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“CHARTING CHANGE”

PROGRESS IN THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

IYC KEWANEE

MODELS FOR CHANGE INITIATIVE
JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION
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The John Howard Association of Illinois provides critical public oversight of the state's prisons, jails, and juvenile correctional facilities. As it has for more than a century, the Association promotes fair, humane, and effective sentencing and correctional policies, addresses inmate concerns, and provides Illinois citizens and decision-makers with information needed to improve criminal and juvenile justice.

As a partner in the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change juvenile justice initiative, the John Howard Association of Illinois has been tasked with observing first hand each of Illinois' eight Youth Centers, the secure correctional facilities operated by Illinois' new Department of Juvenile Justice, and to report on the Department's progress toward reforms consistent with Models for Change goals. Progress will be measured according to "performance measures" proposed for each Youth Center and for the Department overall.

This report describes one Youth Center and the performance measures proposed for it in 2007. The report also describes first steps that have been taken by the new Department of Juvenile Justice to improve conditions and operations, as well as particular obstacles associated with the Youth Center. Collectively, the reports on all eight of Illinois' Youth Centers are intended as a resource for policymakers, advocates, Models for Change partners, the media and the public who seek to understand secure confinement as it exists for youth in Illinois and the challenge of bringing about change in the ways that Illinois now incarcerates troubled youth. Individually and collectively these reports provide a base-line reference for annual updates on the Department's progress at each Youth Center and on periodic reports on issues such as education, staffing, disciplinary practices, reentry or "aftercare" for youth, and the Department's budgetary needs.

This report draws upon the observations of volunteer citizen visitors who through the John Howard Association provide public oversight of prisons, jails, and juvenile corrections facilities. These visits bring people from many walks of life into closed institutions where they can observe activities and conditions and speak with residents and employees.

This report was written by and under the direction of Malcolm C. Young with Patricia Connell and with contributions from John Howard Association of Illinois staff members Charles A. Fasano and Jannifer Nevilles.

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CHAPTER THREE: “CHARTING CHANGE”
PROGRESS IN THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
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IYC KEWANEE

IYC Kewanee opened in November 2001, is the newest Department of Juvenile Justice facility. IYC Kewanee is in a rural area of the state, approximately 150 miles from Chicago, 15 miles south of Interstate 80 and 50 miles east of the Iowa state line. It is not close to any large urban center, major hospital, mental health facility, or institution of higher learning.

The town of Kewanee’s modest business district is about two miles southwest of the Youth Center. Two small housing developments are not much more than a thousand yards away from IYC Kewanee’s southwestern perimeter. Two large manufacturing plants or distribution centers are across the street from the entrance and parking area, backed by Burlington Northern tracks as they run into Kewanee. But none of these are obvious from the parking area on the north side of the facility. IYC Kewanee appears far removed from normal commerce and habitation. It leaves the impression with most visitors of being smack in the middle of corn fields.

IYC Kewanee is comprised of two sets of connected residential units symmetrically arranged to the west and east of a complex of larger buildings built on a north-south axis. The property is on flat land from which all trees and shrubs have been removed. It is encircled by a utility road surrounded by parallel twenty foot cyclone fences topped with razor wire. There is an access through a reception center for visitors on the north side and a security entrance for employees on the south side.

During much of the year a brisk wind, hot in the summer and cold in the winter, blows across the Illinois plain. That wind, the visual isolation, the fence and IYC Kewanee’s design exaggerate the starkness and remoteness of the place.

IYC Kewanee was designed to achieve maximum security against a population perceived to be dangerous despite their youth, the “violent superpredators” described with great impact by John DiIulio in the mid-1990s.¹ There are few windows and they are small in relation to the faces of the buildings, thick, and do not open. Doors are secured with heavy bolts that buzz open on command of an officer nearly invisible behind darkened glass. There is no relief from the cement, steel and bullet-proof-like glass construction. Furniture is unitary, uniform, and fixed in place. Except in administrative offices, there are no loose items, such as wall decorations, book shelves, floor lights, or wooden furnishings.

The complex of larger buildings consists of a building which houses administration, the school, treatment provider offices, a visiting area, the confinement unit, the cafeteria. There is a

¹ John J. DiIulio, Jr. “Fill Churches, not Jails: Youth Crime and ‘Superpredators,’” a statement submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee 28 February 1996. DiIulio proclaimed to a receptive congress and enamored press: “No one relishes the thought of locking up more juveniles. But it must be done...OJJDP and the rest of the federal juvenile justice establishment needs to get out of its anti-incarceration time warp...” Unfortunately, DiUllio’s description of a coming wave of violent youth influenced public officials and corrections construction as evidenced by the hardened adult-prison-style design of both IYC Kewanee and IYC Chicago.

large gymnasium. The residential units located to each side of the larger buildings consist of three separate wings with a central control area as a hub. Counting the hubs that are connected to medical and mental health units, there are six of these control units or hubs. Youth sleep in small, not cramped, single bed rooms furnished with a combined stainless steel toilet and sink, a platform bed, and a fixed desk and stool. The door to each room is as solid and secure as any in an adult maximum security prison. Each room has an outside window, larger than at the older Youth Centers and without bars. But the view outside is likely to be a wall or a flat, empty yard. Rooms with views of any kind of living thing save short-cut grass are rare. Each wing of each housing unit has its own fenced recreation area. There are about 14 of these. The recreation areas are too confined to allow for any kind of athletic fields. There appear to be two outdoor ball fields on the property. They are the only common outside areas where boys who live here could possibly gather or play organized competitive sports.

