

## Jacksonville Journey

In the fall of 2008, the City Council approved the first year of funding for the Jacksonville Journey. In response to two years plus of escalating crime and the continued distinction of been named “The Murder Capital of Florida”, the comprehensive anti-crime community wide initiative began. As Sheriff John Rutherford continues to stress, fighting crime is a three legged stool-prevention, intervention and enforcement. We can’t arrest our way out of our crime problem.

At the time, the city’s truancy and dropout rates were among the highest in Florida, juvenile crime was on the rise, thousands of ex-offenders were being released back into the community with little or no assistance and per capital law enforcement spending in Jacksonville was among the lowest in the state. Jacksonville had experienced the highest number of homicides in the state for the previous eight years and 15 out of the previous 19 years.

At the 2011 Finance Committee meetings, the Jacksonville Journey Oversight Committee was asked, “What is the “exit strategy” for the Journey programs”. Based on the results and the continued progress, we believe the programs should continue to be funded.

The nine member volunteer JJOC continues to ensure that all funded programs receive critical oversight to assess and assure the efficiency and effectiveness of each program. The JJOC recommends metrics to evaluate Journey programs and has demonstrated its commitment to eliminating unproductive vendors or programs and requiring changes to assure maximum return on investment. For example, when the provider was not meeting attendance requirements at Lake Shore Middle School Team Up, the JJOC asked the JCC to solicit a new provider. When the Duval County School Board’s Out of School Suspension program (ATOSS) was not performing to expectations, monthly presentations occurred until all deliverables were being met. Additionally, the overall budget was reduced

by 50%. The JJOC continues to ask the tough questions, hold programs accountable, while being good stewards of the taxpayer's dollars.

Current funding includes:

• Alternative to Out of School Suspension(5 centers)	\$1,067,423
• Team Up Programs (12 sites)	\$2,177,164
• Early Literacy	\$2,000,000
• Juvenile Assessment Center(\$63,239 prior year)	\$ 289,236
• Summer Camp	\$1,081,400
• Summer Jobs	\$ 209,220
• Gang Intervention	\$ 250,000
• Juvenile Crime Prevention/Intervention Program	\$ 321,600
• Re-entry Portal (JREC)	\$ 600,000
• Training programs for ex-offenders(2 programs)	\$ 658,800
• Employment programs for ex-offenders(2 programs)	\$ 440,039
• DART	\$ 324,091
• LISC	\$ 500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,912,953</b>

To date, some of the results include:

- An overall, 23.9% reduction in crime. Crime is down nationwide but Duval County is higher than the national average.
- We are no longer the murder capital of Florida. There 71 murders committed in 2011 a 38% reduction since Journey began.
- The ex-offender programs have contributed to a 35% reduction in the recidivism rate. By providing assistance, training and education, fewer individuals are returning to prison.
- Juvenile crime has been reduced by 32% and felony juvenile crime by 38%. The JJ focus on additional programs for juveniles and keeping juveniles in a safe supervised environment has contributed to this reduction.
- Prior to JJ, the Duval County School Board suspended more students than any other school district in Florida. As a result of ATOSS, high

school suspensions have been reduced by nearly 70% and this collaborative program between the City and the schools has profoundly improved safety and security. Since the creation of ATOSS, juvenile arrests in our schools has dropped 38%, major conduct violations have dropped 40% and absenteeism has dropped 33%

- Students enrolled in Team Up have a better promotion rate and better attendance rate than their counterparts who do not attend.

The strategic, holistic approach to law enforcement, prosecution and intervention efforts by the Jacksonville Sheriff's office, the State Attorney, the community based programs and the community at large is all contributing to our overall reduction in crime. We should continue on this path with consistent law enforcement, prevention, intervention and rehabilitation programs. The JJOC has provided unprecedented oversight and accountability of the programs under its auspices and has been an essential component of the City's prevention, intervention and rehabilitation efforts. The only additional cost of Journey as a separate entity is a portion of one staff person's time; but the added level of oversight contributes to the effectiveness of the individual programs. Nevertheless, if it is the desire of the Finance Committee to recommend elimination of the JJOC, it is respectfully submitted that the programs should continue and appropriate City departments tasked with the same level of oversight now provided.

The JJOC realizes that during tough budgetary constraints, the funds available may be reduced. As we did last year by eliminating the Jacksonville Commitment, Family Foundations and reduction in other programs, we will work with the Council to recommend what we believe is the best use of the dollars available. We look forward to continuing to work with you.