

## SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE

### BROOKLYN'S YOUNG ADULT COURT OFFERS DIVERSION AND TREATMENT TO HIGH-RISK ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS



The late DA Kenneth Thompson (far left), instrumental to the office's adolescent diversion prosecution initiatives, attended the opening ceremony for KCDA's Young Adult Court on May 6, 2016. At the lectern is a 16-year-old program participant, who instead of receiving a jail sentence, completed mandated hours at the Brownsville Community Justice Program, where he designed a conflict resolution video game.

Johanne Macajoux, a prosecutor with more than 11 years of experience, serves as the Bureau Chief for the Brooklyn Young Adult Court (BYAC) of the Young Adult Justice Initiative at the Kings County District Attorney's Office. BYAC is a criminal diversion program that steers young, high-risk misdemeanants away from the traditional criminal justice pipeline and sets them on a pathway to improve their lives. The program's goal is to prevent high-risk juveniles and young adults from recidivating while providing them with appropriate treatment to address their needs, as determined by a risk needs assessment.

Prior to its Smart Prosecution grant in FY '15, BYAC eligibility was restricted to 16–17-year-old individuals facing misdemeanor charges. However, with Smart Prosecution funding, BYAC expanded to include young adults up to age 24. Participants as young as sixteen years of age are eligible for BYAC, because in New York State, offenders as young as sixteen can be processed in the adult criminal system.

Ms. Macajoux notes that young adults are disproportionately involved in the criminal justice system. While 18–24-year-olds comprise just 10 percent of the U.S. population, they

*Learn about King County's Brooklyn Young Adult Court on pages 1-2*

*Turn to page 3 to read about San Francisco's new Gun Enforcement Unit*

*Read about how San Diego is evaluating Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) curricula on page 4*

*Turn to page 4 to read about Kansas City's visit to the New York County District Attorney's Office (DANY) in Manhattan*

account for almost 30 percent of criminal arrests. Ms. Macajoux stresses that juvenile brain development—particularly in the regions controlling decision-making and psychosocial skills—may not be fully developed until adulthood. Therefore, adolescents and young adults are

more likely to engage in risky behavior and have difficulty moderating their responses in emotionally-charged situations. These factors lead to high volumes of juvenile cases as well as recidivism.

From March 2016 through December, BYAC handled over 2,000 cases involving 1,057 defendants a marked 311% increase from 2015 when 339 defendants received services. All cases have been diverted to social services and alternative-to-incarceration programs through Brooklyn Justice Initiatives (BJI), an organization that works with BYAC and its research partner Center for Court Innovation (CCI). BJI assists the BYAC team in the courtroom daily.

Nine months into the program, the bureau chief says her team is excited to have its first evaluation meeting with CCI. CCI provides the initiative with monthly reports on the number of defendants enrolled in services as well as comprehensive data analysis of case processing and outcomes of the program's participants. Once the evaluation is complete, CCI will help disseminate tools to practitioners interested in the diversion-based approaches for young people facing charges. "CCI is a great partner," Ms. Macajoux says. "The open lines of communication between us have facilitated opportunities for us to improve the model."

Ms. Macajoux and her team also eagerly anticipate incorporating procedural justice into the program. She explains that procedural justice typically emphasizes the importance of respect, understanding, having a voice, and neutrality in the courtroom. To address this, Ms. Macajoux and her team hope to implement earlier case conferencing. BYAC team members will distribute procedural justice surveys to defendants early in the process.

BYAC aims to make its daily operations more efficient while reducing recidivism through open communication and collaboration with partners. Buy-in from the defense bar, an initial challenge, has been improved through increased communication and training. Monthly meetings with stakeholders are hosted by the presiding Justice. On April 8, 2016, CCI hosted a stakeholder training session on topics featuring: Young Adult Brain Development, Risks Needs Responsivity, and Procedural Justice.

Building on CCI's training curriculum, the young adult diversion program plans to host trainings for criminal court judges, new assistant district attorneys and the defense bar, respectively. These training sessions will feature an overview of BYAC and its procedures, while showcasing the programs offered by BJI. Ms. Macajoux explains that showcasing programs and services available to practitioners is a key component of this model as it creates a menu of options for individuals eligible for diversion.

The bureau chief also notes a helpful Peer-to-Peer exchange with another jurisdiction that also specialized in serving young people, and collaboration with the defense bar to promote these diversion efforts. Ms. Macajoux and her team look forward to more Peer-to-Peer exchanges and

fostering relationships with other Smart Prosecution sites. She explains, "With the addition of the FY '16 sites, particularly those working with young adults, we anticipate further peer-to-peer exchanges."

Ms. Macajoux credits BYAC's success to several people: Acting District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, Counsel to the District Attorney Maritza Ming, paralegal Yvonne Jackson-Barrett, clerk Michael Mercado, project coordinator Shakiva Pierre, and BYAC's specialized prosecution unit that comprises of three Assistant District Attorneys— Ann Goodman-Lieb, Selaine Saunders, and Cara Sherman. Ms. Macajoux also credits staff employed by BYAC's research partner, CCI: Director of Operations Adam Mansky, Director of Criminal Justice Operations Courtney Bryan, Project Director of Brooklyn Justice Initiatives Aisha Greene, and Associate Director of Research, Center Demonstration Projects Lenore Lebron.

