

The Wave

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TIDES' NEWEST PROGRAM PROVIDES SUPPORT FOR YOUTH ON PROBATION

AARON IS A ONE BIRTHDAY CANDLE AWAY from turning 18 and he has already lived a life most young people his age cannot even imagine. Estranged from his parents, Aaron turned to the streets, dealing and doing drugs. Eventually he was caught and sent to the Rhode Island Training School.

After serving half of a 12-month sentence, Aaron was eligible for early release. It was then that Aaron's future took a 180-degree turn. The Youth Transition Center (YTC), Tides' newest program for youth eligible for early release from the Rhode Island Training School, is designed to help youngsters serve out their probation successfully and reduce the chances of repeat offenders.

The YTC is a hub for not only Tides' vast array of services, but for those social service agencies that address the client's specific

"I've come to a meeting where no one wanted the kid and I said, 'I'll take him.'"

**CESAR PEREZ
TIDES FAMILY SERVICES**

needs, such as substance abuse. Tides works closely with the state's probation program and, in fact, probation officers are located in Tides' Providence site.

"It's one-stop shopping," said Cesar Perez, YTC director for Outreach and Tracking Program. "Our purpose is to bring all the services to clients and their families. Here, they can go to their group, see their caseworker, probation officer and social service caseworker all in the same day."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Aaron, left, spends some quality time with YTC Director for Outreach and Tracking Cesar Perez and YTC Supervisor for Outreach and Tracking Jasmin Osorio.



TIDES FAMILY SERVICES

OUR MISSION

is to provide high-risk youth with comprehensive, preventive services that promote personal growth and better connect them with their families and communities.

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SKL Communications, copy/photography
Greenpoint Graphics, design/layout
ABS Printing, printing

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Printing for Tides publications is through the generosity of
MAKROD Investment Associates, Inc.,
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IN THE WORKS AT TIDES

■ OUTCOME EVALUATION: An evaluation that will help Tides measure the success of its program and ensure that clients are receiving the highest quality services is currently underway. The Outcome Evaluation program is in its design stages, but once completed will be an effective tool to monitor program quality, high levels of client service and accountability to our funders.

■ TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE: A team of volunteer specialists from Gilbane Construction, Citizens Bank, and Johnson and Wales University are working with Tides to produce a comprehensive assessment of Tides' information technology needs, and to make recommendations to upgrade hardware and software agency-wide. Upgrading and enhancing our computer technology will allow us to gather and disseminate relevant information for accurate and timely decision-making that is reinforced with solid and reliable data. It will allow field staff to input client data directly into the central computer system from remote sites, saving time, money and valuable resources. It will provide outcome data that will help us to ensure the effectiveness of programs. "We are grateful and appreciative for the wonderful partnership between businesses and nonprofit organizations," Br. Michael Reis, Tides CEO said.

YOUTH TRANSITION CENTER CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Aaron's first encounter with Tides Family Services was at the Training School's transition center where he met Cesar.

"We lay out the ground rules and make sure that the kid understands that he has to follow the program or there will be consequences," Cesar said. "I come from the philosophy that we never say no to a kid. I've come to a meeting where no one wanted the kid and I said, 'I'll take him.'"

Once Tides accepts the client, Jasmin Osorio, YTC supervisor for the Outreach and Tracking Program, takes over. She arranges home visit and meetings with clients, and coordinates all the service providers. Goals are set for the client and the team members. "Our transition meetings are not just to make the client accountable, but to hold ourselves accountable as well," Jasmin said.

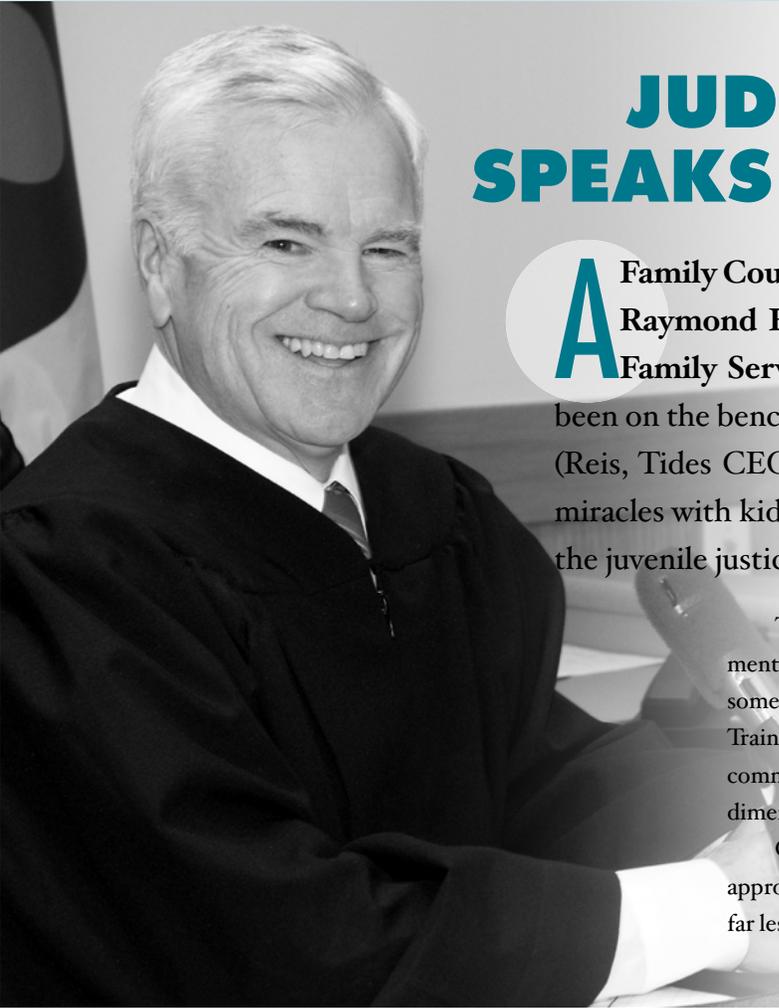
For youngsters not quite ready for assimilation into the community, Tides coordinates services with the State's Step-Down Program. After intensive counseling, and when the youngster is ready to return home, Tides takes over. Caseworkers are in contact with clients at least three times a day, making sure they are in school, encouraging them to work on their goals and planning recreational activities.

