



SMALLER IS BETTER

WHAT IS A “SMALL AND HOMELIKE” FACILITY?

- For this presentation, a facility that holds **no more than 30 young people**, living in groups of **no more than ten**
- For this presentation, a homelike facility



CASE STUDIES

NEW YORK, MISSOURI, WASHINGTON D.C., & LOUISIANA



NEW YORK

Ewidge Michel, a group leader for a Close to Home facility in Queens, said the role of staff in these programs is “not correctional.”

“It’s not being a security guard,” Michel said. “You’re actually constantly being therapeutic with a young person and trying to have a breakthrough or even plant seeds of hope so they can move on and be successful.”



BASIC PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- Sends young people convicted of certain offenses in New York City to small facilities in New York City communities instead of to large upstate facilities.
 - Funded using the same structure as the previous system (50/50 state and city)

Two types of placements:

- Non-secure placements (NSPs): 8-13 bed facilities, operating out of retrofitted homes
- Limited-secure placements: 6-20 bed facilities, operating out of retrofitted homes that generally have locks and perimeter fences
- All Close to Home facilities are run by private contractors.
 - Therefore, no state retrofitting of buildings was required. Contractors already had or purchased residential facilities.
 - **Facilities are not permitted to refuse young people** and are paid for a set number of beds, regardless of whether they are full.

CORE IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

- Risk-Needs-Responsivity
 - Intensity of services matches the level of risk (don't intervene more than necessary)
 - Intervention targets specific, data-backed risk factors in ways that are supported by empirical evidence
 - Services are tailored to the young person's developmental stage and to the individual young person and family involved
- Positive Youth Development
 - Focuses on the strengths of young people, not their shortcomings
 - Engages young people in services that promote social, vocational, and academic engagement; creative expression; and positive peer and adult relationships
 - Measures success more broadly than recidivism – aims for and assesses success based on positive and supportive relationships, increased job readiness, and educational achievement



CHILDREN'S VILLAGE IN DOBB'S FERRY

Each cottage is home to approximately 10 residents, mostly in two or three-person rooms. Cottages provide a comfortable and communal environment.

Each cottage has its own character, reflecting the interests of staff and residents: some have vegetable or flower gardens; some have pet fish or gerbils; others are filled with photographs, artwork, or indoor plants.

