

2014 Needs Assessment for Baldwin

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Hon. Hallie Dixon	Sen. Tripp Pittman	Rodney Criswell	Charles Durgin
Pam McGhee	Rep. Stephen McMillian	Shane Nolte	Robin Fuqua-Taylor
Jennifer Bedgood	Sen. Mark Keahey	Amy Boylan	Aimee Risser
Frank Burt	Rep. Joe Faust	Jerry Haase	David Wilson
Tucker Dorsey	Rep. Randy Davis	Vanessa Moore	Mary Beth Krepinevich
Jennifer Lee	Bob James	Meg Peterson	Bonnie Hindman
Sue Joy	Charles Gruber	Gerrie McMillian	Kelly Qualls
Sonya Broadus	Cheryl Gwin	Peggy Lassiter	Hatsie Lamb
Christie Steigerwald	Dr. Lynn Yonge	Cris Solberg	Carmen Calvert
Buffy Marston	Robbin Riggins	Cindy Haber	Katherine Johnson
Kathryn Watson	Constance McRae	Jonathan Armstrong	Christie Brannon
Niki Whittaker	Karen Dees	Jamie Maloy	
Gwyn Smith	Melissa Calloway Moody	Cpl. John Malone	
Huey 'Hoss' Mack	Catherine Hanks	Larry Stewart	

Accomplishments

JPO and the County Commission have collaborated to create an Intake Department for receiving Juvenile Charges and identifying a juvenile's needs at the earliest possible time in the charge process.

The County Commission has obtained funding to re-open the girls' program at Camp Horizon Wilderness Program, and expects to reach said goal by the beginning of the new school year.

The Drug Education Council has expanded its involvement in Baldwin County via programs such as "families rock", "choose to change", and by establishing an Underage Drinking Task Force.

The Youth Advocate Program (contract service provider via the Juvenile Court and DYS) has expanded its program to accept DHR referrals.

The Dept of Human Resources has finalized 11 adoptions since Oct 2013.

The Dept of Human Resources has identified a provider to complete more parenting assessments for the purpose of offering more services.

The Baldwin County Board of Education has pursued funding to ensure the existence of 23 preK4 classrooms within the public school system for the upcoming school year.

The Baldwin County Board of Education has partnered with HIPPY to assist families who have been placed on the preK4 waiting list, so more families may receive assistance in early education.

Baldwin County Mental Health has merged with the Mobile County provider and is now known as Altapointe. Said merger will hopefully bring increased funding to our region in general for the provision of mental health services.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of South Alabama has expanded their services within the public school system in Baldwin County and is working with numerous local employers to match Baldwin County children with mentors to prevent their entry into the juvenile justice system.

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First Priority

Need related to children of this county

Parental Involvement

Existing resources available to help meet this need include:	Resources needed but unavailable to meet this need include:
<p>US Attorney's Office has law enforcement based resources to educate parents regarding internet safety and sexting issues that can speak to groups of parents in whatever setting they choose. The Drug Education Council has educational resources available to children and parents both regarding drug use and the health/legal/other consequences of usage via CAPP program and other outreach activities. Big Brothers/Big Sisters has parent training/resource opportunities together with the mentoring programs between community members and children to provide strong role models. The District Attorneys office has obtained grant funding to assist in raising awareness with kids and parents regarding sexting. Baldwin Youth Services offers parent and child training classes to assist families in developing communication skills necessary to allow discussion of sensitive manners between children and their parents. The Care House offers internet safety classes throughout the schools in Baldwin County to raise child awareness and stands ready to assist parents as well.</p>	<p>We need a means by which to make these opportunities easier to access for parents, particularly working parents. It seems that most of these valuable resources are only accessed by the parents when "forced" to do so via court, school official or juvenile probation intervention. Alternatively, parents need to be made aware WHY their involvement is such a big deal and that things are not in fact the way they once were. Mistakes that kids make are not necessarily a relatively harmless lesson to them and their families anymore. Unfortunately, most efforts aimed at raising awareness are the PSAs that are playing on the television in the wee hours of the morning when advertisers aren't buying time. Media needs to place more importance on these issues and give them prime time spots occasionally, or "advertise" the issue on popular web sites parents would be likely to visit to catch their attention and allow them to elevate their knowledge level on these issues.</p>

Action steps that will result in progress toward meeting the identified need:

Encourage more cities to have parent based forums, such as those occurring in Fairhope and Foley, in which service providers come and speak as to the importance of Parental Involvement, advertising the types of information available to the parents should they attend, and garnering sponsorships of the event with local businesses in which they could donate food, doorprizes etc in order to "lure" parents to the educational opportunity if necessary.