Movement between the housing units and the main administration building including food service is along bare concrete walk ways. Just in the last year, IYC Kewanee's staff planted some flowers along the cement walks.

The interiors of the buildings themselves are strikingly neat and clean. Walls are cement block. Floors are linoleum tile, highly waxed and polished. During our first visit the entire facility was painted one color: beige.

The word "institutional" does not do Kewanee justice: it is built like a modern, maximum-security adult prison. In fact, it is harder, harsher, and more immovably solid than many adult maximum security prisons that John Howard Association visitors have seen in Illinois or other states.

By the time of our visit in 2007, the Department was repainting the interior with brighter colors. Some sports murals covered a few of the walls. This was a start.

IYC Kewanee is a specialized Youth Center. It is the sole Department of Juvenile Justice facility for boys in need of sex offender or severe mental health treatment. Its residential units are segregated according to treatment needs. There are separate units for sex offenders, for boys requiring mental health treatment, and for mentally ill boys who also need treatment for substance abuse, or "MISA." But the treatment mission assigned to IYC Kewanee is frustrated by the facility's location. It is too distant from hospitals, medical centers, or any kind of larger population center to draw on the medical and treatment professionals in those locations. The Department has found attracting and keeping qualified treatment professionals to be difficult.

IYC Kewanee's rated capacity is 354 youth in single bed rooms when all units are open. IYC Kewanee is classified as "high medium security" Youth Center, but it does house some maximum security youth who are assigned to IYC Kewanee because of their treatment needs.

Performance Measures for IYC Kewanee

A. Physical Setting

IYC Kewanee faces an insurmountable challenge in attempting to adjust its physical appearance to something that is appropriate for adolescents. The residential units and individual rooms are exactly what would be expected of a modern prison built with security foremost in the architect's mind. The main buildings are massive, quite out of scale for young people. Inside, IYC Kewanee is lighter and brighter than some of Illinois' older Youth Centers. But it is hard, cold and sterile. The visitor's entrance sets the tone. As is most of the Youth Center, it is bland and beige without any adornment save the plaque seen at all Youth Centers bearing the names and pictures of State and Department of Juvenile Justice officials. There is no decoration, no art, not even a copy of the Department's mission statement to inspire. There is nothing to suggest that IYC Kewanee was designed for troubled youth or that its designers considered the relationship of environment to the goal of shaping in positive ways the impressionable and forming minds of youth.

1. Providing appropriate wall decoration throughout the building.

IYC Kewanee had been open only a few weeks when a John Howard Association of Illinois team first visited. One then had the sense of walking through a new home that was not yet occupied and hadn't yet taken on the personality of its residents. Four years later, in 2005, not much had changed other than the addition of some posters and some signs in the school. By 2007 art work created by the youth had been added in the visitors' room. The classrooms in the school and the library had lots of posters and other visual enhancements. The MISA wing had a large mural conceptualized and executed by the youth showing the two paths kids can take. The mural was bright, cheerful and somewhat thought provoking.

But other areas in this Youth Center are barren. The cafeteria has no windows. Its walls are covered in ceramic tile. It appears to have been designed to be cleaned with a fire hose. The medical unit has "rooms" for patients that are clearly simply modifications of the cells that youth live in. With heavy security glass and doors, they look like isolation chambers for captured extra terrestrial creatures in a grade B science fiction film. The outdoor recreation areas are basically flat cement pads surrounded by twenty-foot hurricane fences topped by coils of razor wire. Day rooms, with fixed chairs and tables, have a pure institutional look absent even the clutter of a cork bulletin board. Outside windows are large and let in lots of light, but the view is mostly into an adjacent recreational area or the blank outside of a building. Some windows look out as far as the fields that border the Youth Center grounds. From not one window can a single tree be seen.

*IYC Kewanee will only have begun to satisfy a **performance measure** when it seriously puts into place a program to soften and humanize for youth its hard, stark, security-driven interior design. Someone should "go wild" setting up displays of art work, inspirational posters, notices of achievement and bulletin boards on the living units, and in confinement, treatment and mess halls, and increased displays in the school area. One suggestion we propose in some of the specific performance measures that follow is that the Department of Juvenile Justice invite a competition among creative architects and interior design firms for a plan to economically but*

thoroughly change the visual and textural environment for youth who are incarcerated at IYC Kewanee.

2. Repainting walls in common areas in lighter, brighter and varied colors.

During our 2007 visit the Superintendent was carrying paint strips in a variety of bright colors with her to try out in different parts of the institution. It was her intention to begin to change some walls completely, and to add spots of colors in others. She felt somewhat constrained by a lack of available painters on staff.

*A **performance measure** will be met when painting crews have repainted the walls in common areas, passageways, and perhaps window trim in colors that provide some warmth, variety and visual pleasure. This may not be enough. Following through on our call for a thorough environmental redesign, we recommend here that a **performance measure** at IYC Kewanee be the retention of a professional interior designer to prescribe a program of painting, design, and non-structural modifications to the living units, day rooms, food service areas and medical and mental health units that would mitigate the harshness and bleakness that is built into IYC Kewanee.*

3. Taking steps to improve the appearance and lower the noise level of the facility.

Most efforts to date seem to have been limited to adding decoration and changing paint. More is needed, and our call for a thorough environmental redesign applies here as well.

4. Reducing the use of razor wire.

Kewanee has an abundance of high hurricane fencing topped with razor ribbon. This level of security against escape may be appropriate at adult corrections facilities for potentially violent prisoners who are true escape risks. But the same fencing on the grounds of a Youth Center housing adolescent boys powerfully conveys to people outside and to the youth inside that the authorities consider them to be as much a threat to public safety as the worst of adult prisoners.

