

Barbara Allen-Hagen Award Application Hartford Juvenile Detention Center - #1009

PbS Barbara Allen-Hagen Award

Purpose

The PbS Barbara Allen-Hagen Award was established in 2007 to honor Barbara Allen-Hagen in her retirement from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). As PbS' designated monitor while the project was federally-funded, Barbara's passion and dedication became the foundation for PbS' guiding principle that all youths are treated like one of our own. The annual award is presented to one long-term correction facility, one short-term detention or assessment center and one community residential program that best demonstrates significant improvements to their operations, conditions and culture using PbS' data-driven improvement model. The winning sites are selected based on their success in developing and implementing PbS improvement plans that ensure practices are safe, developmentally-appropriate, research-based and result in sustainable positive outcomes for youths, staff and families.

Eligibility

To enter, sites must have successfully completed two PbS data collection/improvement cycles without data quality issues (i.e. their data must be included in the PbS field average). Previous applicants and finalists are highly encouraged to reapply. The same improvement plan may be used from a previous application provided the new application incorporates recent data and activities. Past winners may apply but must present a different improvement plan than their winning application.

Deadline

Applications must be submitted by 11:59pm EDT on March 31, 2022.

Please contact the PbS Help Desk with questions: help@pbstandards.org.

Facility Information

Please report the most current facility information.

Facility or program name:

Hartford Juvenile Detention Center

First PbS data collection:

04/01/2019

Average daily population:

During the most recent data collection

20

Gender of facility or program population:

- Male
- Female
- Co-ed

Age range of youths:

Ex. 10-17 years old

10-17

Average length of stay (in days):

14 Days

Number of staff:

74

Your Contact Information

Name of person completing application:

Giovanni Gagliardi/Mia Scafe

Job Title:

Deputy SuperIntendent/CPO

Email:

giovanni.gagliardi@jud.ct.gov

Phone:

860 244-7962

Facility Leadership

Facility Administrator:

Giovanni Gagliardi

PbS Site Coordinator:

Patricia Nunez

Agency CEO/Director:

The person who oversees your agency

Gary Roberge

Are there any other people who should receive communications regarding this application?

Please list each person's name, title and email address

I certify I am submitting this application on behalf of my facility and have obtained the permission of the Agency CEO/Director

I agree to the terms and conditions above.

Improvement Plan

Please tell the story of your most successful PbS Improvement Plan.

Improvement Plan ID:

Choose only one

Safety 14

What Focus Subjects are included in this improvement plan?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Order | <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Security | <input type="checkbox"/> Reintegration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Programming | <input type="checkbox"/> Family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Justice | |

Date started:

04/01/2019

Starting Point: Why

1) Please explain why your team chose to focus on this improvement.

Between 250 and 500 words, please. If you are sending a video entry, please write "see video" and advance to the next page.

The Hartford Juvenile Residential Center Performance based Standards (PbS) team chose to focus on Safety (14). When the team began to analyze the data from the Safety 14 Outcome Measures, we noticed a significant increase in staff fear beginning in April of 2018. By October of 2018, 50% of staff reported fearing for their safety within the facility, which triggered the need for immediate intervention. Legislative changes were being drafted that would transfer the responsibility of post-adjudicatory juvenile supervision to the Connecticut Judicial Branch. This highest risk juvenile population presented with complex needs and would require a longer length of stay and treatment intervention that the pre-trial detention centers were not built for. On July 1, 2018, the post-adjudicated youth population became the responsibility of the Connecticut Judicial Branch, and the REGIONS treatment program was opened in one unit of the Hartford Juvenile Residential Center. Many staff were resistant to this new change, as they felt fearful as to how they would adequately work with and support this new population. The PbS team reviewed staff feedback requesting additional trainings to better understand and serve this highest risk population. There were many questions regarding how the center would be able to adequately house a long-term residential treatment program for these identified youth due to the center only having four housing units: one unit for REGIONS, one female unit, and two housing units for the pre-trial population. During this time the center population had increased and there was a struggle to maintain fully staffed positions. There was an increase in restraints due to the conflicts within the growing population and staff who felt they were inadequately trained. This resulted in increased staff out on workers compensation and staff shortages. The center was faced with a combination of mandated overtime, increased population conflicts and a strain on staff retention. Staff burnout rates were at an all-time high and staff morale was at an all-time low. All these factors required immediate attention sustainable change to help our staff and youth feel safe and supported. (See Toggle Data Outcome Measures for Safety 14)

Strategy: How

2) Please describe how your team made changes, how you communicated the plan throughout the facility and how you worked together to get buy-in from staff, youths and families (where applicable). How did you plan for ensuring the change is sustained?

