



## Morning Session

**Discipline and Punish: Zero Tolerance Policies in Schools and the Juvenile Justice System**

*Several months ago a seven year old Collier County elementary school student with hyperactivity attention deficit disorder kicked his teacher. Sheriff's deputies took him to the intake unit of the Juvenile Assessment Center on a charge of aggravated assault. What's going on?*

Nationally, every year more than 3 million students are suspended and nearly 100,000 expelled from kindergarten through twelfth grade, frequently for offenses such as "defiance of authority" or disorderly conduct.

Of these, untold thousands face police action for disciplinary infractions previously handled at school, because 41 states now require that certain acts committed in school be reported to the police. Boys in general are the target, with minority males bearing the disproportionate brunt.

Youth advocates and education experts express increasing alarm at what they see as the toll of such policies, referring to what they call the "school to prison pipeline."

Judith Brown, senior attorney with the Advancement Project in Washington, D.C. noted "School used to be a refuge. Now it's a lock down environment. We are bringing the practices of criminal justice into the schools."

On March 18 the LWVCC will take a look at how this national scenario is being played out in Collier County. What are the zero tolerance policies in the CCPS? What are the percentage of discretionary disciplinary referrals and of mandatory ones? How many juvenile court cases are for school-related offenses? What spectrum of options faces these students and their families? Walking us through these issues will be Connie Lewis, acting intake supervisor at the Juvenile Assessment Center; Bill Spano, Director of Alternative Programs with the CCPS, and Shannon McFee, a defense attorney in private practice who has represented many of these youth.

## Afternoon Session

**PRIVATIZE OR PERISH?  
The Future of Children's Services in Southwest Florida**

Panel: Jan Eustis, The Ruth Cooper Center  
Harry Propper, President and CEO, The Children's Network of Southwest Florida  
Stan Applebaum, Children's Advocate

The recent transfer of control over child welfare from the Department of Children and Families to a private firm, Camelot Community Care, will result in a massive overhaul of social services in Southwest Florida's five county area as part of Governor Jeb Bush's campaign to privatize social services throughout the state. Camelot's local operation is called

The Children's Network of Southwest Florida. Counties served are Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades.

Nearly every company and nonprofit organization that serves the foster care system will be involved with Camelot, which is reorganizing the way child welfare cases are managed. About 1,700 children will be placed in foster care or under protective supervision this year in Southwest Florida.

Our panel will outline the steps that are being taken to ensure a smooth transition and they will discuss some of the concerns voiced by agencies and child advocates.



**WHEN: MARCH 15TH**

10:30 a.m. Morning Session

12:00 p.m. Luncheon

12:30 p.m. Afternoon Session

**WHERE: Professional Development Center**

615 Third Avenue South

## Social Policy

Katherine Todd, Chair

In February the committee met with David Schimmel, CEO of the David Lawrence Center, to discuss mental health needs and issues in Collier County. A brief overview of the community mental health movement in the U.S. established that thirty plus years of progressive research into the biochemical origins of many of the major diagnoses, combined with refinements in medications, have made mainstreaming of the persistently mentally ill far more effective.

While stigmatization issues continue and often prevent those in pain from seeking treatment, a recovery philosophy which instills hope and actively works to keep the persistently mentally ill engaged with and integrated into the community is not only practicable, but most effective.

An estimated 2,000 adults in Collier County experience major mental illness, of these approximately 1,000 receive services at the DLC, 500 seek private therapeutic services and 500 do not seek treatment at all. DLC serves as the primary provider of mental health services in the county, and of almost inpatient treatment. Of the approximately 15,000 individuals who receive services at the center each year one half have substance abuse diagnoses and one half have mental health diagnoses. Of the one half presenting with mental health issues, one third are children.

Of the approximately 4,000 crisis admissions/evaluations at DLC each year, 25% are children under the age of 18 years, often as young as three or four. Accurate diagnosis and treatment of young children poses a real problem. The use of psychological testing as a diagnostic tool has declined dramatically for a variety of reasons; psychiatric consultations can be difficult to obtain and cost prohibitive; school clinicians are overwhelmed. Many parents in distress turn to the family GP or pediatrician for relief with the result that approximately 30% of children who are medicated don't need to be so.