In addition, the coils of razor wire that surround each living unit's recreation area destroys basketballs that land in them. As of our visit in 2007, no efforts have been made to take down some or all of the fencing. The Superintendent was particularly interested in getting rid of the razor ribbon around the recreation areas, but believes that some members of the local community would object even to this modification.

5. Increasing and maintaining landscaping efforts and the development of recreational fields.

The grounds at IYC Kewanee offer little in the way of landscaping save abundant grass and a few flower beds.

From inside the Youth Center visitors observed a baseball diamond through several layers of cyclone fencing. It is not apparently put to use on any kind of regular basis. Our impression is that the combination of staff shortages, extreme emphasis on security, and profiles and needs of boys assigned to this Youth Center work against establishing an outdoor

recreational or vocational programs. A **performance measure** will be met when IYC Kewanee assesses the use to which its property can be put to use for recreational and horticultural or other vocational purposes. This step should be part of an effort to change the overall environment of this Youth Facility.

6. Maintaining capacity at Kewanee.

Since its opening, one of IYC Kewanee's housing units has not been in use. Given the Department's overall number of boys needing sex offender treatment, or treatment for severe mental conditions, it is unlikely all beds will ever be needed. Perhaps the Department should give consideration to instituting additional programs for other populations at Kewanee.

7. Meals and food service

Boys eat their meals in a central cafeteria in groups according to living unit. The cafeteria is bland and institutional. It has no natural light. The tile floors and the walls have no strong pattern or color.

Boys eat their meals at communal tables with their living units. They are permitted to talk softly, so long as they eat quickly enough to not interfere with prompt movement to and from the cafeteria.

At our visit in 2007, the administration reported that it has tried to make the state-established menu more "kid friendly." The meal we observed seemed to be well seasoned with some variety and choice. Portions were fairly generous. Youth we spoke with voiced no complaints about food.

The kitchen is, of course, contemporary in design and well equipped. The food service staff were engaged and energetic about the business of serving meals that are nutritious and appeal to boys, working within the limits of the state menu established by the Illinois Department of Corrections.. The supervisor and staff get along well with the boys who are assigned to work in food services. As at most other Youth Centers, boys who work in the kitchen at IYC Kewanee seem to thrive on the experience. Most boys we observed appeared motivated to do a good job. Among boys at IYC Kewanee, these jobs are coveted. Some boys told visitors they wanted to continue in food services after their release.

For IYC Kewanee, a **performance measure** will be met if efforts to improve and enhance the appeal of food served are continued.

For the Department, one **performance measure** will be met by consulting with a dietary and nutritional expert to determine how well the adult menu (identical to that used for the Illinois Department of Corrections, save for the addition of milk) meets the needs of youth, both boys and girls.

An additional Departmental **performance measure** will be met by a meeting of cooks from each Youth Center to discuss recipes, food preparation methods, the state menu, and ideas on employing youth in kitchens or in providing them training and academic or vocational training credits at the same time.

B. Youth at Facility; Classification

1. Can the facility document the demographic profile and delinquency history of youth at the facility, and is documentation consistent with that provided by other Youth Centers? Can they account for the seeming differences in racial makeup between their population and that found at other DJJ facilities?

The administration at IYC Kewanee maintains information about the demographics and delinquency history for all youth at the facility consistent with that maintained by other Department of Juvenile Justice facilities. At the time of our 2007 visit, and indeed in previous years, boys are assigned to IYC Kewanee for one of three purposes: to address issues related to sexual misconduct; to meet the needs of boys who have severe mental health problems; or, to meet the needs of boys who are diagnosed with both a severe mental health problem and a substance abuse problem.

The racial profile of youth at IYC Kewanee has been markedly different from the profile for youth in Department of Juvenile Justice overall. In recent years the population committed to Department of Juvenile Justice has averaged 33% white, 56% black, and 11% Hispanic and "other." At Kewanee, whites make up 56% of the population, blacks 39%, with 5% Hispanic or "other."

One reason for the different racial profile at IYC Kewanee may be that in this same time frame 70% of its population came from central, south and north Illinois, areas with predominantly white populations and which commit numerically fewer minority youth to Department of Juvenile Justice. Another 10-15% comes from the "collar" counties that surround Cook County, also predominantly white. Only 11-15% of IYC Kewanee's youth came from Cook County which commits a mostly-minority population to the Department of Juvenile Justice. In comparison, 32% of the Department of Juvenile Justice's overall population comes from Cook County.

The administration at IYC Kewanee has no explanation for the disparity between racial or geographical profiles of its youth population compared to the profiles in other Department of Juvenile Justice facilities. But as Youth Center staff is not responsible for classification and assignment of youth to their facility, the answer may lie elsewhere. The Superintendent reported that she had been told that Cook County more often sent juvenile sex offenders to private treatment centers. However, she also told visitors that in the past two years (prior to our 2007 visit) the number of sex offenders sent from Cook County had increased.