BYAC and KCDA's Young Adult Justice Initiative have been profiled in national syndicate *The Wall Street Journal* as well as Brooklyn's local news sources *The Brooklyn Eagle*, *News 12 Brooklyn*.

# SITE ACTIVITY

## FY '14 SMART PROSECUTION SITES

### HARRIS COUNTY (HOUSTON)

**PROJECT:** *SURVIVORS ACQUIRING FREEDOM AND EMPOWERMENT (SAFE) COURT*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** Three team members attended the Michigan State University Smart Suite Researcher Practitioner Fellows Academy from February 7-10, 2017, in Denver, CO. The conference will assist the team as it continues to utilize supervised, targeted intervention and treatment for young adults between the ages of 17 – 25 years old charged with misdemeanor prostitution.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [In Their Own Words: How Texas Pimps Recruit and Sell Girls for Sex...](#)

### LOS ANGELES

**PROJECT:** *INTRODUCING NEW TOOLS USING EVIDENCE AND RISK ASSESSMENT TO CONFIRM ELIGIBILITY FOR PROSECUTION TREATMENT (INTERCEPT)*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** Project INTERCEPT, a pre-diversion program, offers prosecutorial diversion strategies, such as participation in community panels and restorative justice, for participants charged with certain misdemeanor crimes. Participants in Hollywood and South Los Angeles continue to participate in Neighborhood Justice Panels to discuss crimes committed and how their crimes affect the community.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [Traffic Gridlock Is Linked to More Crime...](#)

### SAN FRANCISCO

**PROJECT:** *CASE STRATEGIES UNIT (CSU)*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** In February, the team is planning a call with SME Faye Taxman to discuss program sustainability for CSU. The Unit uses data and predictive analytics for strategic prosecution connecting criminal events, defendants, witnesses, and victims to facilitate more effective investigation and prosecution.

The office launched its Gun Enforcement Unit (GEU) due to a 29% increase in homicides between 2014–2016. GEU will assess each firearms-related offense to determine whether enhanced or vertical prosecution efforts are warranted. The office is collaborating with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)'s Crime Gun Intelligence Center for this initiative.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [California looks to roll back penalties for HIV transmission...](#)

### CHICAGO

**PROJECT:** *MISDEMEANOR DEFERRED ENHANCEMENT PROSECUTION PROGRAM (MDEPP)*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** There are over 1,000 participants in the Smart Prosecution Grant-funded MDPEP. MDPEP processes low-level offenders charged with non-violent misdemeanor offenses and refers them to treatment and other resources. To date, the successful completion/case dismissal rate is 90.6%, failure rate is 9.3%, and over 800 cases were dismissed.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [Legislation to abolish state cash-bail system is introduced...](#)

## FY '15 SMART PROSECUTION SITES

### ST. LOUIS

**PROJECT:** *THE FELONY REDIRECT PROGRAM (FRP)*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** The Felony Redirect Program continues to offer Post-Plea/Deferred Sentencing to non-violent felony offenders with minimal or no criminal history. FRP enables these participants to accept responsibility for their actions and enter an intensive course of supervision with programs such as behavior modification, education, job skills training and employment, and community service designed to redirect from the criminal justice system towards a more positive and productive position in the community.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [Victims Plead For Investigation, Notification Of Attempted Gun Purchases...](#)

### BALTIMORE

**PROJECT:** *IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE-BASED RISK ASSESSMENT DURING THE PRETRIAL PHASE*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** The site continues to develop an automated, pretrial release risk assessment for charging prosecutors to determine appropriate pretrial release or hold recommendations. The State's Attorney's Office, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and research partners are collaborating to develop this uniform, pretrial risk assessment for all agencies' usage.

On January 6, team members participated in a meeting hosted by the Post Arrest Committee of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). During the meeting, Project Coordinator Sarah Labus discussed the project's status.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [Baltimore residents turn to Guardian Angels to fight crime...](#)

## KINGS COUNTY (BROOKLYN)

**PROJECT:** *THE BROOKLYN YOUNG ADULT JUSTICE INITIATIVE*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** On January 19, KCDA and the Brooklyn Justice Initiative led a BYAC presentation to the Kings County Criminal Bar Association. Team members explained their process of diverting young adult misdemeanants, 16– 24 years old, who are at the greatest risk for re-offending and/or are facing more serious criminal consequences, and the services to assist them based on needs assessment.