-Children's Village Dobb's Ferry Campus
Program Description



HOMELIKE SPACES







CLOSE-KNIT, SMALL LIVING UNITS



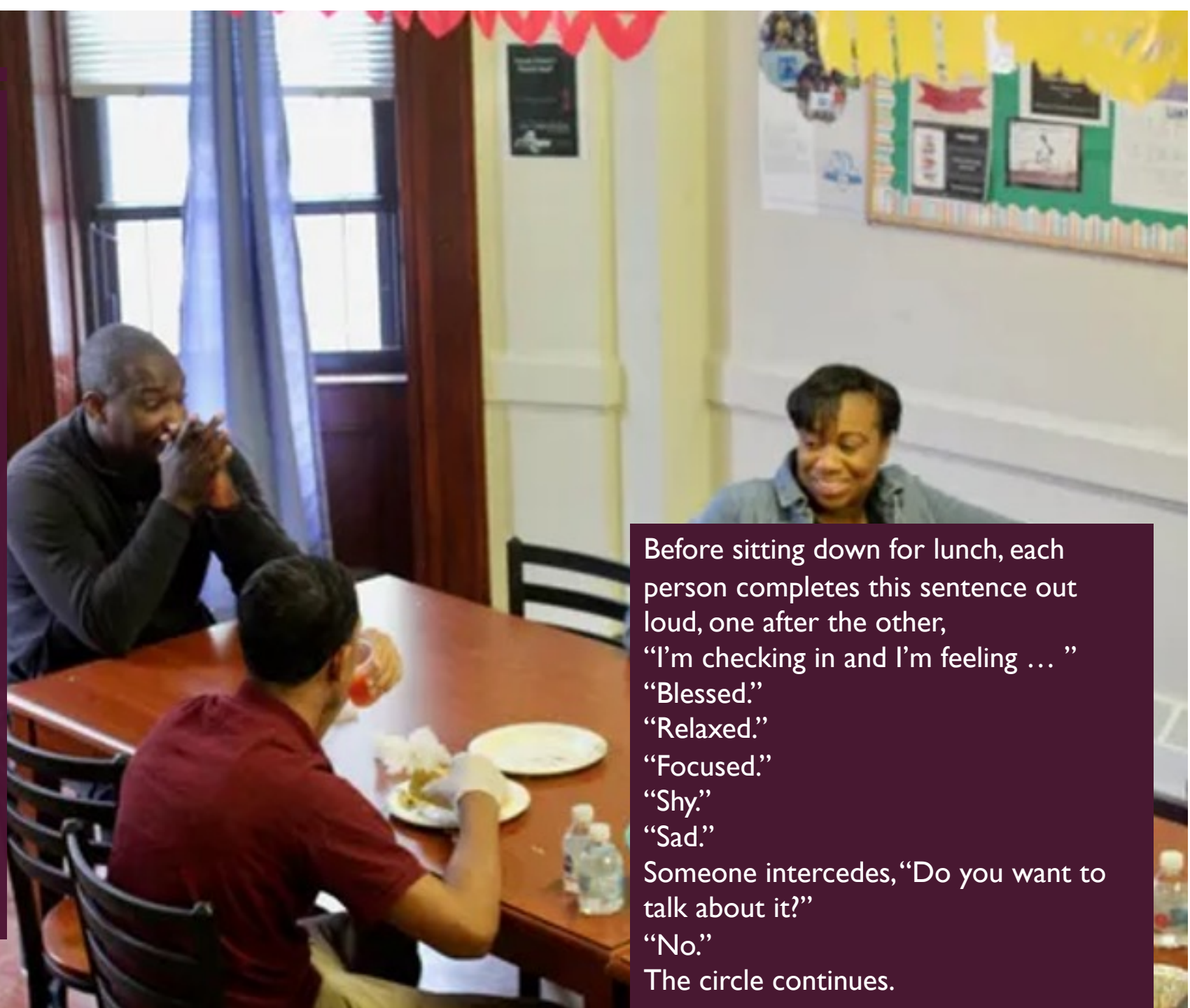
ACCESS TO EDUCATION, RECREATION, & JOB PREPARATION



CANINE RESCUE AND REHABILITATION



RISE GROUND IN BROOKLYN



Before sitting down for lunch, each person completes this sentence out loud, one after the other, "I'm checking in and I'm feeling ... "

"Blessed."

"Relaxed."

"Focused."

"Shy."

"Sad."

Someone intercedes, "Do you want to talk about it?"

"No."

The circle continues.



LESSONS FROM BUMPS IN THE ROAD

- Racial Disparities
- Inadequate continuum of care
- Quick Transition Time
- Lack of reporting oversight

HOW DID NEW YORK DO IT?

- Lead from Administration for Children's Services (ACS)—which does child welfare AND juvenile justice in NYC
- Collaboration with the Vera Institute, Missouri Youth Services Institute, and Annie E. Casey Foundation (data analysis, planning, program creation, policy advocacy support)
- Put initiatives in place to offer community programming as alternative to placement through ACS and Department of Probation (DOP)
- DOP's adopted formal process to propose alternatives to placement to the court and other parties in the form of a plan for community-based services and supports
- Adoption of a risk assessment tool (we've done this!) and decision-making matrix (DYS has one that can be updated!)
- Pilot program: Brooklyn for Brooklyn (B4B) Initiative: small therapeutic settings close to home.
 - Successful pilot demonstrated that smaller local programs served youth more effectively than large, remote institutions.
- State provided a block grant for 50% of cost to the city; city covered the other 50% of the cost of placement
- Passed enabling legislation
 - Allowed City to apply to the state office of child and family services for approval to run this program (through ACS)
 - <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/rehab/assets/docs/c2h/C2H-Enabling-Legislation.pdf>

IDEAS TO PONDER FROM NEW YORK

- Lead by an agency that does both juvenile justice and child welfare (like our state CDHS)
- Collaboration with funders and partners
- Developed community services as alternatives to detention first and throughout, including formal program to investigate and propose alternatives to placement to the Court, with recommended services.
 - Reduced population!
- Ran one successful pilot program
- Created a system to combine local and state dollars
- Permitted municipality to apply to central state agency to run the program itself, via contractors
- Guaranteed contractors funds for beds, empty or full, but did not allow contractors to refuse youth

