



By
Cotina Lane

Introduction

It is widely perceived that juveniles are responsible for a significant level of criminal offending in the District of Columbia. This perception, in part, is due to the narrow distinction between youthful offenders and juvenile offenders. This has led to a heightened concern with juvenile offending and a battle for tougher penalties in the District of Columbia for juvenile offenders.

This report will examine levels of juvenile offending in the context of juvenile population, juvenile crime and juvenile arrest in the District of Columbia during the summer months of May to August for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008. It will look at what the District of Columbia's juvenile population is, where they live, where they commit crime and when they are most likely to commit crime. It will also examine juveniles arrest for May to August of 2006, 2007, and 2008, what programs are available for at risk juveniles and youth in the District of Columbia and how juveniles perceive themselves and their community.

This report is limited by the fact that it is not until an arrest is made that the age of the offender can be definitively determined. Therefore when this report discusses offending it is referring to those offenders whose juvenile or adult status is known to the police, most commonly because an arrest has been made. Juveniles as defined in this report are those individuals who are between the ages of 1 and 17. Adults are defined as those individuals who are 18 years of age and older.

Purpose

Every summer, as juveniles are released from school until the new academic year, and they suddenly are presented not only with unscheduled daytime hours, but evening hours that are temporarily freed from studying or extra-curricular activities; tension rises in the City regarding the use to which this time will be spent.

Efforts to provide constructive opportunities for use of that time are enhanced to the extent that planning begins early.

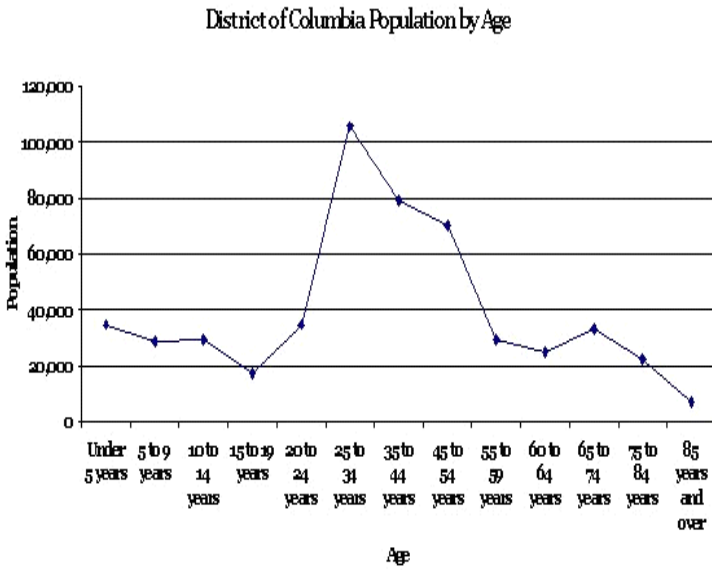
This report briefly examines juvenile offending during three consecutive summers, 2006 – 2008 in the expectation that identification of any emerging trends or patterns can facilitate efforts to constructively engage young people for the upcoming summer.

Population

Juvenile Population

Twenty percent of the District of Columbia’s population is under the age of 18 (Table 1).

Table 1

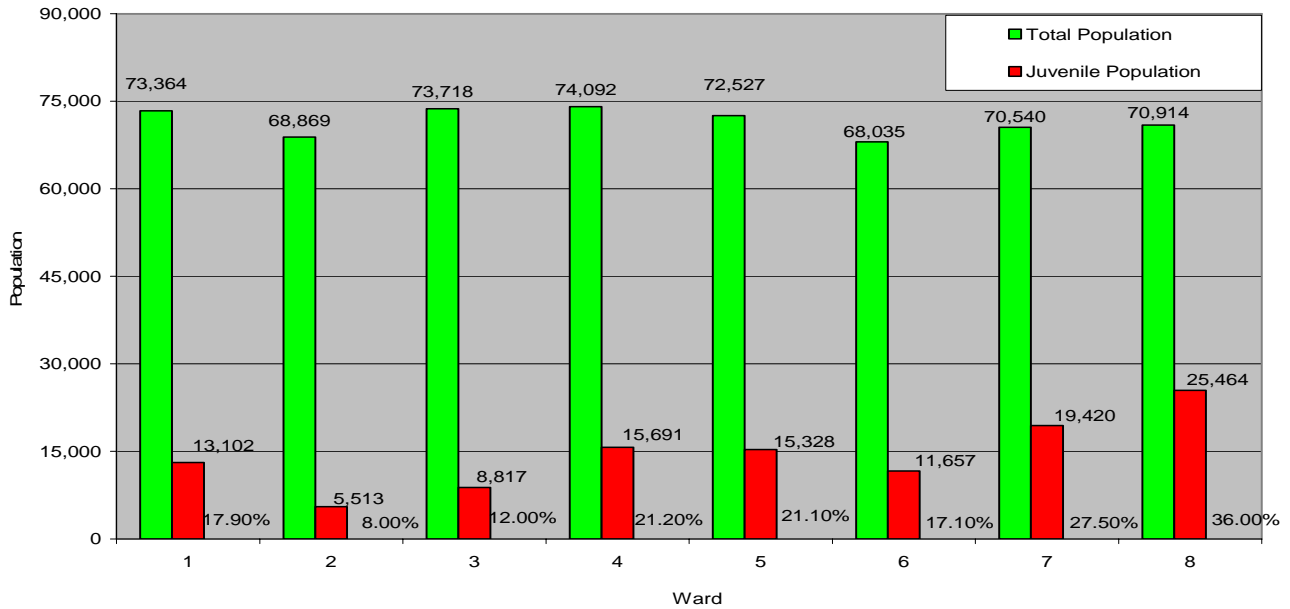


In 2006, the U.S. juvenile population was 78% White, 17% Black, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian. Most Hispanics (an ethnic designation, not race) were classified as White (Juvenile Justice Bulletin, 2008).