There are a number of reasons that the uncharacteristic racial and geographical profile at IYC Kewanee prompts concern. It is impossible to determine, however, which reason, or whether any reason, actually applies. These reasons include:

§ *The Department assigns more white youth to its principle treatment facility for boys than it does black or minority youth. The suggestion would be that a disproportionate number of minority youth are assigned to the maximum security facilities at Joliet or Harrisburg, presumably including those who would be in need treatment as a sex offender or for mental illness or dual mental illness and substance abuse treatment needs. In other words, the Department of Juvenile Justice favors white youth with the benefits of its treatment programs.*

- § *Assignment to IYC Kewanee reflects “regionalization,” or the goal of keeping more youth close to their home location and resulting in a disproportionate number of white youth at the facility.*
- § *Judges in Cook County commit proportionally fewer boys to the Department of Juvenile Justice who need the services provided at IYC Kewanee and the Department’s classification and assignment simply reflects Cook County’s different commitment practices. This possibility is reflected in comments suggesting that Cook County handles more of its sex offending youth through county placements.*
- § *Judges in southern and other “downstate” counties more readily commit youth on delinquency petitions in which sexual misconduct is charged, leading to a disproportionate number of youth from those counties being determined to be in need treatment for sexual problems.*
- § *Similarly, judges in downstate counties commit more youth with mental health problems, perhaps because of the lack of community-based mental health services for youth.*

One complication in attempting to set policy for assignment of youth to IYC Kewanee is that, although the Youth Center operates as a “high-medium security” correctional institution, it is perceived to be more restrictive than either IYC Joliet or IYC Harrisburg, both maximum security institutions. (Hence, boys who complete treatment programs at IYC Kewanee are considered eligible to be “stepped down” to IYC Joliet.) So, despite or maybe because of IYC Kewanee’s designation as a treatment facility, it may well be that youth would prefer to be assigned elsewhere. We cannot assume that minority youth would necessarily conclude they were short-changed even if they knew they were underrepresented in IYC Kewanee’s population.

*A major **performance measure** would be met with a thorough, objective evaluation of the treatment needs of all youth committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice and a determination of whether or not boys are being assigned to IYC Kewanee on the basis of consistently-applied evaluation of treatment needs.*

2. Making sure Kewanee is only housing youth in need of the level of security and treatment offered there.

In many respects operations at IYC Kewanee may be far more restrictive than is necessary for youth classified as “medium security.” Even a greater concern is that the emphasis on security that is built into IYC Kewanee may interfere with its treatment mission.

Youth who have been paroled from Kewanee are returned there if they violate the terms of their release. This seems to occur without a new determination of the youth’s need for treatment. However, after Kewanee has had time to evaluate youth returned on parole violations, he may be “step-downed” to St. Charles.

*A significant **performance measure** for IYC Kewanee will be met when youth are fully and adequately screened during reception and classification and when all assignments to IYC Kewanee are for youth whose need for treatment outweighs the restrictions and level of security that ns imposed on youth at IYC Kewanee.*

Our comments and observations here add to concerns about the appropriateness of IYC Kewanee’s mission as a treatment facility due to the difficulty of obtaining qualified mental health, medical staff, and a full compliment of teachers to serve at this location.

3. Minimizing the impact, number and length of assignments to Kewanee of youth from other Department of Juvenile Justice facilities.

Because of its location in relation to other Youth Centers and courts in the state, IYC Kewanee is used as a holding place for boys from a number of central Illinois counties who are scheduled for a return visit to their county court. Boys can remain at Kewanee for this purpose for a week and often longer. Boys awaiting transport are held in the confinement unit, although not necessarily under the same conditions as others in confinement.

In addition, because IYC Kewanee currently has the only operating in-patient infirmary with 24 hour nursing coverage, a number of boys are assigned to Kewanee as the best location in which their medical needs can be met. While not in confinement, these boys are subjected to IYC Kewanee's excessively secure environment and treatment consistent with that provided in a maximum security prison.

At the time of our 2007 visit, IYC Kewanee had taken steps to treat those temporarily assigned there in manners consistent with their individual security classification and needs. The new changes include that youth held on writs or at midpoint in travel to court are no longer forced to spend most of their day in confinement cells. They eat meals in the dining room, have regular recreation schedules and attend facility wide programs like "movie nights" and church services. We spoke to one youth who was spending his second time there on a Writ. He was at IYC Kewanee for three to four weeks on each visit. For the first visit, he was served meals in his confinement cell where he was required to eat with out plastic forks or knives because of security concerns. These restrictions were not in place during his current stay.

John Howard Association of Illinois visitors observed a youth sent to IYC Kewanee for medical care. He was in one of the rooms in the infirmary. Unlike the situation on living units and for youth we observed during other visits, this boy's door was open to the corridor and he was surrounded by reading and writing materials.

*IYC Kewanee seems to be moving in the right direction in managing youth assigned to it while in transit. This Youth Center and the Department of Juvenile Justice will continue to satisfy a **performance measure** as it loosens needless restrictions and permits variations from a regimen designed for youth classified as maximum security for youth who are classified minimum or medium security.*

C. Behavior Management and Discipline

1. Modifying behavior management and institutionalizing balanced and restorative justice

Confinement of youth with serious mental health problems and those who have below average mental capacities for disciplinary purposes has long been criticized. In the past, some youth at IYC Kewanee were placed in confinement for prolonged periods of time. In 2003 a John Howard Association of Illinois team heard about a seriously aggressive youth who was held in confinement for virtually all of six months. He apparently went from one 30 day stretch to another with only brief two or three hour periods in general population in between. Practices at IYC Kewanee are now changing.

During our visit on June, 26, 2006 the Superintendent stated, “We know confinement is not good for kids, especially after one – two days.” She wondered aloud whether a point is reached when putting a kid in confinement on an increasing basis produce no positive result. She now urges that in the instance of a youth whose misbehavior could result in a period of confinement, staff first call in a therapist and seek an alternative outcome before referring the youth to the adjustment committee. In describing disciplinary responses she distinguished between situations such as when there is a fight between youth and a teacher intervenes and is struck, which she believes does not merit automatic confinement, and a situation when a student assaults a teacher outright, which would probably merit the more severe punishment.