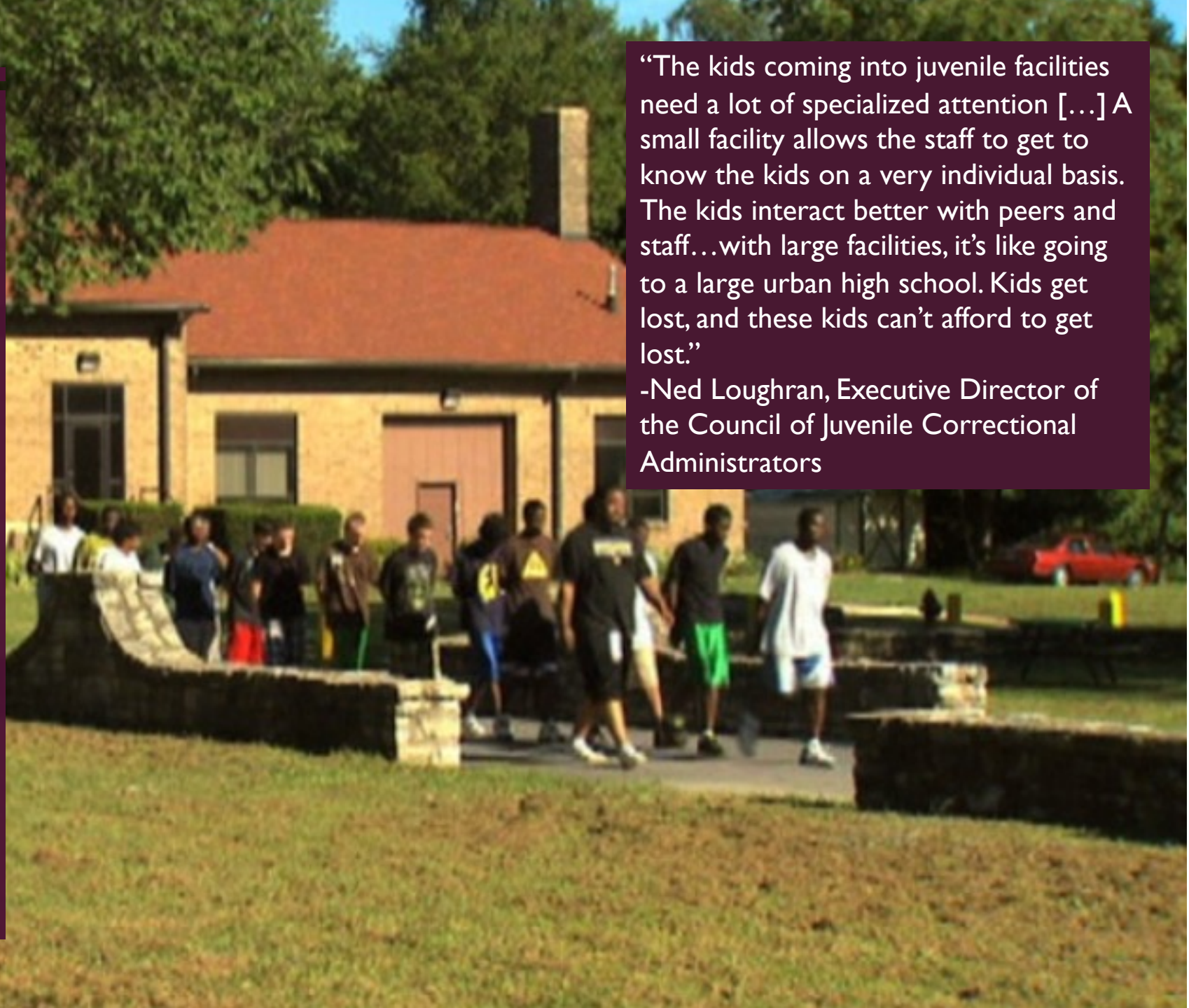
RESULTS

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- Of the 836 young people released from a Close to Home Facility between 2014 and 2016; less than 8% (67) were brought back for violating the terms of their release or committing new offense during that time
 - Close to Home appears to be more successful in reuniting families than the old state home system. In 2016, 79% of exiting young people were successfully transitioned to their families.

MISSOURI

“The kids coming into juvenile facilities need a lot of specialized attention [...] A small facility allows the staff to get to know the kids on a very individual basis. The kids interact better with peers and staff...with large facilities, it's like going to a large urban high school. Kids get lost, and these kids can't afford to get lost.”