There are significantly fewer juveniles in the District of Columbia than adults when the population of the city as a whole is considered. The 2000 Census reported a juvenile population in the District of Columbia of 114,992 juveniles and a population of 457,067 (Table 2). There is less than a 10% difference in overall Ward population totals between the highest and the lowest, ranging from 68,035 to 74,092.

Juvenile population totals among the different Wards however range from a low of 5,513 to a high of 25,464 representing a five-fold increase

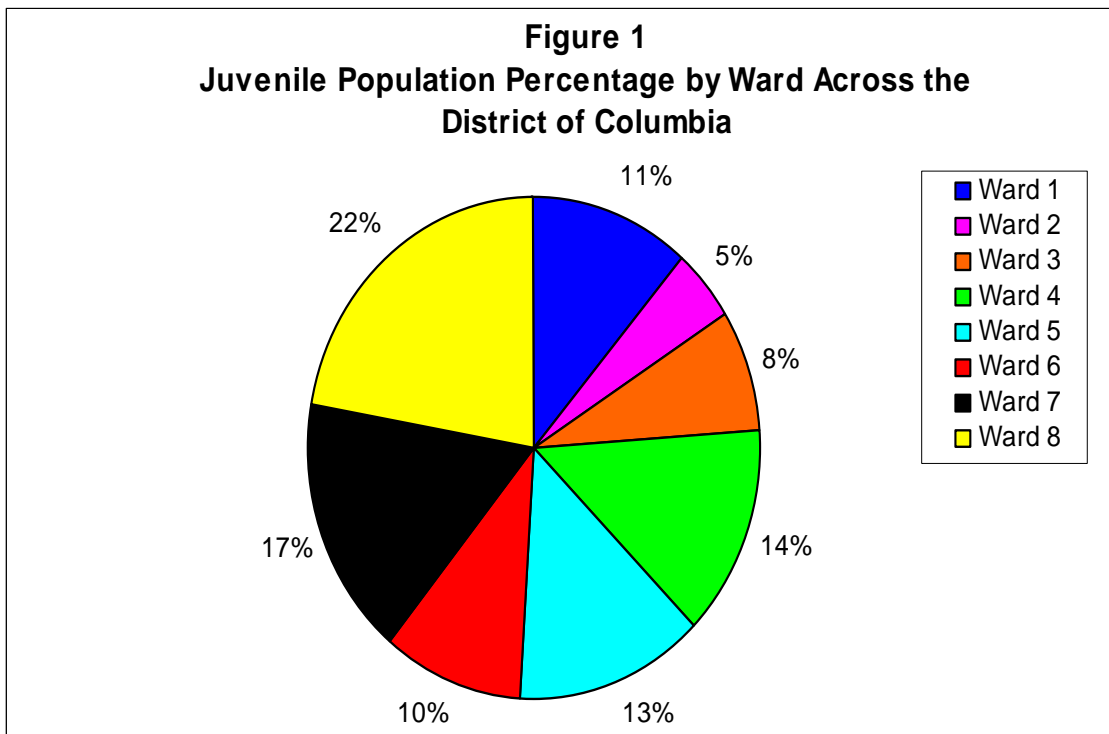
Table 2
District Population By Ward



Where Do Juveniles Live?

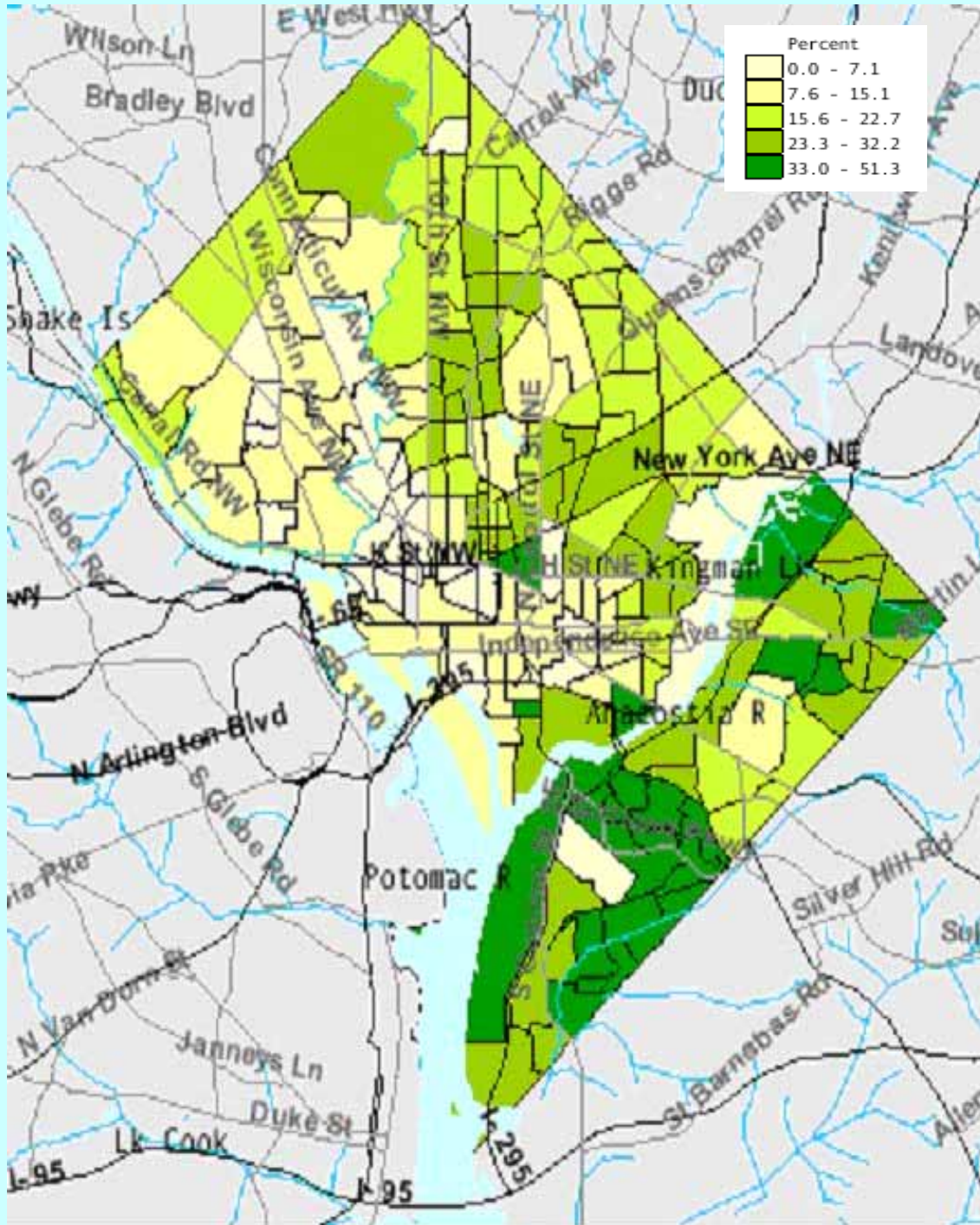
Of the District of Columbia’s juvenile population roughly one-third, 44,884 juveniles, reside in Wards 7 and 8. These *East of the Anacostia River* Communities comprise the 6th and 7th Police Districts.

