The Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency (MCCD) is celebrating its 60th year of promoting state justice policies that are fair, effective and affordable.

Since it was established in 1956, MCCD has been a trailblazer in Michigan, partnering with communities on crime prevention strategies, promoting fair and equitable access to justice, expanding community-based alternatives to incarceration, and improving outcomes through safe and effective treatment.

Over the next few months we are commemorating MCCD’s 60 years of service by showcasing its legacy of accomplishments throughout the decades. These briefs will lead up to MCCD’s 60th Anniversary Gala on September 9th at Weber’s Inn, Ann Arbor – we hope to see you there!

1986-1996: Major Changes in the Juvenile and Adult Justice Systems

During this decade, MCCD and its partners witnessed major policy changes in the juvenile and adult justice systems as part of the “tough on crime” philosophy sweeping the country. These include expansion of the automatic waiver of juveniles to adult court for trial and sentencing and Michigan’s massive prison expansion.

Leadership in Lansing engaged in a political feeding frenzy - labeling juveniles, particularly youth of color, as “super predators”. The legislature gave little thought to the unintended consequences of their acts and, as a result, the Department of Corrections became the unwitting parent to hundreds of children. Even more disturbing, prison inmates stepped into the role of mentor, as more youth were sent to adult prisons.

In the midst of this frenzy, MCCD did not stand still, but pushed as much program and policy change as possible.

Children’s Visitation Program

In 1989, the Skillman Foundation generously funded MCCD’s Children’s Visitation Program (CVP) to coordinate children’s therapeutic visits with their mothers, provide parenting education and counseling, and advocate for the children in their caregiving families. Mary King, MCCD’s current Executive Director, was originally hired as the first CVP Program Coordinator!

CVP served between 100-120 children every month. On
designated Saturdays, volunteer drivers transported children from all over the state to Huron Valley Women’s Facility in Ypsilanti, MI for a supervised visit with their mothers. In addition, the CVP clinical staff received many requests to make regular home visits with the children and assist in addressing issues such as truancy, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, delinquency, financial assistance, employment, financial aid and help with college tuition.¹

Nearly 90% of incarcerated women are mothers. Approximately 75% had sole responsibility for their children prior to their arrest. Every year, the incarceration of women causes the immediate breakup of families across the state. Most often, there are few services and support networks available to deal with the many physical and psychological needs of the children involved.²

The Children’s Visitation Program worked to provide a continuum of care for children during their separation from their mothers.

During the early 1990’s, CVP:

- Provided parent education to mothers in the program;
- Counseled children and caregiving families in the child’s home environment;
- Counseled incarcerated mothers;
- Assisted children and caregivers in accessing available local services; and,
- Trained over 165 volunteers from throughout Michigan who transported the children for the Saturday visits with their mothers.

Preventing Violence By & Toward Children

In July 1994, the City of Lansing and the Ingham County Commission appointed a 21-member coalition, representative of public and nonprofit agencies, community and neighborhood organizations, schools, businesses, private citizens and parents, to develop a comprehensive community-wide strategy to prevent violence by and toward youth.³

MCCD worked with the Ingham County/City of Lansing Youth Violence Prevention Coalition and the Lansing Advertising Club Public Service Committee to develop an anti-violence prevention campaign aimed at helping children and youth. Research suggested that violence by and toward youth was really an adult problem emerging from adult patterns of behavior. The Lansing Advertising Club members,

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volunteering their expertise in media, messages and advertising, worked with content provided by MCCD on the antecedents of violence.

The Campaign became a community project with paper, printing, billboard space, and creative talent all donated to the effort. Posters, table tents, billboards, radio and television public service announcements were disseminated to get out the message.

Although the campaign message was described as “edgy,” it really was positive in that it identified a problem, suggested solutions, and gave a statewide number connecting parents to parenting services. As a result of the collective efforts, the Lansing Advertising Club won local, regional, and national advertising awards. Funding was also pursued in order to continue the campaign efforts and develop new messages.

**MCCD Creates Research and Evaluation Division**

MCCD’s continued, through its new Research and Evaluation Division, to identify the prevalence, causes and effects of crime and victimization and to ascertain the efficacy of public policies and programs attempting to address these problems. The MCCD Research and Evaluation Division ensured that data, research and evaluation were available to justice professionals, decision makers, service providers and the public during the development of policies and programs aimed at preventing and reducing crime and victimization. In addition to numerous local data analysis and program evaluations, MCCD’s Research Division produced: 4

- “Analysis of Michigan Department of Social Services Data on Foster Care Needs.”
- “Wayne County Juvenile Home Recommendations.”

**MCCD’s Public Education & Advocacy Efforts**

In 1994, MCCD created a public education program where citizens and communities across Michigan had access to accurate information regarding crime, delinquency, family violence, criminal and juvenile justice trends, community corrections and prevention. MCCD’s public education effort responded to request for information by citizens and organizations, produced and disseminated newsletters and reports, and conducted state and local training and education seminars, workshops and conferences. 5

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4 Id.
5 Id.
MCCD’s history becomes even richer over the next 10 years. Stay tuned for our FINAL installment with highlights of our next decade, 2006-2016.