As part of the program, every client is required to do community service. Over the past year, kids have volunteered with AS220, Caritas House, CCAP and several area schools. Last summer, Cesar and his staff took advantage of a federal stimulus program and placed 25 kids in summer jobs.

Without the constant supervision and oversight provided by the YTC, these youngsters would have nowhere to go except back to the very streets that got them in trouble in the first place. By holding them accountable, connecting them with services that will continue after their probation ends, their chances of success increase enormously.

The YTC's current case load is 50, but their goal is to reach 65. The success rate hovers near 90 percent. Aaron is testimony to the YTC's effectiveness:

Aaron is in his second semester at the Community College of Rhode Island where he is pursuing an associate's degree in general studies. He is already looking ahead to the future and plans to continue his education at a four-year school to earn a bachelor's degree in business and administration. "If it wasn't for Tides, I'd still be selling drugs," Aaron said.



JUDGE SHAWCROSS SPEAKS OUT FOR TIDES

A Family Court judge for nearly 24 years, Associate Justice Raymond E. Shawcross is a strong supporter of Tides Family Services. “I’ve been working with Tides since I’ve been on the bench,” he said, “And I have known Brother Michael (Reis, Tides CEO) even longer. I’ve seen how Tides has worked miracles with kids. Br. Michael has made a substantial impact on the juvenile justice system in Rhode Island.”

The partnership among the juvenile justice system, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and Tides allows some youth who might otherwise be placed in the Rhode Island Training School, group, residential, or foster homes to return to their communities under the guidance and supervision of Tides multi-dimensional programs.

Countless studies have proven that youngsters who receive the appropriate guidance and support, such as they receive at Tides, are far less likely to be repeat offenders than those who are incarcerated.

“There are no other agencies in Rhode Island that do what Tides does.”

Judge Shawcross would agree: “The easy answer is to lock them up, but we all know that doesn’t work. The individual attention that kids receive at Tides keeps them out of the Training School, and the fact that Tides never gives up on a kid.”

Aaron, a Tides client, is a case study of how Tides, DCYF, and the juvenile justice system work hand in hand to seek better and more effective alternatives for juvenile offenders. Incarcerated for drug dealing, after serving six months of a one year sentence, Aaron was a candidate for Tides YTC program. Today, the 18-year old is a student at the Community College of Rhode Island with ambitions of earning a bachelor’s degree in business at a four-year school (see story on page 1).

Kortny, 15, has a different story, but one that could easily have brought her before Judge Shawcross. Referred to Tides for persistent school problems, Kortny’s grades began to improve, her attitude changed and today she is back at her home high school looking forward to graduation.

“Because of Tides we are able to avoid sending kids to the Training School, which is better for the kid and cost effective for the taxpayer. In the short term, the money is not spent on residential placement or the Training School, but in the community. In the long term, we are gaining productive members of society,” Judge Shawcross said.

According to the 2009 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook, “...Key components of successful community-based programs to prevent juvenile recidivism are the provisions of intensive family therapy and an acknowledgement of the critical role families, homes and communities play in resolving delinquency....”

Tides fits that description and more, according to Judge Shawcross: “There are no other agencies in Rhode Island that do what Tides does. No other agency is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. It’s Tides that allows kids to be in their homes and their communities.”



TIDES APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Franks P. Sullivan has joined the Tides family as director of development. A successful entrepreneur, teacher, fundraiser and public relations consultant, Frank comes to Tides from the Salvation Army, where he served as director of development and public relations for two years. His vast array of experiences include positions as a political consultant, budget analyst, international salesman and foreign student program organizer. In addition, he was a secondary teacher of French and Latin in the East Providence schools system and has taught mortgage financing at the School of Rhode Island Association of Realtors. Frank holds a BA in English Education from Providence College and a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Rhode Island.

SAVE THE DATE A RENAISSANCE EVENING WITH TIDES

Circle July 16 on your calendar for a spectacular evening by the bay at the Aldrich Mansion, Warwick Neck. Great food and beautiful music by the Johnny Badessa Group will be the background for *A Renaissance Evening* where Tides Family Services will honor Centreville Bank and the Honorable Pamela Macktaz for their work in the community. Honorary chair is Gene DeGraide, and chairs are Nancy and Greg Laboissonniere. For more information, or for reservations, contact Barbara G. DeCesare at 401.823.3884 or bgd53@cox.net.

Centreville Bank Director of Marketing Ann Harty, left, and volunteer Judith Cuccorelli work on plans for Tides Family Services' Humanitarian Awards dinner, A Renaissance Evening.



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