Figure 1
Juvenile Population Percentage by Ward Across the District of Columbia

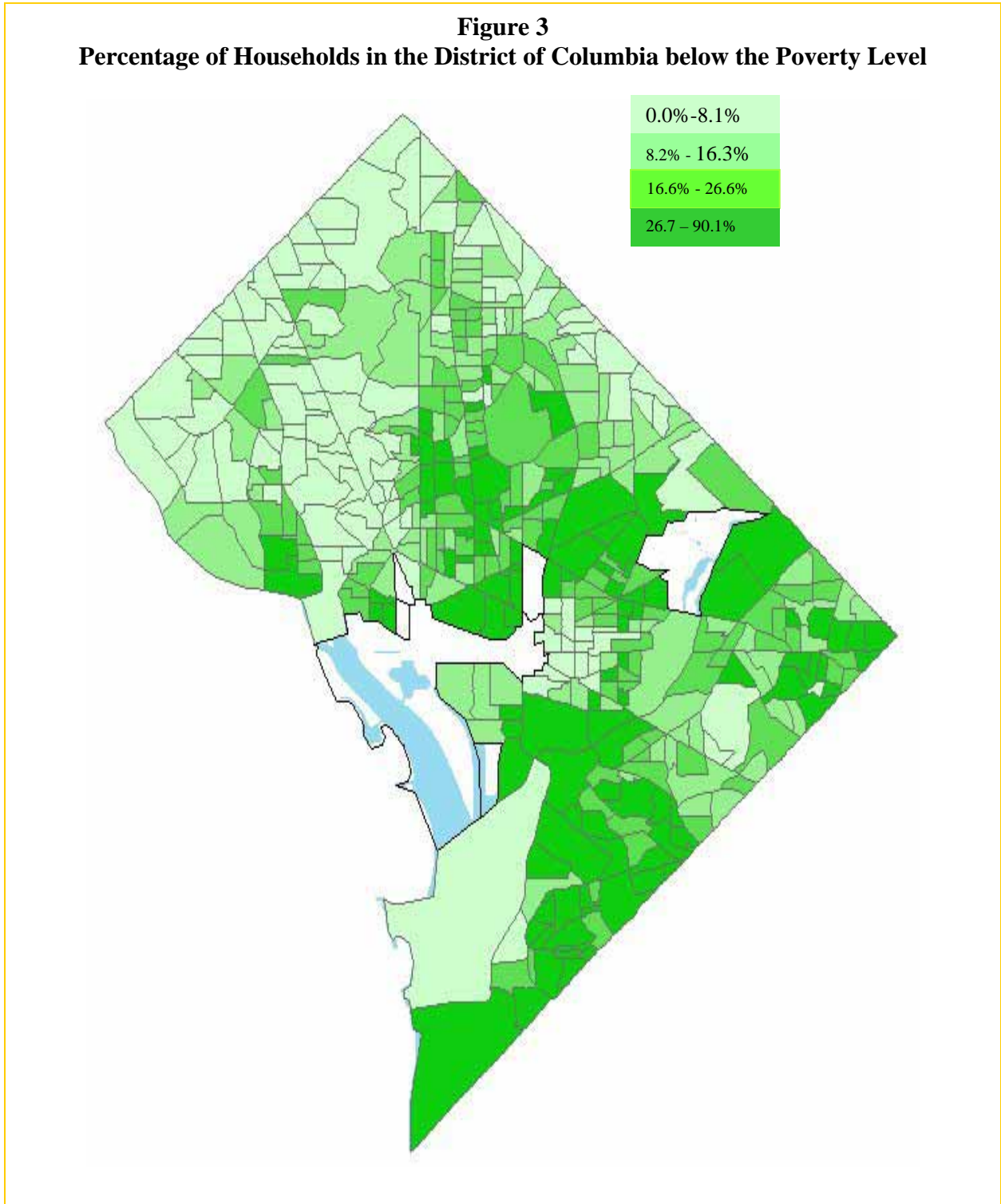


While 20 out of every 100 city residents are juveniles, in the typical *East of the Anacostia River* community (Figure 2) approximately 30 to 50 out of every 100 residents are juveniles.

