

**Rocky Hill Youth & Family Services presents the town's first:  
JUVENILE REVIEW BOARD**

The Rocky Hill Youth & Family Services is implementing a new program this fall for juveniles in town. Juvenile Review Boards (JRB) have been documented as far back as forty years in Connecticut. It tailors diversions to the needs of the 'whole child.' There are over 44 JRB's throughout the state serving over 51 communities. The JRB is a group of local professionals including police, social workers, school officials, juvenile court officials, clergy and community members who meet to offer juveniles and their families a positive alternative to the juvenile justice system. The board designs alternative consequences that promote responsible behavior by youth, and help families solve the problems that may be at the root of inappropriate behavior. It offers a community based alternative to deal with school, family and minor criminal problems, as opposed to court, to deal with these issues.

Youth can be referred to the JRB by a police officer and/or through the school. Either way, the youth and their parents will have to agree to participate in the JRB process. The family has the option to pass on the JRB and go forward with the juvenile court system. Once a referral is made, the family meets with the JRB case worker for an initial meeting to discuss the case and schedule a date for the hearing in front of the board. A few possible consequences of the JRB are community service, counseling, restitution, writing an apology letter, and drug or alcohol testing and treatment. The consequence is always related to the behavior, making the process individualized to the needs of the youth.

There are several key differences between the JRB and the court system.

1. The JRB is not a court; the youth will not have a juvenile record after participating in the JRB. There is no court; therefore there is no presumption of innocence and no lawyers.
2. Only juveniles who committed either a first time misdemeanor offense or Family with Service Needs (truancy, run away, and out-of-control) before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday can participate in the JRB.
3. The youth has to admit guilt and accept responsibility for their behavior. The point of the JRB is to deal with the behavior, not decide if a crime occurred or not.
4. If the decision of the JRB is not followed, the case will be referred back to the court system.

There are several benefits to participating in the JRB as opposed to the juvenile court system.

The JRB:

1. Identifies and intervenes before youth can develop a pattern of delinquency
2. Provides timely and appropriate options to address at-risk or illegal behaviors
3. Provides prevention and intervention services that promote positive personal growth and development
4. Recommendations are designed to diminish the chance of repeat criminal conduct
5. There is no criminal court record if completed
6. Lowers the number of youth involved in the juvenile court system by providing alternative interventions and appropriate restitutions.

If you have any questions regarding the JRB, or would like to inquire about being on the JRB board, please contact the Rocky Hill Youth & Family Services Bureau at (860) 258-2718