The Senior Staff at IYC Kewanee are opposed to mechanically applying disciplinary rules to youth with mental health problems. Administrators expressed an opinion that there are youth at IYC Kewanee who need to be in the care of Illinois’ Department of Mental Health. Some are simply not competent. One example was a 20 year old boy with Downs Syndrome, a long time resident who has been repeatedly returned to the Department on a parole violation for fighting.² As an adult he has been found unfit to stand trial several times. The several civil mental health facilities in which he has been placed on different occasions have been unable to manage his outbreaks of punching and kicking. The staff at IYC Kewanee know this youth well enough to have learned that he reacts violently to the sight of handcuffs, so they keep cuffs out of sight when around him. They wonder what will happen when, at the age of 21, he leaves the Department’s jurisdiction and will likely end up in a less understanding correctional facility.

In contrast, line staff exhibit resistance to reducing the use of confinement and more flexibly responding to youth misconduct. The Union leadership seeks to continue using confinement and existing disciplinary procedures as it has for years. And from outside the Youth Center, some officials have urged the Superintendent to refer all fights or assaults on staff to the local states attorney for prosecution. This practice, once followed to “show support for the staff,” is now rarely employed.

At the time of our September 2007 visit, the use of confinement was down from previous years. The 24 bed confinement unit held only nine boys from IYC Kewanee. Two of these were on suicide watch or “crisis placement.” Six of the seven other youth were being disciplined for fighting and one for “intimidation” and racially motivated “threats” against staff. One of the alleged fighters, observed attacking another youth with “closed fists,” was confined for 15 days. A boy who was alleged to have repeatedly assaulted a staff member was confined for 30 days pending a review by the adjustment committee. We were told that most if not all of the times in confinement would be reduced, some sharply. We were told that on average five youth were in confinement at one time. “Informal adjustments” are used frequently when kids got into fights or altercations with other youth or even staff members.

While reducing the use of confinement, IYC Kewanee has taken some initial steps in applying balanced and restorative justice principles. Boys are now occasionally allowed to resolve rule infractions by writing letters of apology. They are encouraged to empathize with others in a process in which staff members asked boys to consider similarities between living at IYC

² In Illinois, a delinquent youth who is released on parole for the Department of Juvenile Justice may be violated and returned to the custody of the Department until the age of 21. A number of older youth aged 18-20 are held in Department of Juvenile Justice Youth Centers, especially IYC Joliet, for this reason.

Kewanee and the lives of patients in nursing homes. From this experience, some boys were motivated to write cards and make door decorations which were sent to a local nursing home.

By continuing to reduce the use of confinement through the intervention of therapists, “informal adjustments,” and invitations to work out problems and apologize for transgressions, IYC Kewanee will satisfy a key performance measure.

2. Increases in awards and recognition for good behavior.

The staff at IYC Kewanee see to it that boys are given rewards and recognition for achievement. A modest example: IYC Kewanee has sponsored a competition for the cleanest and best behaved housing unit. Not surprisingly, boys we spoke with seemed proud of the notices of their successes which are posted on the walls of winning housing units.

IYC Kewanee holds two or three writing contests each year to encourage oral and written expression.

Individually youth are rewarded for good behavior by big screen movie nights, special food treats, and going to the “Teen Center”, a recreation room with foosball tables, games and video games. (One boy, glad to have the chance to play games, complained about their being dated.)

3. Modifications to Kewanee’s disciplinary system and policies to protect staff from violence or assaults by youth.

We spoke to several staff members about youth violence. We heard no particular concerns or expressions of fear from youth at IYC Kewanee. In fact, the administration and some staff members told us that most youth at IYC Kewanee, even those who have been sent to confinement, are not “fighters.”

4. Conditions on the Confinement Unit

The confinement unit at IYC Kewanee stands out in an institution that is mostly white, gray and light green. The walls are salmon and the floor a kind of pink, in contrast to the duller colors throughout the Youth Center.

Confinement cells appear to be about six by ten feet, are furnished with a platform bed and a single combination toilet and sink. Windows are about two-and-a-half feet by four inches in width, and provide no real view.

No mattress is provided the boy who was on crisis watch. Cells are more open to viewing from outside, and accessible to the officer who monitors the unit, than confinement cells are at most Youth Centers.

All youth in confinement are seen by a mental health professional at least once per day.

Apart from the presence of the officer and the one visit from a mental health professional there is clearly nothing to do and nothing going on, for boys in confinement.

5. Chemical and waist-belt restraints and shackles

At IYC Kewanee, chemical restraints (pepper spray) and body restraints are on hand for use.

At the time of the September 2007 visit, there had been no use of chemical restraints for more than one year.

D. Restorative Justice

Even though elements of restorative justice are incorporated in the approach which has been developed to behavior management and discipline at IYC Kewanee, there was little familiarity with the term “Restorative Justice” among the youth supervisor (line) staff. Staff at all levels now attempt to use alternatives to room confinement in resolving disputes among youth and between youth and staff.

In addition to incorporating some restorative justice principles into the behavior management and discipline component the facility implemented the “Nursing Home Module” described above that teaches empathy and provides youth an opportunity to perform a community service from within the Youth Center. No outside visits or service work is contemplated. The Superintendent feels that local community members fear IYC Kewanee’s population and would not tolerate youth presence outside the Youth Center in any way.

E. Community and Family Contact

Some boys receive fairly frequent visits while others receive none. The Youth Center sends letters to parents, allows visits on weekends and at other times by prior arrangement. Staff members feel that they make every effort to encourage visits by accommodating parents whenever possible.

