

## **Mission Statement**

The Bucks County Youth Center provides safe and secure custody and treatment of youth in the juvenile justice system. We accomplish this by utilizing professional, caring and experienced staff members who promote education, counseling and personal development of youth. This interaction takes place in both secure and non-secure levels of residential care aimed at increasing pro-social behavior and decreasing chances of recidivism.

## **Program Description**

The Bucks County Youth Center (BCYC) is a residential facility licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services to provide secure detention and community-based residential services. The services are primarily provided to the Bucks County Juvenile Court and Juvenile Probation Departments.

The thirty-six bed secure detention program provides services to both pre and post adjudicated juveniles who are being processed through juvenile court. Upon intake, residents receive assessments in the areas of education, physical health, mental health and behavior. The assessments are conducted by staff from the Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22, medical services department managed by PrimeCare and BCYC staff members. Additional services such as Drug & Alcohol assessment, Psychiatric and Psychological testing and evaluations are performed on residents when directed by juvenile court. During their stay in secure detention residents receive daily programming that includes regular and special education, life skills programming and recreational programming. Residents remain in the secure detention program until a final disposition is ordered and enacted by the juvenile court.

The twenty bed Residential Service Unit(RSU) is a community-based program for males and females who have been adjudicated and referred by the Bucks County Juvenile Probation Department. The normal length of stay averages between six and nine months but varies based on the service needs of the residents and the juvenile court. Service plans are created using information gained from the Juvenile Probation Youth Level of Service as well as the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS). The provision of services is accomplished through the combined efforts of RSU Case Managers, Lenape Valley Foundation therapists and the Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22. The services include individual, group and family counseling, life skills, substance abuse, regular and special education. There is also a strong emphasis on inclusion to the community in the form of community service projects, outside school & employment and recreation/field trips. Residents' length of stay is generally determined by their accomplishment of the goals and objectives that are individually developed for them.

## **Philosophy**

Both programs that make up the Bucks County Youth Facilities are staffed by caring, concerned professionals who recognize the importance and intrinsic value of their chosen vocation. We operate under the tenets that most of the youths we serve may be hostile, fearful and/or angry upon

entering our system. We also realize that we are potentially the first contact they will have with the juvenile justice system. As such, it is imperative that they are treated with fairness and dignity, as this will shape their view of any future proceedings that they are involved in within the justice system. Due to the negative experiences that many of our youths have had with adults in their lives, we recognize that we must first show them respect before we can realistically expect to receive it from them. We must also strive to remain constantly aware of signs that youths may give indicating their need for help and their readiness to accept that help. Due to the widely diversified qualities of youths we encounter, it is obvious that no one person can effectively deal with all youth or his/her family. Therefore, we employ staff with widely diversified backgrounds, personalities, education and experience in order to give the youths an opportunity to connect with someone they believe understands them. Combinations of therapeutic and custodial styles are utilized in our work with youths, recognizing that each person will respond to a different combination of these approaches. All Youth Center programs call upon volunteers from the community to promote positive interactions and a feeling of being connected with the youths. This is an integral part of their experience since it is our ultimate goal to reconnect them to their home community and to help them become productive members of society. It also allows the community to learn about the positive qualities of our youths that are frequently overshadowed by a few of their deeds. When this connection between the youths and their communities begins, so then does the reparation that is essential in restorative justice.