Figure 2
Juvenile Population Distribution by Percentage Across the District of Columbia



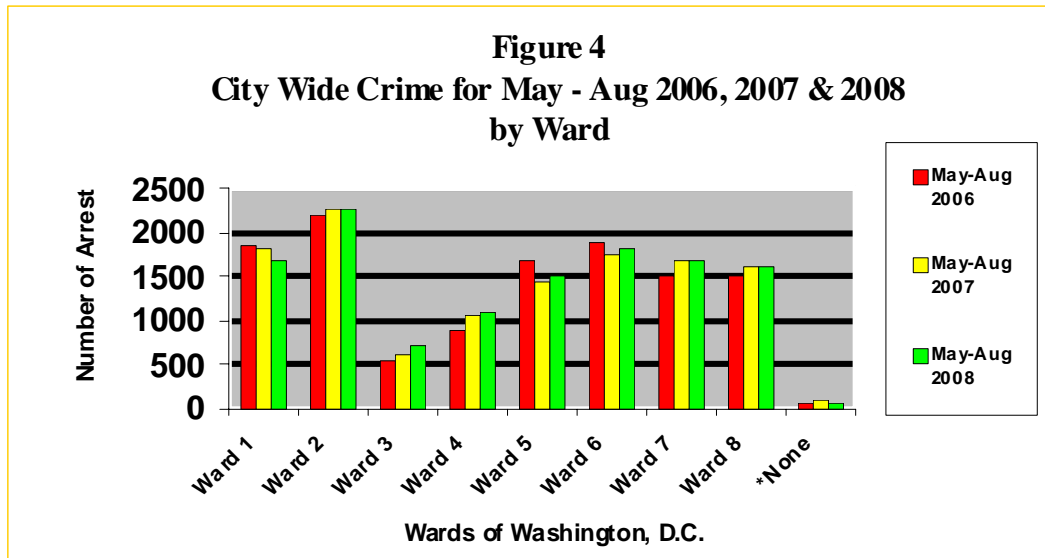
The challenges confronting these communities are more acute when it is taken into account that they also constitute the most economically disadvantaged sections of the city. The areas of the city with the largest concentrations of juveniles also tend to have the highest concentrations of poverty (Figure 3).



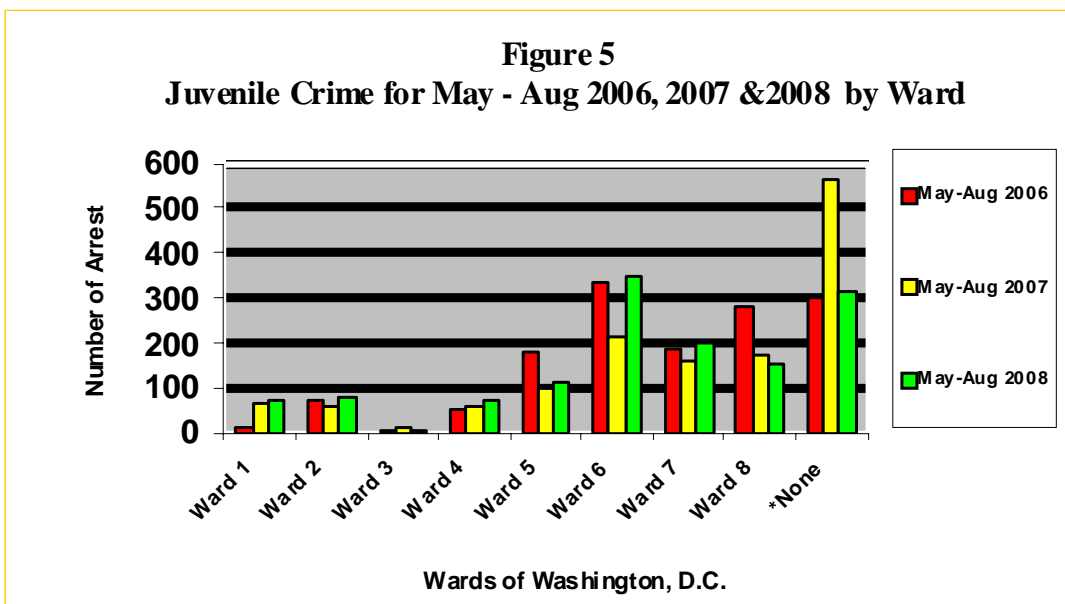
Juvenile Crime

Where are Juveniles most likely to commit crime?

All areas of the city deal with issues of adult and juvenile offending. When examining overall reported crime for the summer months of 2006 – 2008 Wards 3 and 4 had small but incremental increase each year. Ward 1, alone among the Wards had incremental decreases. (Figure 5) The remaining Wards had varying patterns of summer offending levels.



For each of the summers in question, Ward 6 experienced the most significant increase in juvenile arrest¹ (Figure 6). Ward 3 showed no significant change and Ward 8 had a significant decrease from a high in 2006 of 289 arrests to a low in 2008 of 152 arrests. The exceptionally large number of juvenile arrestees for whom no Ward was identified, however, limits the ability to draw significant conclusions in this area.