Encourage more civic groups and churches to host parental education fairs for their members/ parishioners to make the information more widely available.

Encourage speakers providing this type of educational effort to make their speeches more accessible via websites etc so parents can obtain the information on their own time.

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Second Priority

Need related to children of this county

Juvenile Prevention

Existing resources available to help meet this need include:	Resources needed but unavailable to meet this need include:
<p>The Juvenile Probation office has a number of options available to juveniles and their families to assist in the prevention of crime via the intake office. Additionally, JPO and the County commission have worked together to create a round-the- clock intake process at the Juvenile Detention Center for the safety and benefit of law enforcement and their detainees, so that needs may be addressed at an earlier level in the process than we may have seen in the past. Once a need is identified regarding a juvenile and criminal activity, we have numerous resources via the Drug Education Council via CAPP, Baldwin Youth Services, Court Referral Services via drug screening and educational classes, Altapointe/Mental Health regarding anger management/family counseling/substance abuse referral and related services, and the Youth Advocate Program, as well as residential placements such as the Horizon wilderness Camp in our County, Westwood (substance abuse facility) in neighboring Mobile County, and programs run via the Department of Youth Services when necessary.</p>	<p>It is our fear that continued budget cuts will endanger our youths' chances of rehabilitating fully prior to adulthood, as there are numerous statistical data that indicate a failure to properly fund diversionary based efforts in juvenile court tend to increase adult crime rates in the future. While we are blessed to have so many programs, we have seen a move to a more privately based fund raising effort among the groups that are not run by a governmental entity, and continue to see a diminishment in bed spaces available to Juveniles at the DYS level.</p>

Action steps that will result in progress toward meeting the identified need:

We hope to continue to maintain our relationship with the County Commission, that we can maintain our staffing in dealing with pretrial/intake resolution of juvenile criminal activity.

We hope to establish similar partnerships with the Board of Education to address school based issues, beginning with Truancy, in expanding diversion based programs to prevent juveniles from straying away from the right path.

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Third Priority

Need related to children of this county

Foster Care

Existing resources available to help meet this need include:	Resources needed but unavailable to meet this need include:
<p>DHR offers training to prepare new families to house Foster Children throughout the year, and has worked diligently to find safety plans for many children to prevent their placement into Foster Care. REAP (via altapointe) continues to offer services, many times in-home, for families in peril of having children placed into DHRs care. The Juvenile Court continues to set numerous dockets to accomodate private dependency petitions filed by relatives of children in peril of going into Foster Care. The Heath Department continues to offer family planning services to the public at large to possibly prevent situations occurring which would subject children to the peril of being placed in Foster Care.</p>	<p>Better advertising for potential Foster Families to learn of the opportunity. PSA advertising in the wee hours of the night and mornings doesn't seem to reach enough people who could make room for Foster children in their lives. Better access to drug prevention services by the general public and pregnant women in particular could help to prevent household situations that could be dangerous to children by helping parents become/remain drug free and able to meet their children's needs to keep them out of foster care.</p>

Action steps that will result in progress toward meeting the identified need:

Have persons with some authority/sway and an interest in Foster Care issues address the lack of Foster Homes in our state via a true media campaign, such as the First Lady of Alabama seems to propose in her various speaking engagements. Address large employers, including those such as the local boards of education and county commissions, to offer some sort of financial stipend to employees who will become Foster Parents. Emphasize the need for appropriate prenatal care in a variety of settings to be certain young persons who could become (biological) parents receive the appropriate information relative to creating a safe home for their babies.