The treatment staff members at IYC Kewanee try to involve parents in family therapy. As at other Youth Centers, their success has been limited. .

1. Steps to increase parent contract

*A **performance measure** will be met when staff has reviewed the form and nature of information sent parents to assure openness, cultural fit, and that communications are as effective as possible. Additionally, consideration could be given to identifying boys during orientation for which family involvement, communications, or support might be most helpful to his success in the program. For these boys, special or targeted and continuing outreach to parents might have significant benefits.*

*A second **performance measure** will be met when staff members have given careful and creative consideration to ways to increase effective communications with parents, guardians or responsible family members at the outset of the program as an important part of developing aftercare (see below).*

2. Seeking parent's ideas on increasing visiting

*As at other Youth Centers, a **performance measure** would be met if IYC Kewanee surveyed parents about ways to increase their participation in their son's treatment. This step would contribute to the careful and creative review of ways to increase communications with and participation by family members, guardians and responsible family members.*

3. Flexibility in admitting family visitors

*This **performance measure** is being met. The administration does not impose strict hour limits on visitors and seems to genuinely encourage parent involvement with their child.*

4. Increasing the availability of transportation for family visitors

Travel to IYC Kewanee by car is easy for those from central Illinois, the area of the state from which the majority of residents hail. Unfortunately that is not true for visitors from elsewhere, and public transportation to the site is limited. Virtually all visitors arrive by car.

But public transportation is not impossible. There is no bus service to Kewanee, but Amtrak operates passenger trains that stop twice a day in each direction in Kewanee. A train leaves Chicago about 7:30 in the morning scheduled to arrive in Kewanee before 10:00 am. A returning train departs about 7:30 in the evening. Round trip tickets are about \$32.00. The Kewanee rail station is only a few miles from the gates of the institution.

*A significant performance **measure** will be satisfied when the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and individual Youth Center administrations have taken steps to ease the cost and difficulty of transportation for family visitors to this isolated Youth Center. Various options such as vouchers, information on transportation in brochure form or on the Department's web site, and special arrangements with public and private transportation services and local restaurants could be explored. A shuttle between the rail station and the institution for Chicago-area visitors and arrangements to fill the time between the 10:00 am arrival and 7:30 pm departure could make the rail trip inviting instead of daunting for families along the rail line.*

5. Activities for boys and visitors.

As of May 2007, there are few activities for parents and family members and boys at Kewanee apart from time spent in the visiting area. Among activities that might be considered are: athletics and athletic competitions in which visitors participate or observe, classroom reviews of academics and academic performance in which parents share their son's achievements.

Efforts to design and put in place joint activities for boys and visitors are an important measure of performance.

6. Surrogate or volunteer visiting program for boys who do not receive visits.

As of May 2007, there was no program involving 'surrogate' or volunteer visitors. IYC Kewanee's location and the perception of the youth who reside here may present obstacles which need be overcome if any kind of 'surrogate' visiting program is to be instituted. .

7. Increased telephone access to parents, family or guardians.

Phone calls are restricted to a maximum of one per week. Some youth told visitors that they can both make and receive calls, and we had a sense that the maximum call limit is not rigidly enforced.

*An important **performance measure** will be met when the arbitrary limits on phone calls at Kewanee and other Youth Centers are lifted. The value of positive family contact is ridiculously out of balance with the cost of competitive-rate, direct calls from a state facility. It is harder to imagine any policy change having a more favorable cost-benefit ratio.*

F. Education

Classroom education to which every Illinois child is entitled has essentially been withheld from youth at IYC Kewanee.

1. Teaching and school staff

Since the Youth Center opened its school has never had enough staff to provide full-time education for the boys who are incarcerated here. The slow hiring process documented by the John Howard Association of Illinois has had an impact at IYC Kewanee, as has the lack of qualified teachers in the area or willing to move to the area. The situation seems even worse with respect to qualified special education teachers and the educational services administrator (principal).

The wing-by-wing schedule of activities provided our visitors in 2006³ showed that boys in four wings were in school from 8:00 am – 11:00 am three days each week. Boys in two other wings were scheduled for school 8 ½ hours per week. Boys on three units got 7 ½ hours of school per week and three units of boys had no school, although we were told that all of these youth had high school diplomas or GEDs.

In September 2007 eight teachers were employed in a school for which 21 teachers were required. The teachers administered their own program because they had no principal. There was also no secretarial support, so teachers do their own record keeping and prepare teaching materials and reports without assistance. In 2007 we were told that the youth who were in school at all were receiving a half day of classroom instruction two or three day a week, or as little as 7.5 hours in a class room per week.

Youth who have a high school diploma or a GED are not required to be in school. IYC Kewanee has no educational program for the 70 youth who, we were told, were in this category.

While treatment programming may fill up some hours boys would otherwise be in school, treatment does not compensate for classroom education. Youth at IYC Kewanee are in any event forced to spend empty time which should be taken up by school in their rooms.

³ Housing Unit Schedule revised 2/28/2006.

*A vital **performance measure** that has persistently not been met at IYC Kewanee is operation of a school staffed by a full compliment of teachers collectively capable of teaching a full curriculum to all youth legally entitled to education, supported by a principal and support staff.*

2. Vocational Education and Programming

The only formal vocational program at Kewanee provides some level of training in the use of computers. We observed the computer lab and a dozen or more computers. They looked to be out of date. Some students were playing chess with a computer. One student sat in front of a monitor that instructed him that it had failed to load his program. One student did appear to be working with an actual graphics program.

