

New youth programs "popping up" in town



Ask the Mayor

by Mayor John Peyton

If you've been noticing all kinds of new programs popping up around town, you're not alone. Jacksonville is making changes that will reduce our city's crime rate and provide a safer environment for all residents. And funding from *The Jacksonville Journey*, now in its implementation phase, is creating new intervention, rehabilitation and prevention programs for children and youth, all over the city.

Within the last month, several programs have begun, such as the Intramural Sports League. The League allows kids, ages 13 to 17, to participate in organized sports including basketball, flag football and wiffleball, at eight parks in Jacksonville's Urban Core. Many youth in our neighborhoods welcome the opportunity to enjoy team sports after school and during the summer, in a safe environment - an opportunity that living in one of our city's most economically disadvantaged and crime-ridden areas has rarely provided.

Another new development is the reopening of the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) for use in increased intervention and rehabilitation programming for our youth. Timely intervention can divert the 7,000 juveniles that will be processed annually at JAC from the wrong course and set them on the path to responsible citizenship. That keeps Jacksonville's citizens safe and no longer living in fear, as well as saving taxpayers money

on legal fees and costs of incarceration. But most importantly, it keeps impressionable youth from wasting their lives.

Also, as of the past few weeks, all 15 Journey-funded Team Up centers are open. These centers are providing vital after-school supervision programs in middle and elementary schools around the city, many of which are already at capacity.

The Early Learning Program recently took off as well. This program will institute Journey programs in 25 childcare centers. The centers will collaborate with the Early Learning Coalition to turn daycare centers into learning centers, making an indelible mark on the early development and, in turn, the later successes of children in our community.

The Jacksonville Journey initiative began a little more than a year ago and is a community-wide effort to bring an end to our city's violent crime rate. Because of the research and recommendations that came out of the initiative, we secured more than \$31 million in local funding to jumpstart a comprehensive approach to crime-fighting through prevention, intervention and rehabilitation programs.

I am proud of the progress we have made and am optimistic about the future. Frederick Douglass said, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." I believe that building strong children and putting them on the path to responsible citizenship is what *Journey* programs like these will accomplish.

For information on any of these programs, contact 630-CITY.

We Need Your Help



Alyce Bowles

On Friday, Feb 6, 2009, at 9:15 p.m., police responded to the 600 block of Alhambra Lane North in Sawgrass (a gated community located in Ponte Vedra, Florida) where a deceased victim, 92-year-old Alyce Bowles, had been discovered by a friend.

No signs of forced entry were observed and all doors and windows were secure from the inside. The residence was neat and clean and it did not appear as if anything had been disturbed or stolen. An autopsy revealed the victim died as a result of blunt force trauma and no clear motive is apparent at this time.

Anyone who may have seen anything suspicious near the victim's home between 5:30-9:00 p.m., or has information concerning this investigation is asked to contact Detective T. Rollins or Detective K. Roberts with the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office at 904-824-8304. CrimeStoppers has offered a \$2,500 reward.



Christopher LaShawn Lester

On January 31, at 10:30 p.m. JSO officers responded to 3160 Dignan Street where they found the body of Christopher LaShawn Lester. Foul play is suspected as the cause of death. Anyone with information about this homicide is asked to contact JSO at 630-0500 or First Coast CrimeStoppers at 1-866-845-8477.



Michael Lamar Perry

At 13th and Moncrief on August 7, 2008, Michael Lamar Perry was gunned down by an unidentified black male riding a green beach cruiser bicycle, and wearing a white t-shirt and blue jean shorts. Motive for the shooting is unknown. The victim's mother, Regina Middleton is pleading for the ones who know about this crime to come forward. She grieves every day for her son and says, "I thought it would get better as time goes by, but it gets worse."

If you know anything about this murder, please call JSO Homicide at 630-2177 or CrimeStoppers at 1-866-845-8477.



Jerry Clemons

In the early afternoon of Nov. 7, 2008, this 33-year old male was killed in a drive-by shooting at 14th and Canal Streets. If you know anything about this murder, please call JSO Homicide at 630-2177 or CrimeStoppers at 1-866-845-8477.

Haleigh Cummings

This little 5-year-old girl is still missing from her home in Satsuma, a small town in Putnam County. Tips continue to come in, and every one is checked out by FDLE and other law enforcement agencies. Haleigh has blond hair and brown eyes, is 3 feet tall and weighs 39 pounds. She was last seen in the Hermit's Cove area of Satsuma on Feb. 9.

Please call CrimeStoppers at 1-866-845-TIPS if you see her or know anything about her disappearance. The reward for information regarding her whereabouts and/or the conviction of the perpetrator of any crimes stands at \$25,500.



Have you seen this man?

Last December two victims were shot, one fatally, in the Commons Apartments on Anniston Road. Police are searching for questioning a man matching this composite picture. If you have information about him, call CrimeStoppers at 866-845-TIPS.

Mom on Wire...

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him for about one hour and forty-five minutes. She made a number of threats at the beginning of the conversation, including telling him that she would not leave until he talked to her, and threatened to tell his neighbors that he was a pedophile. He initially denied any improprieties. At the end of the conversation, however, he confessed to some improper acts while denying others.

The suspect's attorney moved to suppress, or exclude, the statements made to the mother. The trial judge conducted a hearing on the admissibility of the statements. At the hearing, the suspect admitted that he was not physically threatened by the mother, and that he had made no attempt to remove her or have her removed from his home. He asserted that he gave the

incriminating statements because he was tired and wanted to go to bed, not because he felt threatened. Finally, when asked by the State at the hearing if he had a "free exchange" with the victim's mother, he acknowledged that he did. The trial judge found that the statements were voluntary and allowed them into evidence before the jury.

He appealed his conviction. Because the suspect had not yet been arrested or charged with any crime, and was not in custody at the time of the statements, he did not argue on appeal that his Sixth Amendment right to counsel or his Fifth Amendment right against self incrimination was violated. Instead, he maintained that even though he was not in custody, because the interrogation was conducted by a state

agent, the State had the burden of establishing that his statements were voluntarily made.

The appellate court framed the issue in terms of whether the defendant's free will had been overcome. Discussing the facts of this case in particular, the appeals court stated that while the mother of the victim did some yelling and cursing and threatened to tell anyone who asked that the suspect was a pedophile, it is also clear that the suspect invited her into his residence and made little effort to get her to leave. More importantly, the suspect did not make the incriminating statements until the end of the interview, well after any harassment was essentially completed. In addition, he testified that he made the comments in question to get rid of her so that he could go to sleep, not

because he was intimidated. Finally, the suspected admitted only some of the allegations, while denying the remainder.

The appellate court ruled that in this case there was substantial competent evidence to support the determination that his statements were voluntarily made. Accordingly, his conviction was affirmed.

This case is *Beverd vs. The State*, and was decided by the Fifth District Court of Appeal on March 14, 2008.

Jay Howell, a Jacksonville attorney, has been a State Prosecutor, a US Senate Investigator, and the founder of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. He represents crime victims in civil claims for damages and advocates for legal rights of all victims.