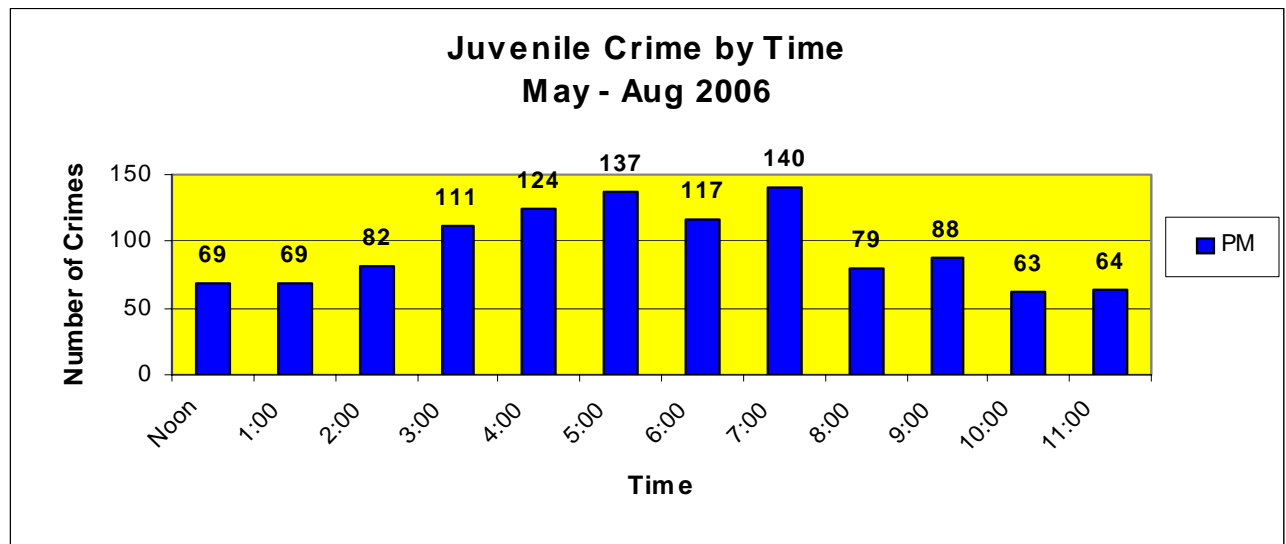
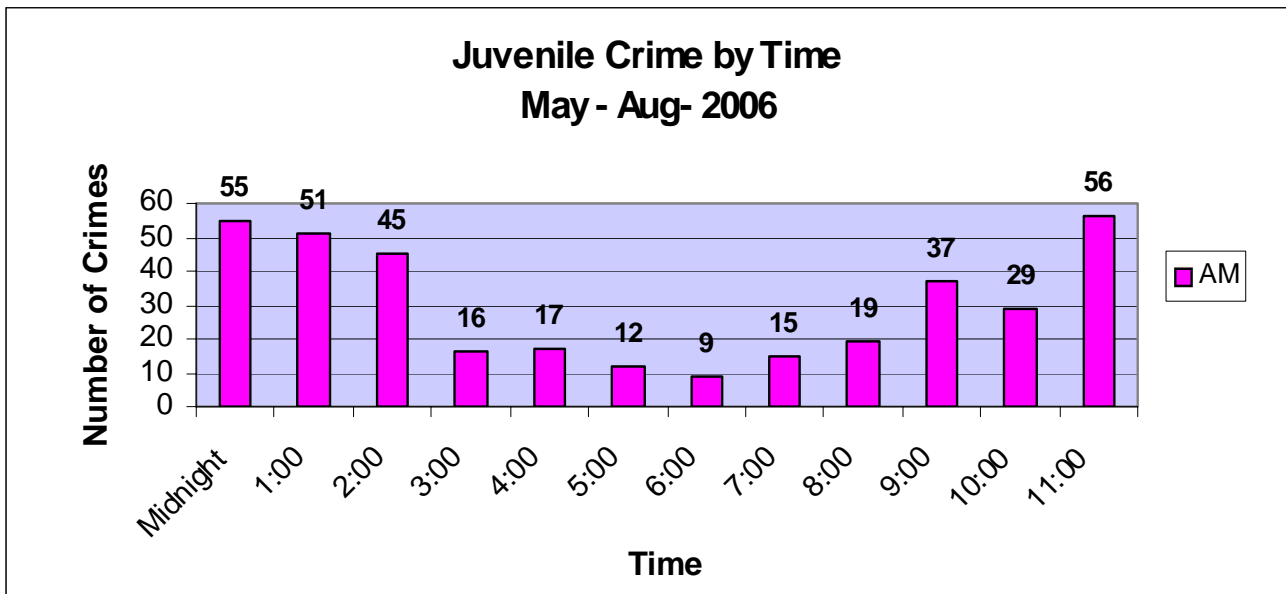


¹ Only includes those juvenile arrests where the Ward was identified.

When do Juvenile's commit crime?

In determining the frequency of juvenile crime in Washington, D.C. data from the Metropolitan Police Department's Criminal Justice Information System revealed that the highest incidence of crime committed by juveniles during the **Summer of 2006** (Figure 7) was during the late night/early morning hours of midnight and 2am. With a decrease in activity from 3am to 6am, juvenile crime increases again around 7am through 11am with slight decline in the number of crimes committed at 10am.