*In the past administrators explained the lack of vocational programming at IYC Kewanee on the basis of “security concerns.” As a **performance measure** the Department of Juvenile Justice will evaluate the security measures and restrictions on programming that are absolutely necessary to provide adequate safety and security for the Kewanee’s staff and for its youth while at the same time providing services, programs and education that will help them return to their communities. Youth who are involved in treatment deserve to participate in ordinary societal activities except at those moments at which their behavior is out of control.*

Since IYC Kewanee employs youth in its kitchen and dining area, it seems reasonable that this facility, like other Youth Centers, could readily establish a cooking or food services training program. Kewanee’s wide expanses of open land could provide plenty of room for a horticulture program.

*A **performance measure** for IYC Kewanee would be satisfied by a review of its potential for vocational programming and by the establishment of vocational training or programming of sufficient scope to reach as many boys as are in need of, and capable of learning from, the programs that will be established.*

G. Health Services

1. Medical and dental services

Medical Services have been provided at Kewanee under a contract with Wexford Health Care. Wexford has had a contract since December of 2005. The number of hours of psychiatric coverage has increased from 12 per week to 40 per week. Kewanee has 320 hours of nursing care per week which permits it to have 24/7 coverage. A medical doctor is available 20 hours per week. A dentist and hygienist are each available at the facility 10 hours per week. This number appears to be adequate for the dental needs of the population. The Health Care Administrator has been at Kewanee since it opened.

2. Psychiatric services.

The primary psychiatric service provided as part of Kewanee’s Medical Unit appears to be the management of psychotropic medications. The facility is now approved for 40 hours of psychiatric coverage per week. This time is judged adequate to manage the prescriptions of the

85 to 90 youth who are typically on medication. There appears to be no to very little psychiatric counseling or intervention.

A **performance measure** for IYC Kewanee will be satisfied by a prompt assessment of medical and mental health staff against needs. As noted, this Youth Center is the only one to have a 24 hour medical presence. Our concern lies with the adequacy of psychiatric care and supervision of the counseling and programming offered a population designated as either sex offenders or seriously mentally ill. Another concern is that the psychiatrist and mental health staff be specialists in adolescent care.

H. Recreation

Recreation is another area of programming at Kewanee which suffers significantly because of "security concerns." There have been as many as four staff assigned to providing recreational opportunities at IYC Kewanee. They are needed to provide youth who are not in school for normal school days and not enrolled in vocational programs some activity. The facility never mixes sex offenders with the mentally ill youth and may even segregate the mentally ill from the MISA population. The practice of running separate athletic programs for each category of youth, coupled with the number of separate small recreational areas attached to each living unit, means that the four Leisure Time Specialists are spread very thinly over the Youth Center.

The recreational programming inherited from the Illinois Department of Corrections is inadequate. On the basis of security concerns, the Youth Center does not let boys play baseball. There are two baseball diamonds on the grounds but they appear not to be used for this reason.

The Superintendent wants to offer other organized sports, such as kickball.

Boys at Kewanee participate in basketball and volleyball in the school gym. The range of activities in which they can engage in the small recreation areas outside each individual housing unit is limited, particularly without the guidance of Leisure Time Specialists or other staff dedicated to encouraging healthy physical activity.

At IYC Kewanee as elsewhere, the Department of Juvenile Justice will not spend general funds on recreational equipment or supplies for boys. Senior staff would purchase basketballs, athletic equipment, and a large popcorn popper for the Teen Room if funds were available to them.

Exercise, air, and a break from the heavily secured environment at IYC Kewanee are essential for adolescent boys. IYC Kewanee will meet a **performance measure** when it designs, staffs and implements a recreational program that engages all youth in sports and athletic activities, including outdoor sports during good weather.

1. Activities

There are a variety of board and table games available on the living units for use in the dayrooms and in the Teen Center. There are some computer games to which boys whose behavior is exemplary have some access. But that's about it.

Boys at IYC Kewanee spend a lot of time on their units and in their rooms. According to the schedules provided us, boys not employed and not in school typically spend one hour in the morning in their rooms, another in a T. V. room, and more time in their unit's day room. This routine will be broken with an hour in the gym, outside, or with a "group" led by a designated staff member. The afternoon is similarly spent cleaning rooms for an hour, or in the dayrooms for an hour, with breaks in this schedule for group meetings. In addition, there are "counts" at 6:05 am, 3:45 pm and 9:15 pm during which boys are secured in their rooms and boys are locked in their rooms during the shift change before 2:00 pm. An hour is set aside between 8:00 and 9:00 pm solely for the purpose of "snacks," and lights are turned out at 10:30 pm for all youth on weekdays.

The policy of not mixing populations results in there being fewer opportunities for youth to participate in inter housing unit competitions or tournaments. It would be instructive for staff at IYC Kewanee to consider the example of IYC St. Charles, where youth in general population regularly compete with those assigned to mental health units.

The senior staff want more for boys at IYC Kewanee. They do not describe the boys in their care as severe behavior management problems or security risks. Rather, the Superintendent and her staff describe them as youth who would do much better with activities such as art therapy, music --- "These kids can sing! ---, a real recreation program, a full school schedule and academic competitions than they do sitting around for five or more hours each day.

Boys at IYC Kewanee are left to their own devices. Some of our visitors met a youth who was isolated on a medical wing for special observation. But, he assured us, he preferred his room to the one he left on his unit. There was more to do because a flock of Canadian geese situated themselves on a strip of lawn just outside his window. By luck, both he and the corrections officer assigned to his unit enjoyed watching these birds, and to the Correction Officer's credit, he made a point of talking to the boy about their shared interest.

