



# CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

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## OF CALIFORNIA

### Conference Spotlight: Napa County Probation

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The Napa County Evening Reporting Center (ERC) was opened in March 2009 as an evidence-based alternative sanction program designed to serve medium to high risk youth between the ages 14 to 17 focusing on the strengths of these youth to achieve positive outcomes. The Department partnered with a local non-profit, The Wolfe Center, to provide substance abuse treatment services. The ERC started inside the Napa County Juvenile Justice Center but eventually moved to a new location enabling the program to expand. This gave the youth a sense of ownership to have their own space separate from the Juvenile Hall. Initially, participating youth received 30 hours of evidence-based cognitive behavioral curriculum in addition to pro-social activities, especially on Friday evenings. The initial budget covered the Probation and Wolfe Center staff needed to start the program. Without additional funds, the program could not expand and was missing a critical component: mental health services.

After a year of providing these services the Community Foundation along with the Van Loben Sels/ RembeRock Foundation and the Gasser Foundation, became aware of how Napa used the SB 81 funding to keep youth in the community with the Evening Reporting Center and generously provided new funding for the program. With these new funds, Probation was able to add a mental health component provided by a local non-profit, Aldea Children and Family Services, and expand the Wolfe Center role providing substance abuse services. On September 27, 2010, the program was expanded to a 60 day program, giving the youth over 50 hours of cognitive behavioral programming and more time to practice the skills they were learning. The priority focus area was quality of service and individualized treatment and case plans for each participant and their families.

It was important to expand the program to 60 days not only to provide youth time to practice their new skills but also time for their families to participate in the youth's program and progress. In addition to all ERC staff being trained in the NCTI curriculum, Aldea staff began providing one on one service to youth and their families during ERC hours. While the youth is in regular programming Aldea staff provide education and skill building for the parents to support the extension of ERC philosophy and structure to the home environment. In addition, the probation department applied for and was granted funding to train two teams of staff from the Wolfe Center, Aldea Health and Human Services and Probation in Functional Family Therapy (FFT). FFT is an evidence-based program designed to meet the needs of the youth while engaging their families to support lasting behavior change. Research has consistently found that FFT not only helps treat existing behavioral problems but also prevents the need for more extensive and costly treatments in the future. While the goal of FFT is to reduce recidivism for the child exhibiting problem behaviors, younger siblings often reap the benefits of the program as well possibly leading to better outcomes in the future and preventing other members of the family from entering the juvenile justice system. Currently, there are 13 staff trained to provide FFT services for families. In the summer of 2011, the Day Reporting Center opened at the same location as the ERC as an extension of the program. This program was designed to serve medium to high risk youth ages 14 to 17 who were not involved in a summer school program and has continued its operations every summer break.

The Evening Reporting Center and the collaboration between the Wolfe Center and Aldea have proven to be a great asset to the Napa community and the youth and families they serve. The program continues to have two Wolfe Center staff and one Aldea staff member assigned to the ERC program in addition to probation staff. To date the ERC program has served 308 unduplicated youth with a success rate of 70 percent.