

ENHANCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MICHIGAN'S GIRLS & YOUNG WOMEN

It Could Be Anybody's Daughter



A Five-Year Strategic Plan
Prepared by: The Michigan Gender Specific Task Force

FOREWORD

Due to the alarming disproportionate rate of females entering the state juvenile justice system and a federal mandate, a task force comprised of volunteers from private, public, and community organizations was established in 2000. This task force continues to develop, coordinate, and advocate for gender specific programming for females within the Juvenile Justice System.

Michigan, along with the rest of the nation, struggles to provide appropriate and effective treatment to its female juvenile offenders. The successful treatment of this population, one many practitioners believe poses little threat to public safety, requires a two pronged approach. First, public perceptions about females under juvenile justice supervision must be changed. A difficult task at best, however the shifting of fundamental belief systems is a critical starting point. And in tandem with this, appropriate gender specific programming must be put into place.

Currently, females comprise approximately 30* percent of the total youth arrests of index crimes within the state. Females are entering the system at greater percentages, younger ages and for more serious crimes. As female involvement in delinquent behavior rises, the appropriate treatment for them is of increasing interest to policy makers, practitioners, and the public.

* Source: 2001 Uniform Crime Report, Michigan State Police

MISSION STATEMENT: The Female Gender Specific Task Force supports the changes required to help girls and young women in Michigan achieve their full potential.

VISION STATEMENT: The Female Gender Specific Task Force (FGSTF) will provide leadership to the belief that there is value in supporting girls and young women to reach their maximum potential. Girls and young women in Michigan must become self-reliant, educated, and healthy individuals in order to break the cycles of fear, violence, dependency, marginalization, and poverty.

To achieve our vision, we encourage development of a continuum of individualized, female-responsive initiatives across Michigan that support the six domains of effective female development: intellectual, physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual, and familial/relational.

VALUES STATEMENT: The values upon which this plan rests include:

- ❑ Growth & Empowerment - Strong leadership and support from caregivers are key to the development of self-esteem, self-sufficiency, and personal responsibility.
- ❑ Understanding & Connecting – Understanding is expressed through tolerance for youthful mistakes, so girls can learn from experience without being labeled for life. Understanding also means recognizing and respecting issues of diversity and cultural difference. Connecting allows us to rise above our isolation and embrace our differences to work together to help girls.
- ❑ Proactive – Identify and build on the individual strengths of girls and their families. We must be creative in developing solutions that intervene before damage is done.
- ❑ Equitable Access – To ensure that individualized services meet the needs of girls through providing equal access.

GOAL 1: Develop public awareness and commitment for female specific issues among policymakers, legislators, educators, and decision-makers in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

OBJECTIVE 1: The FGSTF will develop broad-based educational outreach materials that explain why developing and implementing gender-specific programming that is important.

STRATEGY 1: Engage girls and young women in developing the design and content for a public awareness campaign about gender specific issues.

STRATEGY 2: Produce a "white paper" and a Fact Sheet that make the case for gender-specific programming.

STRATEGY 3: Develop and disseminate a "generic" informational kit that includes the white paper, fact sheet, news release, a flyer about the website, analysis of benefits and cost-savings, and contact information.

- ❑ Milestone 1: Identify a list of recipients for the basic information kit.

STRATEGY 4: Create a Speakers' Bureau whose members have received specific training on how to present female gender-specific programming issues to various audiences.

- ❑ Milestone 1: Recruit Sandy Metcalf of Ottawa County to develop and offer specialized training to no more than 10 invited candidates who have the time, dedication, and ability to staff the new Speakers' Bureau.

STRATEGY 5: Continue to expand and enhance the Helping Our Girls website as an outreach tool to reach our target audiences.

- ❑ Milestone 1: Provide a downloadable version of the surveys that will be developed.
- ❑ Milestone 2: Add links to member sites, to evaluation samples, to resources that can assist groups in writing grants, and to a list of appropriate readings.

OBJECTIVE 2: The FGSTF will tailor its public awareness and outreach materials to meet the needs of different audiences.

STRATEGY 1: Groups that would benefit from understanding female gender-specific programming include: elected officials, agency and program directors, criminal justice and juvenile justice professionals, schools, the faith community, the business community, families, young people, and the media.

- ❑ Milestone 1: Materials on gender-specific programming will be reviewed through the specific concerns of the groups identified above.
- ❑ Milestone 2: The proposed Speakers' Bureau will be tasked to anticipating the questions and concerns of each group, to ensure that these outreach specialists are prepared to address their concerns.