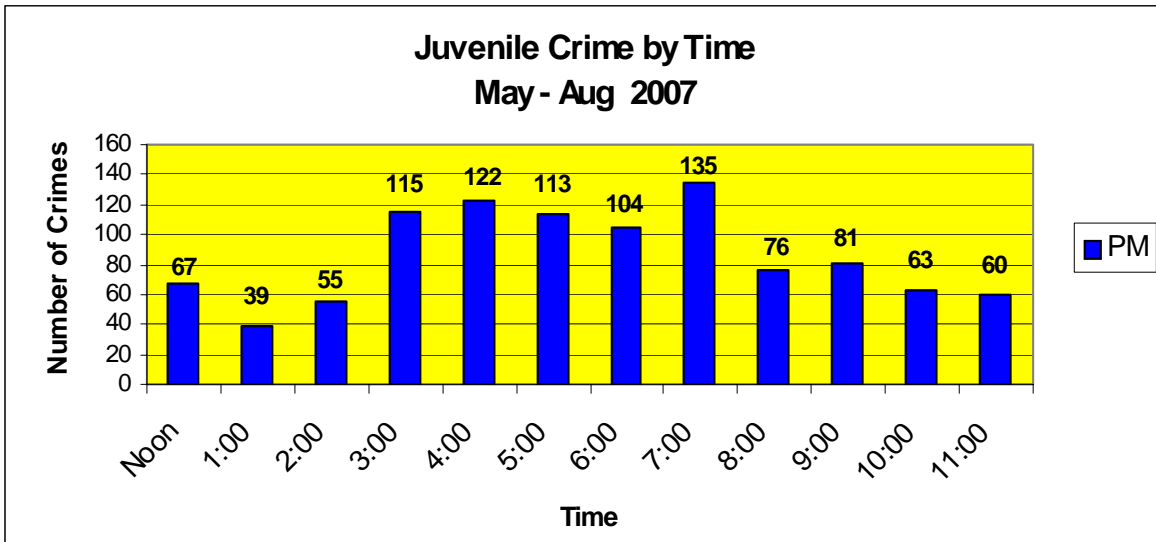
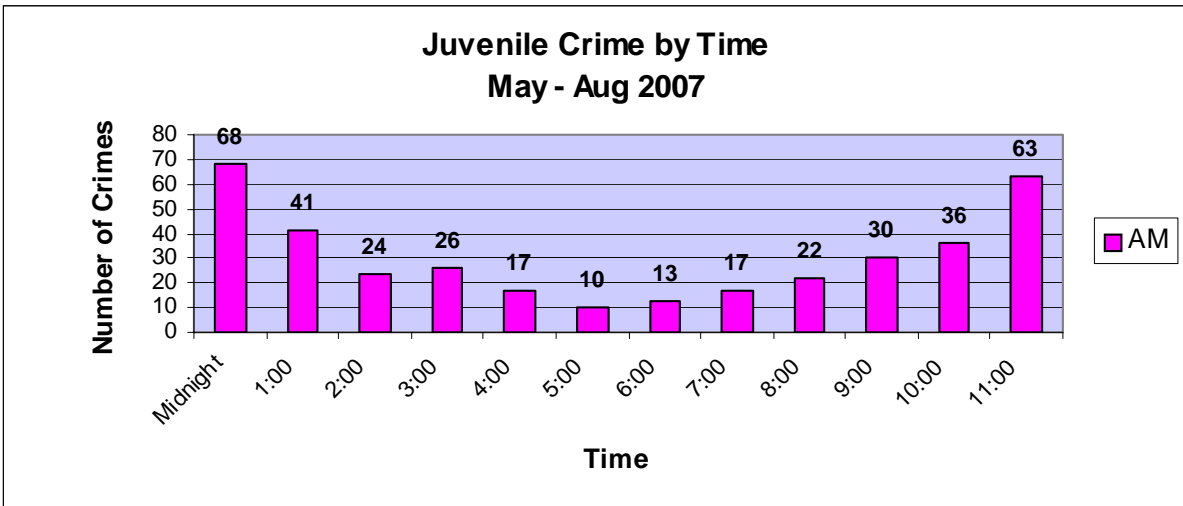
Figure 6



Crimes committed by juveniles later in the day remained high throughout the afternoon well into the evening hours with a spike in the number of crimes committed occurring during the hours of 2pm through 7pm with totals declining between 8pm and 11pm with a slight incline around 9pm.

Juvenile crime in the **Summer of 2007** showed similar trends to the previous summer. Most juvenile crimes occurred in the late night/early morning hours between midnight and 3am, with a decrease in juvenile crime from 4am to 6am and an increase in juvenile crime from 7am to 11am (Figure 8).

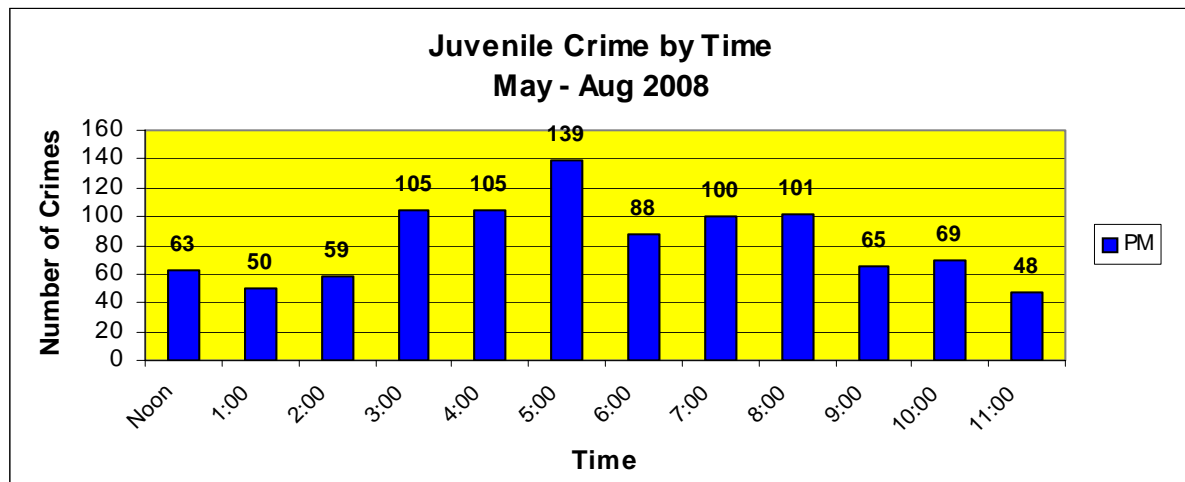
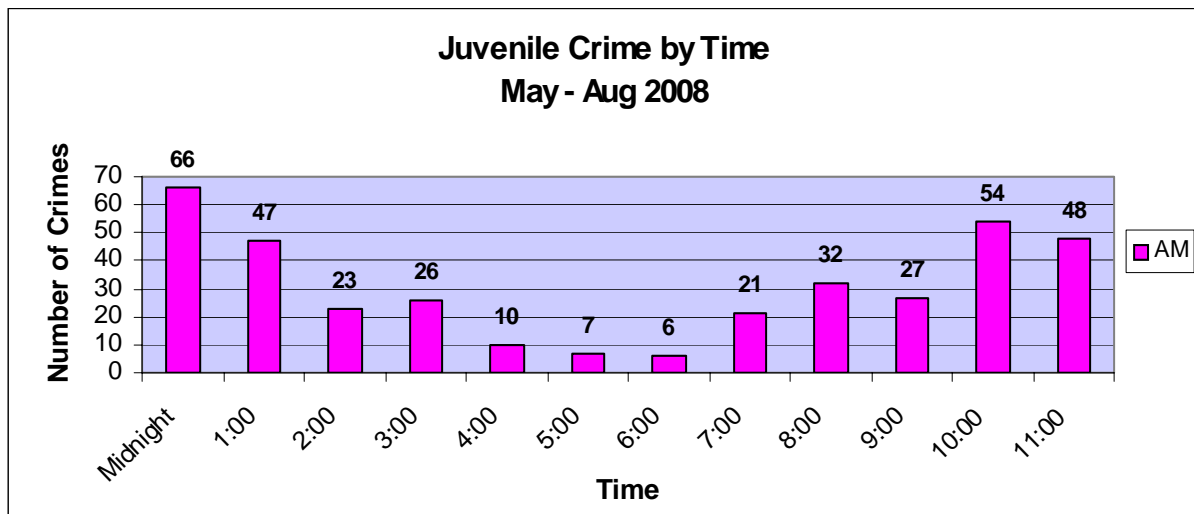
Figure 7