-Ned Loughran, Executive Director of the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators



BASIC PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- Secure confinement is designed to confine only the most high-risk young people (committed).
 - At the beginning of the model, Missouri invested four million dollars into juvenile court diversion to minimize the number of young people in secure confinement
- Humane environments adjusted to risk
 - 11 day treatment and family resource centers
 - 7 group homes
 - 18 moderate care programs
 - 7 secure programs

CORE IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

- Secure confinement should not be treated as a punishment for a young person; instead, it is an opportunity to resource that young person and their family
- Young people must be confined near the families and communities they are returning to
 - Missouri's DYS emphasizes regionality – even its administrative division is divided into five separate regional centers.
 - **DYS's goal is to keep young people within 50-75 miles of their homes.**
- Young people thrive in closely supervised small groups where they are safe from abuse, harassment, and ridicule.
- Safety is created by relationships and supervision, not coercive and humiliating techniques
- Young people who are confined need academic, pre-vocational, and communication skills
- Families are key parts of treatment
- Intensive aftercare is key to rehabilitation

STAFFING FOR RELATIONSHIPS

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- Increased education requirements in hiring
 - Recruitment on college campuses
 - Intensive staff training
 - Emphasis on hiring and retaining staff that come from communities young people being served belong to



RELATIONSHIP- BASED PRACTICES

TRANSITIONING TO HOMELIKE SPACES

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- Although all the facilities use a dormitory-style model, the architecture and design of the facilities is varied
 - DYS built some new facilities to accommodate the model;
 - two facilities are retrofitted schools;
 - and two facilities are part of college campuses.



HOMELIKE SPACES



CLOSE-KNIT, SMALL LIVING UNITS

REJECTING COERCIVE PRACTICES

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- Missouri juvenile facilities are not interested in punishment.
 - Staff are not armed
 - Pepper spray is not used
 - Hog-ties, face-down holds, and strip searches are not used.
 - Seclusion is extremely rare (<25 times annually throughout the system) and staff remain right outside the door 100% of the time, speaking to the young person.

SUPERVISION IS SAFETY

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- Safety is ensured through **supervision** and **relationships**.
 - The Missouri Model requires 24/7 supervision of young people in secure facilities at a youth/staff ratio of about 6:1. Supervision at this level resolves most issues before they become physical – young people are not permitted to escalate without intervention.
 - Research supports the proposition that high-risk young people who develop strong bonds with caregivers engage in far fewer problematic behaviors, as do Missouri's staff safety outcomes.
 - Missouri also uses strategic architecture and complete camera coverage, as an additional level of supervision

Safety Outcomes: Missouri vs. Ohio

(INCIDENTS PER 1,000 CUSTODY DAYS—2005)

	OHIO	MISSOURI	RATIO
Mechanical Restraints	.69	.28	2.5 : 1
Isolation	1.07	.04	245 : 1
Physical Damage or Theft	.21	.02	9.5 : 1

(VALUED AT > \$1,000)

Safety Outcomes: Missouri vs. Facilities
Participating in the Performance-based
Standards (PbS) Project

RATIO OF SAFETY-RELATED INCIDENT RATES (PER 100
FACILITY DAYS) IN PbS VS. DYS FACILITIES

	PbS : DYS
Assaults on Youth	4.5 : 1
Assaults on Staff	14 : 1
Use of Mechanical Restraints	17 : 1
Use of Isolation	228 : 1

RESULTS

MISSOURI HAS EXCEPTIONALLY LOW RATES OF VIOLENCE IN ITS JUVENILE FACILITIES

FIGURE 5

Percentage of Youth Re-incarcerated in Juvenile or Adult Correctional Facilities for Either New Offenses or Rule Violations within Three Years of Release from a Juvenile Facility