GOAL 2: Build community collaborations to provide local direction and support.

OBJECTIVE 1: Develop the capacity within the FGSTF to assist collaborations in implementing gender-specific programming goals.

STRATEGY 1: A subgroup of the FGSTF will study the issue, receive training in how to work with collaborations effectively, and then develop a plan for providing this assistance.

OBJECTIVE 2: Enhance and expand the bi-annual FGSTF statewide conference and workshops.

GOAL 3: Generate a sustaining commitment to and financial support for gender-specific issues.

OBJECTIVE 1: Identify supportive legislators and work with them to pass a resolution that expresses Michigan's commitment to female gender-specific issues.

OBJECTIVE 2: Explore opportunities to educate legislators and agency policymakers about why they should support gender-specific programming.

STRATEGY 1: Develop an analysis of the benefits and cost-savings that result from investing in female gender-specific programming to share with appropriate audiences.

- ❑ Milestone 1: Add this analysis to the information kit.

OBJECTIVE 3: Identify and recognize promising programs that exhibit a commitment to female gender-specific programming.

STRATEGY 1: Use the criteria developed in Goal 4: Objective 3, to evaluate female gender specific programs in Michigan and honor those who exhibit excellence at the bi-annual statewide Female Gender Specific Conference.

STRATEGY 2: Produce and disseminate a report on FEMALE GENDER SPECIFIC: Promising Practices and Programs in Michigan.

OBJECTIVE 4: Develop a support system to assist Female Gender Specific Task Force members in locating and securing grant funding for special initiatives.

STRATEGY 1: Create a committee that identifies foundations willing to entertain proposal for female gender-specific programming, compile supporting statistics to enhance grant proposals, and providing coaching for members to help them develop successful grant applications.

GOAL 4: Create a continuum of individualized and empowering support for girls and young women.

OBJECTIVE 1: The FGSTF will support efforts to implement and evaluate initiatives across the spectrum from prevention through aftercare through the prism of the six domains of a girl's life.

STRATEGY: The FGSTF will develop a plan to gather data to identify strengths and gaps in current programming.

- Milestone 1: A subgroup of the FGSTF will develop survey instruments based on the six domains that identify programming for girls and another instrument that surveys girls so that they can assess the quality and completeness of efforts for them.
 - Action Step 1: The FGSTF will gather samples of surveys others are using to use in developing the Michigan surveys.
 - Action Step 2: The FGSTF will identify mailing lists of places to send the survey, including (1) the directory of programs and services, (2) list of courts, (3) list of Family Independence Agency offices, (4) list of Human Services offices, (5) list of Multi-Purpose Collaborative Boards.
- Milestone 2: A subgroup of the FGSTF will conduct and analyze the surveys, producing a report with written recommendations for the entire task force.

OBJECTIVE 2: The FGSTF will ensure that gender-specific programming also expresses the Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) philosophy.

STRATEGY 1: The FGSTF will collaborate with Michigan BARJ specialists to create a cross-training curriculum.

- Milestone 1: Karen Woods and Sandy Metcalf will collaborate on developing training that integrates female gender-specific issues into the BARJ philosophy, for delivery at the annual Michigan BARJ conference.
- Milestone 2: The FGSTF will provide combined training on BARJ and female gender-specific programming to the new Building Restorative Communities offered through the Michigan Bureau of Juvenile Justice.

- ❑ Milestone 3: The FGSTF will explore opportunities to develop a video on the combined curriculum for dissemination on the website.

OBJECTIVE 3: Define the goals, principles, and elements of female gender-specific programming as the foundation for evaluating programming for youth, young adults, and their families.

STRATEGY 1: The FGSTF will develop criteria and standards of excellence concerning female gender-specific programming.

- ❑ Milestone 1: The FGSTF will gather sample evaluations currently being used nationwide.
- ❑ Milestone 2: The FGSTF will identify promising practices and will showcase them on the Helping Our Girls website (<http://www.helpingourgirls.org>).
- ❑ Milestone 3: The FGST will integrate evaluation into the biannual Michigan Female Gender Specific Conference.

TO CONTACT THE MICHIGAN GENDER SPECIFIC TASK FORCE:

Karen Woods
Task Force Chair
Michigan Bureau of Juvenile Justice
248-442-6536 or e-mail: woodsk2@michigan.gov