The summer of 2007 had a decrease in the number of crimes committed by juveniles later in the day as compared to that of the previous years PM totals by 113 crimes. The peak for the number of juvenile crimes committed remained consistent with the highest number of crimes still occurring between the hours of 2pm and 7pm.

The **Summer of 2008** noted a significant increase in juvenile crime in the hours between midnight and noon. (Figure 9). The patterns of offending remained similar, but the number of offenses increased, with 80 more crimes being committed by juveniles during this period, than during the same period in the previous summer. As before, most crimes occurred between midnight and 3am with a decline in juvenile crimes committed between 4am and 6am. Crimes increased again between 7am and 10 am with a slight decline at 11am.

Figure 8



Unlike AM crimes, there was a decline in afternoon and evening crimes by juveniles for this time period. Most juvenile crimes occurred between 2pm and 8pm; with 38 fewer PM crimes being committed than the previous year.

Juvenile Arrests

How many Juveniles have been arrested?

An examination of aggregate juvenile arrests in the District of Columbia during the summers of 2006, 2007 and 2008 (Table 3) appears to suggest a steady decrease in levels of known juvenile offending. Looking at the same data by police district (Table 4) however reveals differences in how that data can be interpreted.

Table 3
 Juvenile Arrests in
 the District of Columbia
 May – Aug 2006, 2007, & 2008

Year	Number
2006	1545
2007	1414
2008	1363

The overall totals of juvenile arrests have decreased with some police districts showing a marked decline in juvenile arrests between 2006 and 2008. When examined by individual police districts however, the decrease is not as significant as the aggregate totals would suggest.

Table 4
 Juvenile Arrests in the District of Columbia
 May – Aug 2006, 2007 & -2008 by Police District

District	2006	2007	Change from 2006 to 2007	2008	Change from 2007 to 2008
1D	372	230	-142	385	+155
2D	20	44	+24	29	-15
3D	165	76	-89	98	+22
4D	68	69	+1	77	+8
5D	163	89	-73	113	+24
6D	203	163	-40	202	+39
7D	256	172	-84	148	-24
*None	298	571	+273	311	-260

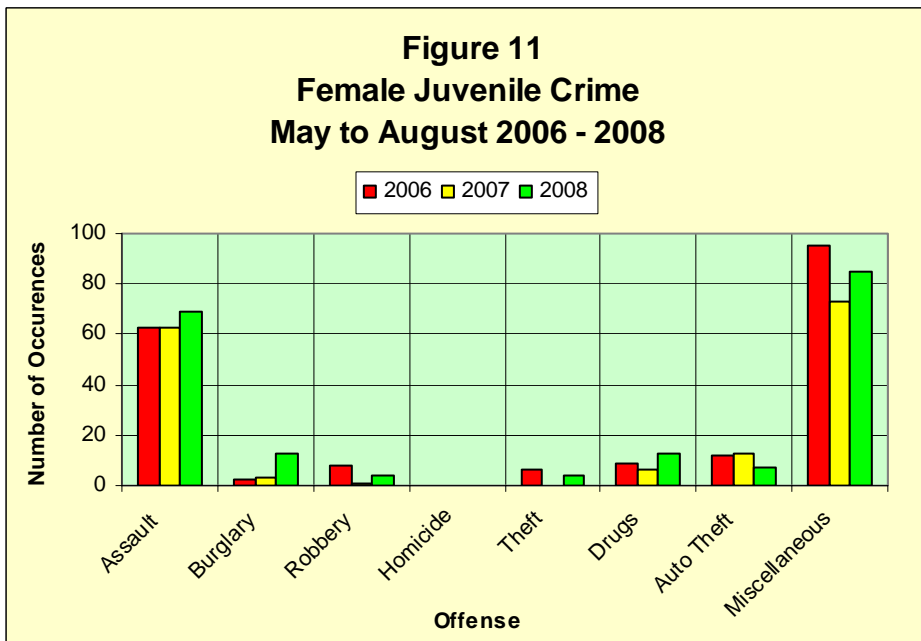
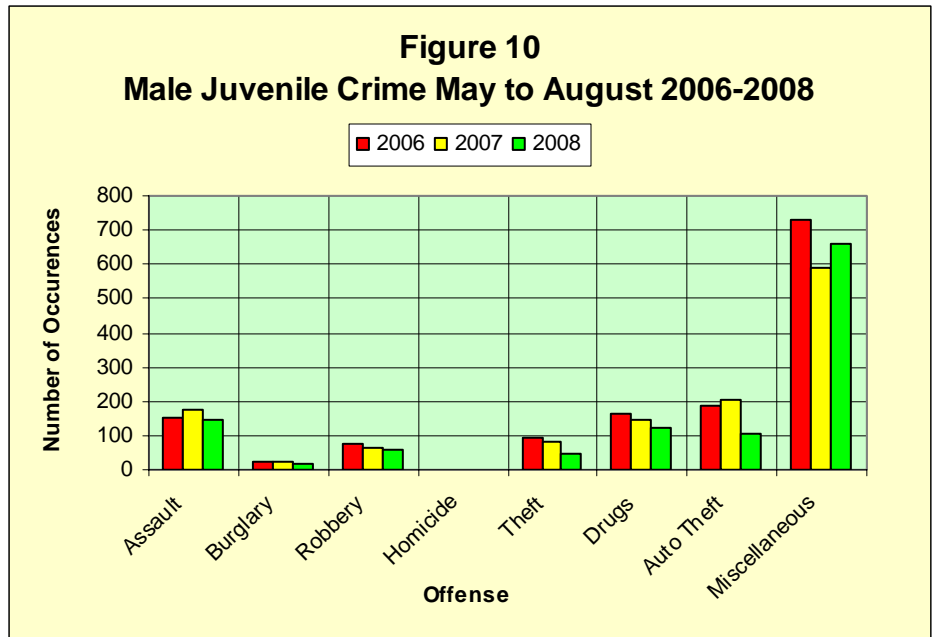
* Police district not designated.