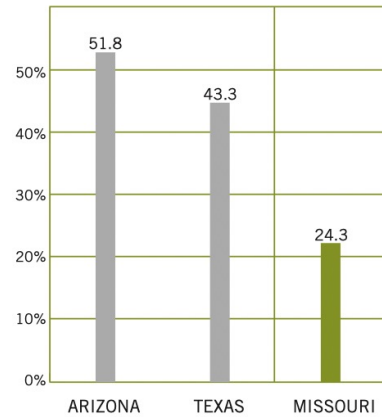
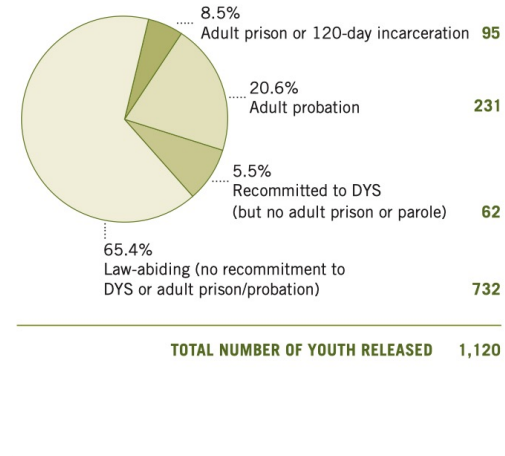


FIGURE 4

Three-Year Outcomes of Missouri Youth Discharged from DYS Custody in 2005



RESULTS

MISSOURI HAS EXCEPTIONALLY LOW RATES OF RECIDIVISM IN BOTH THE JUVENILE AND ADULT SYSTEMS

Educational Progress

PERCENTAGE OF CONFINED YOUTH MAKING AT LEAST
ONE YEAR OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS FOR EVERY YEAR IN
CONFINEMENT

Missouri	74.7%*
National Average	25%

*This figure is an average of youth committed to Missouri
Division of Youth Services custody who made adequate
progress in reading (76.1 percent) and math (73.3 percent)
during fiscal year 2007.

RESULTS

MISSOURI HAS HIGH RATES OF
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT
IN ITS JUVENILE FACILITIES

HOW DID MISSOURI DO IT?

- Reduced population (4 million dollars)
- Retrofitted facilities, ran them directly
- Implemented relationship-based model
- Recruited new staff—college campuses
 - Two facilities are ON college campuses
- Kept small groups together (including education)
- Low Staff ratios to allow for flexibility
- Lots of staff supervision
 - 24/7 two sets of eyes, two calm influences
 - Children are never alone

IDEAS TO PONDER FROM MISSOURI

- Like NY, keeping population down was key to success (CO's population is reduced!)
- Retrofitting facilities proved easier than expected and MSYI could provide guidance
- There was staff turnover during transition to relationship-based model
- Recruiting appropriate staff on college campuses
 - We have colleges! Partnerships? Fellowships?
- Staffing, staffing staffing

A photograph of a group of youth sitting in a circle on folding chairs in a gymnasium. They are wearing white t-shirts with "#ADVENTUREINTOPE" printed on the back. A man in a white t-shirt and blue cap is standing and talking to the group. The gymnasium has a colorful wall with yellow, purple, and blue squares. A large purple rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image.

D.C.

DYRS director Clinton Lacey encourages his staff to minimize the harm of detention by treating youth in custody as they would their own children.

“The easy thing is just to lock a kid up in his room, isolate him, and forget about him,” Baynes said. “The hard part is dealing with that youth when they are starting to ramp up, being able to talk that youth down and de-escalate them, and actually have them express feelings that they’ve never expressed before in their lives.” New Beginnings Superintendent

BASIC PROGRAM STRUCTURE: YOUTH SHELTERS

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- Managed by DYRS (D.C.'s DYS)
 - Court can order youth to shelter rather than detention or home
 - Homes in the community
 - Youth go to school in the community
 - Goal: 8-10 youth
 - One short term shelter for one night overnight stays for kids whose parents do not pick up, runaways, and PINS





BASIC PROGRAM STRUCTURE: COMMITTED YOUTH

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- Oak Hill Youth Center was a 220-bed secure facility, plagued with problems.
 - Renamed and reimagined in 2009
 - New Beginnings is a 60-bed secure facility, divided into ten units housing no more than ten young people.
 - A level system is used, in which young people progress through six stages before release

CORE IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

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- Group process technique
 - Young people are treated as parts of a whole, rather than a collection of unrelated individuals
 - They are expected to participate in creating culture
 - Supporting peers is a key part of progression
 - Positive Youth Development
 - Focuses on the strengths of young people, not their shortcomings
 - Engages young people in services that promote social, vocational, and academic engagement; creative expression; and positive peer and adult relationships
 - Measures success more broadly than recidivism – aims for and assesses success based on positive and supportive relationships, increased job readiness, and educational achievement