In early February, the site is planning an office-wide training for approximately 50 ADAs handling misdemeanor cases for young adults. One purpose of the meeting is to discuss service referrals for program participants at arraignment to prevent re-arrest during pendency of the case. Organization referrals may include services for: employment readiness, conflict resolution, anger management, mental health, substance abuse, and other community-based programs. As of January 30, there are a total of 1,863 cases pending in the Court Part. That number is reduced from 2,000 last month.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [Senate Democrats brace for battle in juvenile justice reform....](#)

## SAN DIEGO

**PROJECT:** *THE COMMUNITY JUSTICE INITIATIVE (CJI)*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** Since the program's inception in November 2014, 1163 of San Diego misdemeanants completed the post-plea initiative that provided them with accountability, early intervention and swift consequences. Also since November 2014, there have been 3320 CJI offers; 2270 CJI accepted offers; 1100 CJI rejected offers; and 310 participant failures.

The team is evaluating Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) curricula as a result of an initial analysis presented by the research partner, SANDAG (San Diego Association of Government) of the COMPAS, (needs assessment) to highlight the needs and level of risk of clients. On January 9, the team participated in an exchange with SME Peter Morris, San Francisco Collaborative Courts, and Site Champion, Allyson West regarding potential implementation of the Think Curriculum for CJI program participants.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [San Diego crime rates drop to lowest level in four decades....](#)

## FY '16 SMART PROSECUTION SITES

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**PROJECT:** *USING OUR BRAINS: REDUCING RECIDIVISM AMONG YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** On January 26, the Smart Prosecution team attended a Stakeholder Meeting at the DC US Attorney's Office to discuss young adult case eligibility and referral process. The site is in the process of completing its MOU with the US Attorney's Office. Both offices will collaborate to develop a diversion-based initiative, using restorative justice, for youth (ages 12-17) and young adults (ages 18-24) who commit certain crimes, such as theft, destruction of property and non-injury simple assault cases with victim consent.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [In the Public Interest: Attorney General's Midterm Report....](#)

### KANSAS CITY

**PROJECT:** *JACKSON COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE SMART PROSECUTION INITIATIVE*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** The team and its research partner have identified micro hotspot areas in the East Zone to target gun-related crimes. Project Lead Kate Brubacher consulted with SME Janet Fine of North Eastern University, to discuss victim witness unit development and community engagement for victims and/or families of victims living in the East Zone.

On January 17-18, Project Lead Kate Brubacher visited The New York County District Attorney's Office (DANY) in Manhattan and met with Victim Witness Aid Unit Director, Beverly Gilchrist, and Audrey Moore, Chief of DANY's Special Victims Bureau. The Center for Court Innovation organized her visit to the Crown Heights Community Mediation Center and the Red Hook Community Justice Center.

The site will begin planning a Trauma Training Program for Community Stakeholders.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [Kansas City is now a smart city....](#)

### MIAMI

**PROJECT:** *THE GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION INITIATIVE*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** Site members conducted a strategic planning meeting on January 17. The site and its research partners discussed strategies and challenges for The Gun Violence Unit, a team of prosecutors, investigators, and community and victim witness specialists working directly with police and the community to prosecute homicides, contact, and non-contact shooting in the Northside District.

The team is co-located at the Northside District Police Station where prosecutors go directly to the crime scene with investigators.

**RELATED ARTICLE:** [Youth Crime Watch program arms kids with tips, tools to prevent crime, violence....](#)

## NEWARK

**PROJECT:** *ESSEX COUNTY SMART SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVE*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** The site will dedicate a specialized unit to identify, investigate and prosecute select cases based upon an offender's use of social media. Site members conducted a strategic planning meeting on January 11. The site discussed developing a matrix for case selection. Matrix criteria will identify offenders, ages, offenses, social media usage, gang affiliations, criminal history, and municipality. Team members anticipate their unit will begin screening cases on March 1, 2017.

The site is planning to train their juvenile department about its initiative.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [New Jersey Municipalities Seek Sustainability Solutions in Tech Competition....](#)

## SAVANNAH

**PROJECT:** *THE CHATHAM COUNTY SMART PROSECUTION PROGRAM*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** Four team members attended the Michigan State University Smart Suite Researcher Practitioner Fellows Academy from February 7-10, 2017 in Denver, CO.

The site and its Research Partner, Dr. Chad Posick, have identified a hotspot area to target violent offenders for vertical prosecution. The team is in the process of developing a screening process to track the most violent offenders active in these areas.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [Savannah crime stats for January show drop in violent crime....](#)

## FY '16 3PI SITE

### SEATTLE

**PROJECT:** *SHOTS FIRED*

**SITE HIGHLIGHTS:** The site welcomes Frank Carrubba, Managing Attorney, San Francisco District Attorney's Office, as its Site Champion. Mr. Carrubba will provide guidance as the site develops a CSU to address firearm violence occurring in hotspot locations within the jurisdiction. The site is also collaborating with seven law enforcement agencies, the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health and research partners.

Six team members attended the Michigan State University Smart Suite Researcher Practitioner Fellows Academy from February 7-10, 2017 in Denver, CO.

**WEEKLY NEWS:** [Victims Plead For Investigation, Notification Of Attempted Gun Purchases....](#)

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This newsletter was supported by Grant No. 2014-YX-BX-K001 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.