

# Task force discusses needs of Hoke youth

By Jen Osborn  
Staff writer

Although there are many Hoke County groups, organizations and agencies whose sole purpose is to advocate for local children, many sometimes end up working against each other instead of with one another. But that may be changing.

Developing a collaborative relationship was one of the main objectives of more than 10 Hoke County agencies whose representatives joined together with the Youth Services Task Force Monday morning to update one another on the needs of local youth and learn about Community Based Alternative (CBA) programs.

Agencies invited to the breakfast included Hoke County schools, social services, the Cooperative Extension Office, Sandhills Mental Health, the health department, the police and sheriff's departments, district court judges, the district attorney's office, the city and county managers, the city mayor, city council members and members of the board of county commissioners.

Allison Newton, chairman of the Youth Services Task Force that recommends CBA programs for area children, explained that CBA is funded through the state and from the Hoke County commissioners.

The breakfast meeting was important, she said, to help keep the lines of communication open among those organizations that work with youth.

"We feel like a lot of problems in our county are caused by lack of resources," Newton said. "But we feel along with that comes lack of communication."

Also at the meeting, Regina Deese, chief court counselor, explained CBA's three programs — early intervention, alternatives to detention and the new alternatives to out of school suspensions.

George Holden, CBA's regional consultant, said CBA's philosophy is to offer alternatives to placing children in institutions.

"We're seeing younger children committing more serious crimes in the community," Newton said, explaining why CBA services are necessary in North Carolina. "We have to put the oil where the squeak is."

Not only does CBA work to keep children out of institutions, but it also helps save the state and counties money in the long run.

According to Ken Foster, assistant

director of the division of youth services, the community services section of the division is responsible for developing an array of less expensive community based alternative programs to help local communities deal with the problems of troubled youth, reduce crime and delinquency and save the tax payers money.

For example, the following are some statistics offered by Foster:

- Last year (fiscal year 1994-95) in

program's director.

Other students who are coming back to school from a juvenile program may also find the program to be one that helps them make an easier transition back to school, Moss said.

Because Hoke County is considered a target county (which means 50 percent of its CBA referrals must come from the courts or law enforcement), Moss said the program was chosen over the 4-H Life Skills program be-

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— George Holden

Hoke County, 188 juveniles were brought before the court charged with 309 criminal offenses. Seven of those offenses were serious felonies.

•Forty-nine juveniles were held in secure detention awaiting trial at an average cost of \$1,800 for a total of just over \$88,200, half of which was paid for by Hoke County and half by the state of North Carolina.

•Four juveniles were committed to training schools at \$46,000 per commitment for a total cost to the state of \$184,000.

Yet the total cost of offering CBA services to Hoke County last year was only \$140,514.

According to Foster, the CBA programs listed above served 191 new admissions last year, 46 percent of whom were court involved youth. There were 162 program terminations during the year with 91 (56 percent) successfully completing the program experience and only 1 percent being committed to training school. The average total cost for these programs was \$867 per child.

### New program

Instead of funding the 4-H Life Skills program, this year the CBA task force decided to add a new program — alternatives to out of school suspensions, a program that would address academic areas as well as things like self-esteem problems, alcohol or drug abuse or absence of positive role models in a setting away from the school.

"Students who would be suspended three to 10 days will have the option of participating and that would allow them to remain in attendance at their own school," said Jeff Moss, the

cause it targets seventh through twelfth grade students who better fit the referral age. The 4-H Life Skills program, while still a valuable program, targets younger children, he said.

"We're following children and children are changing," Newton said.

Students involved in alternatives to out of school suspensions will be housed at the National Guard Armory and must provide their own transportation.

"What we looked at was a way to put some responsibility back onto the students and not just make it a free ride," Moss said. Individual curriculum will target such topics as uncooperative attitudes, solving conflicts, vandalism, learning from mistakes, being responsible for actions, decisions and consequences, and problems with relationships and authority, among others.

"I think it will have a very positive impact on students that wish to participate and not have attendance problems and also want to keep their grades up," Moss said.

Hoke County students who are suspended from school for more than seven days are in danger of failing the school year. So, if a student is suspended for 10 days, Moss explained, without the program he is in violation of the attendance policy. But with the voluntary alternatives to out of school suspensions program, the student has the opportunity to keep himself out of the non-attendance category and won't fail the school year.

Throughout the program CBA hopes to refer students to its program from principals, counselors, juvenile court and public agencies. They estimate they will serve about 200 youth during a year-long funding period.



Photo by Kristin Guthrie

### Turkey Festival wear

Check out this year's Turkey Festival souvenirs. They're on sale now at the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce and the House of Raeford Retail Store. They have specialty golf shirts, adult slacks and shorts, long sleeve and short sleeve t-shirts, totes, aprons, hats, cups, pins and more. Victoria Lynch (left) models a t-shirt along with her mother Jackie, who models a pair of slacks, while Mitchell Sports shows off the golf shirt and the hat.

## Deer causes car accident

A deer that ran into the roadway was the cause of a two-car accident on the same road. As the two vehicles met, Walter Gibson Road late Saturday night that sent one local man to the hospital for injuries, said Sgt. R.D. Jacobs of the N.C. Highway Patrol.

Jacobs said a 1994 Plymouth driven by Randy Lee Smith, 27, of Raeford was traveling east on Walter Gibson Road while a 1995 BMW driven by

Jerry Lawrence Bruner, 34, of Laurinburg was traveling west on the same road. As the two vehicles met, Jacobs said, a deer ran across the road and was hit by Smith. It then apparently was hit a second time by Bruner's vehicle.

After hitting the deer Jacobs said Smith's car started to the right, crossed a ditch and came to rest in a field.

Smith was reportedly injured and taken to Cape Fear Valley Medical Center for treatment.

Bruner, who was not injured, turned and stopped near Smith to render assistance, Jacobs said.

No charges were filed but Jacobs said Smith's vehicle sustained about \$1,000 in damages while Bruner's had \$2,500 in damages.

## New scout troop to be formed

A new boy scout troop and cub scout pack has been formed in Raeford.

Raeford Animal Clinic is the chartered organization of BSA Troop 440 and Cub Scout Pack 440. These groups will serve the boys from South Hoke and West Hoke Schools.

Scoutmaster for Troop 440 is Manuel Leander Jr. His assistant scoutmaster is Ronald Loes. Upon formation of the troop, there are eight scouts active.

Pack 440 has 12 active scouts ranging in age from 7 to 10 years old. Cubmaster is Margaret Leander. Her Assistant Cubmaster is Brenda Miller. Den Leaders are Kelly Stewart, Brenda Miller and Manuel Leander Jr.

A cross-over celebration was held over Memorial Day weekend where scouts "crossed over" to the next level of scouting. Scouts were treated to a cook-out at Burlington Park by the leaders and Raeford Animal Clinic.

Each scout received a certificate and bag of prizes for their hard work.

Troop 440 will be working on their Tenderfoot rank and also on merit badges from the medical field. Dr. Randall McAdams from Raeford Animal Clinic will be holding sessions on veterinary medicine along with Clara Wilson and Chris White, Veterinary technicians. They will be holding sessions on pet care and reptile and amphibian studies.

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