STAFFING FOR RELATIONSHIPS

- Initially, some staff were highly resistant to the culture shift that needed to occur at Oak Hill/New Beginnings. In order to encourage the staff that were particularly resistant to the new model to leave, D.C. implemented an early retirement program that resulted in 60 staff members leaving in the first year.
- Most staff were neither fully bought into the new model or highly resistant. Management focused on intensive training of these “ambivalent” staff, if they had not already left.
- Management worked with the Missouri Youth Services Institute, a consulting agency run by the person who lead Missouri’s transition to the Missouri Method to develop an adaption – “The D.C. Method” – and to train staff during the first years of the program.

TRANSITIONING TO HOMELIKE SPACES

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- Oak Hill was transformed into a campus, housing multiple day programs as well as its secure facility
 - The D.C. National Guard (which runs the National Youth ChalleNGe program, helping at-risk young people complete GEDs), DC's government, and various federal agencies contributed to a \$6 million renovation program. The renovation took about 18 months.
 - Each young person sleeps in an individual room.



CLOSE-KNIT,
SMALL LIVING
UNITS

EDUCATION,
RECREATION,
AND JOB
OPPORTUNITIES

BEYOND NEW BEGINNINGS

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- New Beginnings' 60 beds are not full
 - 2015 data: 65% of committed youth in DC serve their time in the community without going to New Beginnings—group homes, foster care, or at home with services

HOW DID DC DO IT? SHELTERS

- Contract facilities
- Located truly in the community
- Free metro fare for kids; they continue their education in public schools
- Paid for and supervised by DYRS
- Kids are Court Ordered to shelter—shelters cannot refuse kids

HOW DID DC DO IT? NEW BEGINNINGS

- Lawsuit, consent decree, and complaints led to reform
- Consulted with Annie E. Casey Foundation, ran commission for reform that made recommendations
- Created new agency, not under DHS, to report directly to the Mayor (DYRS), hired new director
- Got a lot of money (\$46M), new building
- Charter school run by nonprofit to took over education (Maya Angelou Academy)

WHAT DID DC FAIL TO DO?


- Keep kids in their local communities
- System did not create enough options for kids who were not committed to secure custody
 - Local community alternatives, mostly contract group homes, were reportedly not well run and were not well monitored
- Complaints of backslide on culture change
- Evaluations indicate room for improvement on transition planning

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: DC

- Are community-based detention shelters a good idea in Colorado?
- Are there lessons from education model at New Beginnings?
- Making existing facilities smaller; keeping kids in small groups
- Community services, community placements, and transition planning must be part of the plan
- **Can we go beyond New Beginnings?**

RESULTS

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- In FY2016, New Beginnings' recidivism rate was 22%, down from 37% in FY2013.
 - Students at New Beginnings made an average of 1.3 – 1.4 years of progress over nine months.

The background image shows a large, multi-story building with a light-colored stone or concrete facade. The building has several arched windows on the upper floors. In the foreground, there is a large, light-colored stone wall. On this wall, the words "OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE" and "BRIDGE CITY CENTER FOR YOUTH" are inscribed in large, dark, block letters. The sky is blue with some white clouds. A dark purple rectangular overlay is on the left side of the image, containing white text.

LOUISIANA: AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT

“[S]tructurally unfit to carry out the Missouri Model of care that Louisiana adopted [...] in the early 2000s.”