In its mission of rebuilding lives, the DLC provides diverse services to a diverse population with diverse needs. As always in Collier County, the funding of services to the economically and medically disadvantaged is the hassle requiring major hustle. Consistent with its position of avoiding no funds for social services, the County Commission issues \$1

million a year of legally mandated matching funds for federal monies which flow to the state under the Community Mental Health Act. The center taps all accessible and available sources to meet its overall budget of approximately \$18 million a year.

The March meeting will be at the same place and at the same time. Rather than having a speaker, however, we will use the time to do some planning for the 2004-5 season. Those interested should dig out and review this year's program priorities and come prepared to discuss possible changes in focus and format.



### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March		
10	8:30 a.m.	Social Policy at Crissy's Wildside Cafe
15	10:30 a.m.	General Meeting at the Professional Development Center
25	VOTER DEADLINE - April	
April		
5	12:00 p.m.	Board Meeting at TIB Bank
8	VOTER Mailing at Office	
19	10:30 a.m.	ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Meeting  
The Conservancy of Southwest Florida  
1450 Merihue Drive

- \* The cost for the luncheon, tour included, will be \$20.
- \* Reservations for this event must be made ASAP! Do NOT call the office.
- \* Please call Nicole Ryan at 403-4220 at the Conservancy.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Nicole Ryan, Chair

### Saving Naples Bay

For well over 20 years, scientists and residents alike have been aware that Naples Bay is in trouble. Studies of the Bay date back to the 1979 Naples Bay Study report published by the Collier County Conservancy (now the Conservancy of Southwest Florida). In the mid-1990s, the Naples Bay Study Committee spent months again looking at the Bay, examining the problems and searching for solutions.

There has been no shortage of studies on the bay, but when it comes to the difficult task of doing something to actually clean up and restore this waterway, we seem to have gotten bogged down.

Hope may be on the horizon. A new initiative, called the Naples Bay Initiative, has been created to not only look at the bay, but to (hopefully) create the momentum necessary to actually do something about the problem. It seems like the ideal time to take such action. We have a new Naples City Council in place, with new Council members who campaigned on their commitment to clean up Naples Bay. It is time for action.

However, it is not just the policy makes, scientists and environmental organizations that must participate. It will take many years to actually restore the Bay. Yet, we all make decisions daily that impact our natural environment. Here are some things that you can do to help protect Naples Bay (and other bay or estuarine systems):

\* If you are considering buying a boat with an outboard motor for use on the Bay, get a four-stroke motor or a new direct-injection two-stroke. The old corroborated two-strokes discharge 20-30% of the gasoline unburned into the water and air. Four-stroke engines are also quieter and use less gas and oil.

\* Don't pour any polluting liquids in storm drains, such as oil or gasoline. Most of the storm drains around Naples discharge right into the Bay. Don't pour these liquids on the ground either, because they can be carried by runoff into the

storm drains.

\* Fix oil and gasoline leaks from your car or lawn mower. Our streets, driveways and parking lots nationwide carry the equivalent of an Exxon Valdez worth of oil into our rivers and bays every eight months.

\* Minimize the use of fertilizer on your lawn and garden, because nitrogen and phosphorus that runs off with storm water can cause algae blooms in the Bay that prevent seagrass growth and reduce dissolved oxygen needed by fish.

\* Minimize pesticide use to prevent toxic runoff into the Bay.

\* Use less impervious pavement around your home or business so that storm water can soak into the ground instead of running off into the Bay.

\* Direct runoff from your roof, driveway and sidewalks to your yard instead of directly to the driveway or storm drain. This removes some of the pollutants before they enter the storm drain.

\* Talk to elected officials and policy makers about the importance of the Bay and your support for restoration.

And remember  
Naples Bay is for everyone -  
people and wildlife

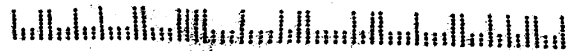


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## ***League of Women Voters of Collier County Florida***

Yes, I am interested in the League X

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\$60/year Adult\*

\$30/year Second adult\* \* Includes National and

\$30/year Student\* State VOTER

*Please remit this form with your check to:*  
League of Women Voters of Collier County

Suite 35-A  
660 9th Street North  
Naples, FL 34102

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political organization working to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of all citizens on their government