On January 11 our JSO narcotics detectives, along with agents from the Drug Enforcement Agency and law enforcement partners in Georgia, delivered warrants on 15 individuals and concluded the investigation of a cocaine trafficking operation that operated between Jacksonville and Atlanta. On that day we netted eight arrests and prevented the distribution of

54 kilos specifically targeted for Jacksonville's streets.

Foxx Den was an investigation that ran parallel to Operation Poppy Seed, which we took down late in 2005. Some of the same people were involved in both that Mexican drug importation operation and this one. In these two drug trafficking operations we've recovered more than 100 kilograms of cocaine and seized cash in excess of one half million dollars.

But that isn't the real "bottom line." What is the result for our city every time we dismantle a major drug operation whose leaders target Jacksonville? Ultimately, we are helping prevent the drug suppliers from further infiltration of our streets and neighborhoods. What drives the "economics" of the drug trade is the crime that can't occur when local distributors have difficulty finding a product to sell. Men and women who are selling dope need customers, but they also need a product.

When the big league players, the traffickers, are taken off the streets and

charged with multiple felonies then vigorously prosecuted and ultimately punished with long sentences, the engine that drives the economics of dope dealing and buying slows way down. At least for awhile. Which is why our narcotics detectives were back at work the day after taking down Operation Foxx Den.

Even with the takedown of eight major drug operations in just two and one-half years, there will be more to come. Like all economies, the drug trade is driven by demand.

Which brings me to our next topic: **The Police Athletic League's** announcement about an exciting partnership with Nemours. The same day we announced Operation Foxx Den, we also announced a major financial commitment by PAL to identify children in our after-school programs who might be suffering from dyslexia. We're going to provide these children with free tutoring and teach them a reading program that will stimulate them, instead of frustrating them, the way traditional reading education often does.

So even if their parents

weren't very good students, or were challenged by learning disabilities of their own (dyslexia is trans-generational), we can help inspire these kids to be good readers and love it. They can dream very big dreams because nothing is impossible when one possesses a love of knowledge.

BrightStart! Dyslexia Program

Here's the connection between these two stories. We know that children who start school ready to read and learn don't fall behind. Children with reading disabilities often do. Left undetected and untreated, a problem such as dyslexia results in children becoming increasingly frustrated. They often "act out" in class, because of an inability to keep up with others and perform the work, or because they are embarrassed and ashamed. Or shamed by others and feeling angry.

With repeated referrals for disruption or skipping school, some of these same children spend time in detention or inside suspension. By high school, some have been labeled discipline problems or

regarded as ungovernable. Falling behind in reading and low grades are precursors to dropping out.

Without the necessary skills to go to work and earn an honest living and poor prospects for the future, dealing drugs can seem like an easy way to earn money and "succeed" at something.

We enforce the law. We investigate crimes and work hard to solve them. We educate the community and build partnerships with citizens who also want to prevent crime from happening. Now we have the opportunity to help a child realize his or her full potential and build a future that doesn't involve living outside the law.

I invite you to join us. If you can spare one to two hours a week, in the afternoon, please consider calling Nemours BrightStart! Dyslexia Program and sign up to become a volunteer tutor for a PAL child. The training class is free and takes only four hours.

Editor's Note: To sign up to become a trained PAL tutor, call Nemours BrightStart! at 904/858-3118.

A SAFER COMMUNITY IS A BETTER COMMUNITY.

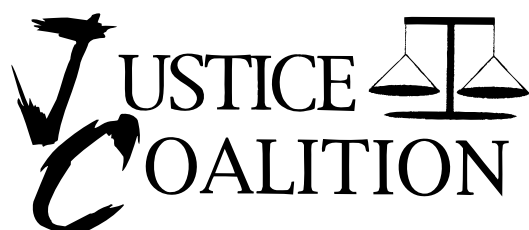
\$10,000 REWARD

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**6001 N. Main St.
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Tues., August 30

If you have any information, please call the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
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