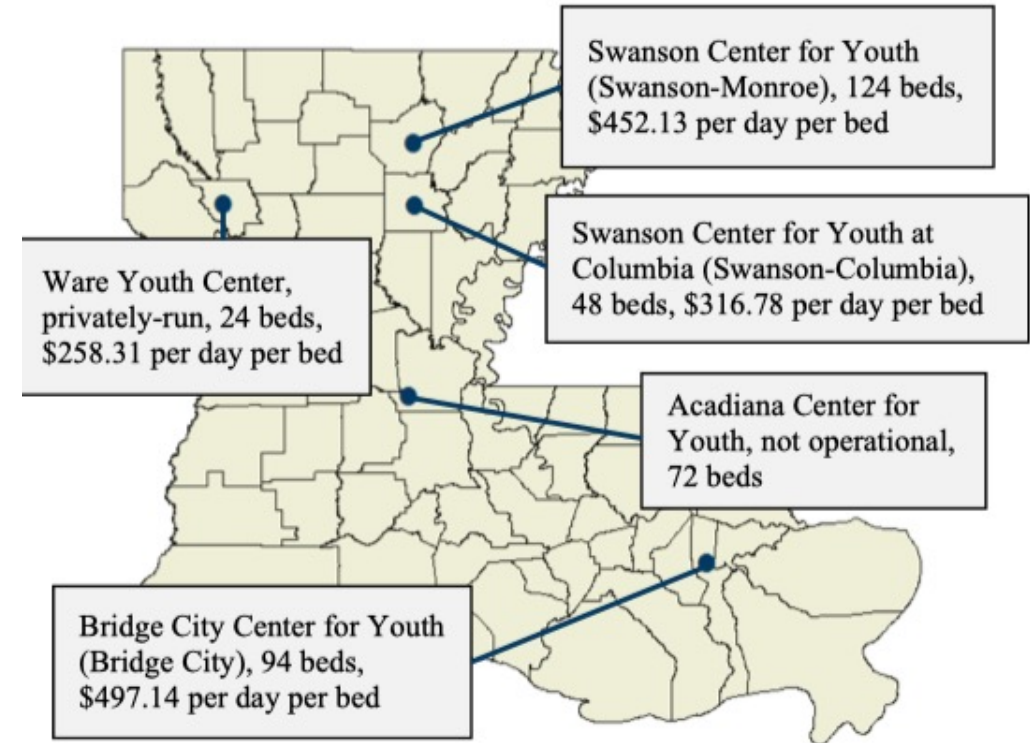
ORIGINAL REFORMS

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- In 2003, Louisiana separated its juvenile system from its adult system, establishing the Office of Juvenile Justice.
 - Shortly after, OJJ voted to adopt some version of the Missouri Model
 - The most infamous youth prison in Louisiana, Tallulah Correctional Center was closed and many more young people were sent to group residences than secure facilities.
 - However, small regional facilities never materialized, due to a combination of budget cuts and political resistance.

CURRENT STRUCTURE

- Five secure facilities, four state run (boys) and one for girls (private operator).
- The two largest facilities have been described as “structurally unfit to carry out the Missouri Model of care that Louisiana adopted [...] in the early 2000s.”
- Ware and Swanson at Columbia have not implemented the kinds of physical, cultural, and programmatic changes required by the Missouri Model.

Secure Care Facilities, Fiscal Year 2017



RESULTS

- Staff turnover in secure facilities has been rising since 2013
- Between 2013 and 2016:
 - Staff that monitor movement, search young people, participate in treatment activities, and keep young people safe had a turnover rate of 107%
 - There was a 52% increase in fights and a 111% increase in physical restraints.
 - The percentage of positive drug screens increased from 2.3% to 9.5%
- In late 2017, room confinement in the two largest facilities was astronomical.
- The three-year recidivism rate for FY2016-2017 was 36%.



ANOTHER CHANCE?

- In April 2019, Louisiana opened Acadiana Center for Youth (ACY). ACY is the first facility built for the model that Louisiana first adopted in 2004.
- Upon opening, it was only partially funded, able to run 3 of its 6 units.





HOMELIKE ENVIRONMENTS?

CONCLUSIONS

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Both programming and facilities must stem from clearly defined, consistent values that acknowledge young people's humanity and potential for redemption. Commitment to relationship-based culture is key.

Small facilities must be the apex of a robust continuum of care, and secure confinement must be used only as a last resort

Relationships are paramount; long term high staff turnover and understaffing is incompatible with the model. Recruiting the right staff, having enough staff, and retaining staff are essential.

"Homelike" must mean more than a small prison. The setting must be child-friendly – truly appear homelike, children wearing their own clothes, etc.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The benefits of "smaller is better" can only be realized through truly small and self-contained living units. The campus model has worked, but only with aggressive separation into smaller pods.

There are many ways to build Smaller is Better facilities, including state purchase of new buildings (Missouri), contracting with private agencies (New York), and renovation of existing facilities (D.C.). The common denominator is being committed to the small living groups principle.

Collaboration with funders and national partners has proven helpful in other jurisdictions

A plan for funding--local, state, federal, grant, or otherwise--is necessary and can help build support with collaborating agencies.

Smaller is better can be cost saving--lower recidivism, and, non-secure facilities are less expensive to create and run