



## The Multnomah County Success Story: Removing Youth from Adult Jail

On December 18, 2008, the Board of County Commissioners for Multnomah County, Oregon unanimously approved a resolution, proposed by Commissioner Lisa Naito, to place youth in custody in a juvenile detention facility rather than the county jail.

The resolution says that, “Juveniles require programs that are designed especially for youth with specially trained staff, services not readily available in Multnomah County’s jails” and that “Detained and incarcerated youth must be provided programs which address their long term education, health, and mental health needs.” As a result of the resolution, if youth are detained, the presumption is that they will be held in a juvenile detention facility.

In a press statement announcing the approval of the measure, then Multnomah County Commissioner Lisa Naito, stated, “We have an opportunity to protect young people and enhance public safety. Thankfully, our Corrections Deputies are doing their jobs and protecting these young offenders that end up in jail instead of the Donald E. Long Center. We haven’t had any recent incidents between adult and juveniles in Multnomah County jails, but we don’t want to wait and act after something has happened.”

In addition to the unanimous support from county commissioners, the measure was supported by the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice and the Partnership for Safety and Justice (PSJ), Oregon’s leading criminal justice reform organization. “With our partners, we will continue to safely manage these young people, meet their educational, treatment and counseling needs, and provide services geared to reduce their chances of re-offending,” says David Koch, Assistant Director, Juvenile Services Division, Department of Community Justice.

The Partnership for Safety and Justice provided testimony and its members sent over 250 letters to the commission. In testimony before the county commission, PSJ’s Deputy Director Shannon Wight stated, “By passing this resolution, you will again solidify Multnomah County as a system that is truly committed to public safety.”

Multnomah County has been a nationally recognized jurisdiction on reducing the inappropriate and unnecessary detention of youth through the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). “Multnomah County has been leading the nation in developing approaches to reduce youthful offending that are now being use in 100 communities around the country,” says Judge Nan Waller, the County’s chief family law judge and a leader on the JDAI effort in Multnomah. “By memorializing what we have been doing, the County is keeping pace with national best practices to enhance public safety, and keep young people safe.”

May 2010

By Liz Ryan

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

**RESOLUTION NO. 08-166**

Directing that Juveniles in Custody in Multnomah County be Held at the Donald E. Long Juvenile Detention Home

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:**

- a. Juveniles certified to stand trial as an adult may be legally housed in jail.
- b. Juveniles are developmentally different from adults; these differences must be given consideration when youthful offenders are taken into custody.
- c. Juveniles require programs that are designed especially for youth with specially-trained staff, services not readily available in Multnomah County's jails.
- d. The juvenile justice system exists to enhance public safety, to hold youthful offenders accountable, and to develop their competencies through treatment and education programs in order to make positive changes in their lives. Detained and incarcerated youth must be provided programs which address their long-term education, health, and mental health needs.
- e. Multnomah County operates the Donald E. Long Juvenile Detention Home (JDH) which maintains a safe, secure, stable, and enriching environment for juveniles in custody while protecting the community.
- f. The JDH staff is trained in providing services and programs to youthful offenders. In addition, JDH provides opportunities for appropriate peer interaction for the development of youthful offenders.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:**

The Board of County Commissioners directs that juveniles in custody in Multnomah County be held at the Donald E. Long Juvenile Detention Home unless the Sheriff and the Director of the Department of Community Corrections, or their designee, agree to alternate placement.

ADOPTED this 18th day of December 2008.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON



  
Ted Wheeler, Chair

REVIEWED:

AGNES SOWLE, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By   
Agnes Sowle, County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY:  
Commissioner Lisa Naito, District 3