Spokane Community Court:
How a Local Library Became Home for Accountability &
Restorative Justice

SESSION GOALS:
1. Detail the community court model and the need for collaboration across agencies of government
2. Highlight unique opportunities within the context of a local library
3. Explore leadership opportunities for participants to assert their influence in improving their communities
4. Emphasis on participant’s accountability, client outcomes, environmental improvement and the reform of justice system as a whole
Principles of Community Court

- **Mission**: Build stronger and safer communities by providing accountability with help

- A collaborative, problem-solving approach
  1. Individualized justice
  2. Improve quality of life for participants the community
  3. Promote fair, equitable, and responsive policies
  4. Find family and community-oriented solutions
  5. Expand employment and education opportunities
  6. Community and neighborhood improvement through sustainable environmental awareness and action

Community Court: National Trends

- 70+ programs in planning or operation
- Implementing and validating assessment tools
- Restorative justice, peacemaking
- Young adult justice
- Handling more serious offenses
- Paired with diversion options for earlier intercepts
- Testing city-wide models
Public Trust: Improvements Are Possible

Public perceptions of the Red Hook Community Justice Center according to a door-to-door survey of local residents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage Feeling Good or Very Good</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>94%</td>
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Percentage of local residents reporting that they felt “good” or “very good” about having a community court in their neighborhood.

Red Hook Community Justice Center

Communicating Strategic Intent

- Policy & Procedure manual
- Weekly core team strategy meetings
- Weekly staffing Meeting
- Continuous community engagement
- External and Internal Challenges
- Team Retreat
- Community Outreach
- Statistics
  - “If you did not measure it, it didn’t happen”
  - WSU longitudinal study
Achieving Workable Unity

• Core Team
  • Spokane Police Department, Downtown Precinct
  • Spokane Municipal Court
  • City Prosecutor
  • City Public Defender
  • Spokane Municipal Probation
  • Center for Court Innovation
  • Spokane Public Library
  • Spokane Central Lion’s Club
  • Providence Medical Group
  • CHAS Clinic
  • The Gathering House (Streetwise Ministries)
  • Center for Justice
  • Downtown Spokane Partnership

• Volunteers of America
• Catholic Charities of Spokane
• Pioneer Human Services
• Spokane Consistent Care
• Women’s Heart

“The library has always been a place people turn to for help...The Community Court collaboration expands the type of assistance available at the library.”

Andrew Chanse
Executive Director, Spokane Public Library
Provider Partnerships

- Education/Substance Abuse Education
- Healthcare/Medical Services
- Mental Health Services
- Identification Documents
- Nutrition
- Civil Legal Assistance

Provider Partnerships

- Housing
- Social and Welfare Services
- Case Managers/Social Workers
- Veterans Assistance
- Care Coordinators
- Needs Assessment
Delivering on Strategic Intent

- Housing
- Medical
- Behavioral Health services
- Education
- Department of Licensing (identification)
- Payee services
- Employment
- Disability assistance
- Hygiene
- Vision
- Civil/Legal
- Victim advocacy and family support services
- Peer and family mental health support
- Veteran’s services
- Faith-based services

Delivering on Strategic Intent

**Before**

**After**
Developing New Leaders

Graduate Volunteers

Volunteer: Cleaning from the Core

Measures of Success

• 713 graduates from program
• Over 3500 community service hours completed
• More than 1,000 annual participants
• 143 participants obtained housing and case management
• 1200 Bus passes provided
• More than 15,000 lunches provided
Measures of Success in 2019

- 62 Participants completed Community Service
- 39 Participants accessed Mental Health Services
- 47 Participants accessed Substance Abuse Treatment
- 50-100 Individuals access services without a court case every Monday

Benefits to Cities

- Saves Money
- Reduced Taxpayer Costs
- Criminal Justice Collaboration
- Shift to Continuum of Care
- Library as Neutral Space
Accountability: Community Service

Environmental Improvement: River clean up
Community Service Downtown and Community Garden

Red Hook Community Justice Center

Independent evaluators tracked 3,000 defendants from Red Hook and conventional court for 2 years:

**Incarceration**: The Justice Center reduced the number of offenders who received jail sentences by 35%.

**Sentencing Practice**: The Justice Center significantly increased the use of alternative sanctions (78% at Red Hook, 22% downtown)

**Fairness**: Offenders at Red Hook were more likely to perceive the judge’s decisions as fair than offenders in the comparison group.

**Recidivism**: Adult offenders at Red Hook were 10% less likely to be re-arrested than offenders who went through conventional court; juveniles were 20% less likely to be re-arrested.
Spokane Community Response

“Community Court has been responsive in providing wrap around services to individuals that have obvious health and housing needs; the stress on the local businesses has been relieved by an appreciable degree.”

—Mark Richard, President, Downtown Spokane Business Partnership

“This court has the ability to reach people on a different level. I feel like we are reaching out to them where they are and offering support as we stand together. We are not standing apart in this endeavor.”

—Janis Olson, RN, Providence Consistent Care

Thank you!

Questions?

Comments?

Website Link:
https://www.spokanelibrary.org/community-court/