Between 250 and 500 words, please. If you are sending a video entry, please write "see video" and advance to the next page.

The Hartford Juvenile Residential Center team began strategizing and planning for ways to reduce the levels of staff fear. We began with seeking input and feedback from staff at all positions and departments within the center. Our first step was to ensure the facility was maintaining fully staffed positions by keeping an open continuous recruitment posting to stay prepared for any staffing shortages. We listened to our staff and youth who voiced concerns regarding feeling unsafe, not supported, and not adequately trained to work with the new high-risk REGIONS population. When your staff don't feel safe, neither do our children. We strategized to on-board new per diem staff to assist with reducing overtime. These new staff gave the facility an opportunity to see how they worked with our youth and gave the per diem staff a chance to 'try out' the work from a front-line standpoint. We also implemented a new position of Shift Managers, to support staff and provide consistent on-the-floor staff supervision while providing coaching and validation to our new staff. Next, the Pbs Site Coordinator developed a Safety Committee comprised of staff from all levels and departments including administration, front line/programming staff, kitchen staff and clinical staff. The Safety Committee is a voluntary meeting open to all staff, which meets once a week to address any staff questions or concerns, while providing support. This meeting allows for staff to receive updates on policy and procedure changes made in the facility and allows staff opportunity to provide feedback and ask any questions to reduce staff fear. This meeting allows staff a chance to share their thoughts and perspectives on making the building safer for staff and the population we serve. In effort to recognize the toll the changes were having on our staff, we highlighted staff through Staff Appreciate Day, as well as Staff of the Quarter, to regularly recognize staff achievements and build staff morale. Staff Appreciation Day recognizes staff on all shifts and the facility prepares a meal, separate from that of the youth, to recognize their hard work and dedication. Staff Appreciation is a valuable step to uplift staff and help increase staff morale. Third, we developed an anonymous and voluntary survey that was offered to staff to complete which asked questions to gain a better understanding of what would make them feel safer when working. Survey results were reviewed and analyzed as part of the Safety Committee. The final step was utilizing Restorative Justice circles. We followed restorative best practices and use circles as way to be 80% proactive and 20% reactive. These circles provide a safe space for staff and youth to work collaboratively to create safe spaces to reduce crisis situations and build relationships. In turn, we have been able to keep a consistent and proactive approach to improve safety within the building as well as reduce restraints, room time and isolation.

Changes and Interventions: What

3) Please describe what you did- specific practices changes, trainings, innovations and creative solutions to the problem identified in question 1.

Between 250 and 500 words, please. If you are sending a video entry, please write "see video" and advance to the next page.

To adequately address staff safety within the facility, we also had to adapt to the changes that were occurring outside of the facility due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Previously, trainings were held in-person at our Training Academy, however, there was a shift to utilize virtual platforms for most trainings. A training room was created on-site in the center so that staff were able to receive all required trainings while allowing for social distancing. We implemented a new training curriculum requested by staff that included Adolescent Development Issues, Becoming Your Better Self, Reducing the Impact of Trauma Exposure and Trauma Informed Strategies to support our staff and the new high-risk youth in our population. These trainings focused on teaching staff how to best serve trauma exposed youth while maintaining positive self-care habits. Another intervention utilized was by creating voluntary and anonymous surveys to obtain feedback from staff to pinpoint when staff feel most unsafe and ways to promote safety within the building. The feedback from these surveys was utilized to plan and strategize new ways to continue making strides to maintain safety for all. We also created a group of Restorative Justice trainers to serve as support coaches for staff implementing circles during programming. Utilizing the Restorative Justice approach in our day-to-day programming, allowed our youth to restore, repair and rebuild relationships between youth and other youth, and youth and our staff. This approach created a safe space for youth to communicate their feelings and gave staff a chance to provide feedback and support. As previously mentioned, we wanted to regularly recognize staff achievements and build staff morale. Aside from our Staff Appreciation Day, which is a way for administrative staff to recognize our frontline workers, we also celebrate Staff of the Quarter to recognize the hard work and achievements of staff to build employee morale. Staff of the Quarter gives all facility staff an opportunity to anonymously vote on a staff who demonstrates a positive attitude, dedication, perseverance, and leadership qualities. Staff Appreciation is a valuable best practice approach to develop and support staff.