*At IYC Kewanee, the challenge is to design and staff a recreational, vocational, educational and academic program that fills the thousands of hours that, collectively, boys now spend with nothing to draw their attention or their minds from the high-level security trappings of their prison save occasional conversations with security staff or counselors and shared inactivity with boys with problems similar to theirs. A most challenging **performance measure** for this facility is to implement just such a program.*

2. Staff

Kewanee has two unfilled Leisure Time Activity slots. It is doubtful that this number of individuals could adequately provide recreational opportunities for all youth at Kewanee if a vigorous program were implemented.

3. Outdoor and indoor recreational areas

The outdoor recreational resources at IYC Kewanee consist of small areas attached to each living unit equipped with a back board, and one baseball diamond.

Indoors the facility uses two gyms located in the school, the individual dayrooms and the Teen Center, a small room in the Administration building.

We have heard of no plans to enlarge outdoor recreation fields.

I. Treatment Programming

At the time of our visits in 2006 and 2007, all youth at IYC Kewanee were involved in sex offender treatment, mental health treatment, or substance abuse treatment for the mentally ill (MISA). The professional treatment is provided by outside contractors, as described below.

1. Treatment staff

Allerton Behavioral Treatment Center has the contract for all treatment programming at Kewanee except the MISA unit which is covered by the Wells Center. Allerton has had this contact for the entire period of Kewanee's existence except for a six month period in 2006-7. The contract with Allerton requires them to provide a PhD level Clinical Director, three PhD level psychologists, thirteen Masters level Therapists, and four bachelor level Behavioral Health Care Specialists, two Activity Specialists, and a clerical staff member. In September 2007 the contractor was unable to provide two psychologists, two therapists and one Activity Specialist, or roughly 20% of the treatment team.

The Administration relates that this level of understaffing is fairly typical, and that by comparison the contractor is actually in pretty good shape right now. More disturbing to the administration, however, is the frequent turn over in treatment staff provided by the contractor. The contractor experiences the same difficulties that afflict the Department in finding qualified teachers, medical and mental health professionals who will work in this part of the state.

2. Treatment

Both treatment programs use cognitive behavioral therapies. Sex offenders and the mental health population get nine hours of treatment per week. MISA youth get 15 hours of treatment per week. Both populations have treatment providers available seven days per week between eight in the morning and eight in the evening. Each week about 220 individual treatment groups meet, a number that permits relatively small groups.

*IYC Kewanee is the Department of Juvenile Justice's major treatment facility for boys. As far as the John Howard Association of Illinois is aware, there has not been an independent evaluation of the treatment services and programs at this Youth Center. Under Illinois Department of Corrections, medical and mental health services were not accredited. A **performance measure** for IYC Kewanee will be satisfied with an independent assessment of its three mental health and treatment programs, with an eye toward identifying a departmental need for additional or differently-skilled medical and mental health staff. A part of this assessment should include an objective evaluation of the handicaps or advantages for different treatment programs flowing from IYC Kewanee's construction and physical environment.*

3. Post institutional needs; aftercare

Staff members believe that most youth at IYC Kewanee need to be in some kind of treatment with their families. Very little of anything approaching joint or family treatment occurs. Therapists have made themselves available on weekends during visiting times. This effort has not resolved the problem.

As high as 60% of the offender population at Kewanee will need out of home placement. The resources for these placements are inadequate to the number of placements needed. Consequently in 2006 and 2007 an increasing and large number of youth remain past their Administrative Release Dates. By September 2007 more than 50 boys were in this status.

Making an effective transition from Kewanee to the community is also difficult. Counselors and treatment professionals make referrals, especially for boys located in the mid-state area. Youth, not surprisingly, have trouble making their appointments for every kind of reason. The staff has no ability to follow up or physically accompany boys to their new treatment providers, the connections become lost, and treatment or counseling ends.

IYC Kewanee severely limits the kind of interactions that help adolescents learn to socialize and behave in groups by separating boys into relatively small units, by the horrible lack of legally mandated classroom instruction, and by the dearth of competitive athletic activities or experiences in working as a team in vocational classes. Inadvertently perhaps, and certainly against the desires of professional staff, very little is being done during the time that now literally hangs on the hands of hundreds of boys at IYC Kewanee to help them develop new and healthier patterns for relating to their families and in their communities.

Perhaps more than at any other Youth Center, the continued effectiveness of the treatment and mental health programs at IYC Kewanee depend upon a transition to community treatment, feedback for each boy, and the ability of staff to follow through with boys after release. As throughout the Department, a **performance measure** will be satisfied only when there is a comprehensive aftercare plan and services to which the staff and programs inside Department of Juvenile Justice Youth Centers can create links before a boy's release and follow up afterwards.

J. Additional Programming

In addition to the educational, recreational, arts or music, vocational and aftercare programs that are lacking and vitally needed at IYC Kewanee, the Youth Center lacks any job training or placement program.

Table 1: Staffing Levels IYC Kewanee

	2007	2008
Superintendents	1	1
Assistant Superintendents	1	2
Security Staff	108	105
Security Staff Supervisors	18	18
Educators	7	11
Leisure Time Activity Specialists	0	1
Counselors	13	11
Case Work Supervisors	2	2
Psychologists	0	0
Social Workers	0	0
Medical	0	0
Chaplain	1	1
Other Administrative*	36	35
Total	**	**

*This category includes maintenance, secretarial, business management, and food service.

**The total number of staff at IYC Kewanee cannot be accurately calculated from these figures because the facility has medical, sex offender, mental health, and substance abuse treatment staff who are employed contractually and are not included in these figures.