Stories of Change

Please note this question is completely optional. Responses to this question will not be factored into the scoring of any applications.

4) PbS is collecting stories from participants about successful changes to share as evidence of good work and progress made through challenging times. Please include a short story about a significant change you've seen or been a part of in juvenile justice, your agency or your site over the years.

Between 100 and 250 words, please. If you are sending a video entry, please type "see video" and advance to the next page.

In 2019, our PbS team began to shrink, and we needed to onboard new staff and train them to be a part of PbS. The Hartford Juvenile Residential Center now has a newly invigorated team and we have met our commitment to reduce staff fear by 5%. One of the most effective changes that has helped us meet this goal has been the focus on restorative circles and restorative practices in our facility. This has been a significant gain for not only our facility, but our entire PbS team, who has dedicated their efforts to reduce fear and promote safety within the facility by better supporting our staff and youth and building relationships. One of our Juvenile Detention Officers, Sulaimon Arnold, who is a restorative circle facilitator has provided a brief story of how Restorative circles has impacted the facility over the years: "In Hartford Juvenile Detention Center, we work with and mentor juveniles of all walks. They all have one thing in common and that being that they have all made mistakes which is the reason why they are in Detention. When I first started in 2019 the group of young men that were in REGIONS taught me a lot within a short period of time. They taught me that guidance and structure is important in terms of preparing our young men for reintegration. A tool that I have found to be of very importance in this process would be "Restorative Justice Circles." I have witnessed the juveniles in the Hartford Juvenile Residential Center change their thought process over time. Most, if not all, the youth start in the same place in terms of not trusting anyone around them and not willing to open or engage in our Dialectical Behavior Therapy circles, or our Restorative Justice circles. My observation has been that by just starting the circle is key and all kids who are willing to at least sit in the circle will eventually participate and those who don't join immediately eventually find themselves joining at some point. I have witnessed juveniles with trust issues learn to trust by using mindfulness breathing exercises, which requires everyone to close their eyes and trust that they are in a safe environment while completing the exercise. Staff maintains the safety of everyone and after completing the breathing exercise the juveniles are usually relaxed and open for the next step of the circle which requires everyone to be vulnerable. The leader of the group being myself must be creative and use different approaches, find something that everyone can relate to and use that as a second ice breaker. I have found sports or family gatherings to be great topics. I have found that after finding the proper ice breaker to have as much engagement as possible that moving forward has been a smoother process. The juveniles begin to take the lead in the groups and request to start the groups, they also request to pick topics of discussion. Restorative Justice circles has allowed some of the juveniles to start new friendships with peers that they probably would have never spoken to. The Restorative Justice circles have also helped to remove tension on the unit by providing a structured outlet to allow the juveniles a chance to voice their problems or opinions on matters without having to worry about anyone lashing out. Overall, I have found Restorative Justice circles to be a successful tool for building staff communication and relationships within the Hartford Juvenile Residential Center. It has shaped relationships between both juveniles and staff, and staff and staff in a positive way. Restorative circles have helped to reduce staff fear, which in turn has led to less youth fear and a decrease in juvenile physical altercations within the center."

Please advance to the next page to finalize and submit this application.

Thank You

*Please click finish only if this application is final. **You will not be able to make changes once you submit the application.***

Before you submit your application, did you:

- *Check word counts (any words over the word count will not be read);*

- *Answer each question completely; and*
- *Review the application with your coach?*

If you are not ready to submit the application, you may review previous pages or exit the survey and return to make changes at any time prior to the deadline: March 31, 2022.

I certify that the information on this application is accurate and ready to be submitted. I understand once I submit this application, I will not be able to make any changes.

I agree with the statement above

If you are sending a video entry, please make sure to submit this form and upload the video here:
<https://pbstandards.org/awards/barbara-allen-hagen-award/barbara-allen-hagen-video-entry/>