An increase in juvenile arrests for some police districts can be seen when looking at the total arrest by police district (Table 4) from 2006 to 2007. There is also substantial decline for Police Districts 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7. In looking at the data from 2007 to 2008 we see an increase in juvenile arrests, with the exception of Police Districts 2 and 7, with the greatest increase occurring in Police District 1.

An estimated 2.2 million arrests of persons under the age of 18 accounted for 17% of all violent crime arrests and 26% of all property crime arrests in the United States 2006 according to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, (2008). Stated in the same report, “Arrest statistics report the number of arrests made by law enforcement agencies, not the number of individuals arrested nor the number of crimes committed”.

Juveniles in the District of Columbia between the ages of 12 and 17 between May and August in 2006, 2007, and 2008 were more likely to be arrested for the commission of “miscellaneous” offenses, as classified by MPD report classifications. These offenses included traffic violations and weapons charges. Juvenile arrest patterns however, varied by gender. Juvenile males (Figure 3) were more likely to be arrested for miscellaneous offenses, assault, auto theft, and drug offenses, while juvenile females (Figure 4) were more likely to be arrested for assaults and miscellaneous offenses.

The top offenses for which male juveniles were likely to be arrested were: miscellaneous offenses, auto theft, drug offenses and assault (Figure 10).



Female juveniles were more likely to be arrested for miscellaneous offenses, and assault (Figure 11).

Things to Consider

Juvenile female rates of arrest have either “increased more or decreased less” than juvenile males according to the *Juvenile Offender and Victims: 2006 National Report* released by the Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Also emphasized in the report was that different factors influence the volume and/or frequency of law violating behavior by juvenile males and females. Arrest rates for juvenile females exceeded those for juvenile males from 1980-2003. Juvenile females committed more violent crime, property crime, drug violations, aggravated and simple assault; increasing 46% compared to the 26% decline in offenses by juvenile males across the United States.

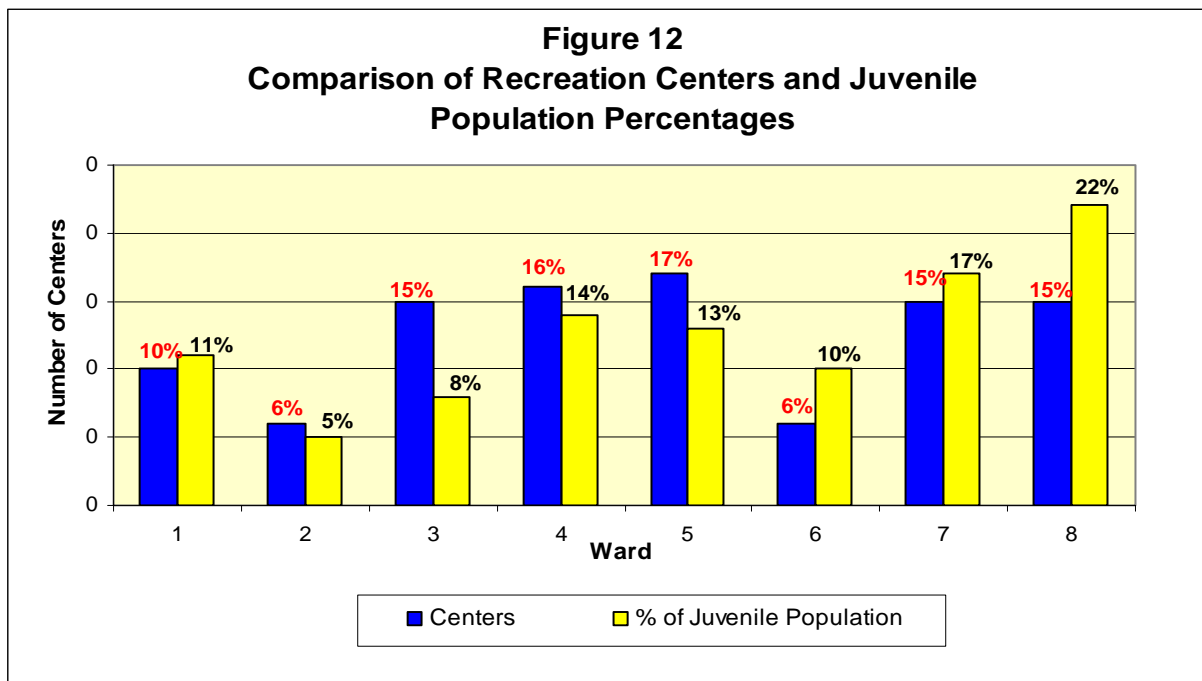
Juvenile Programs

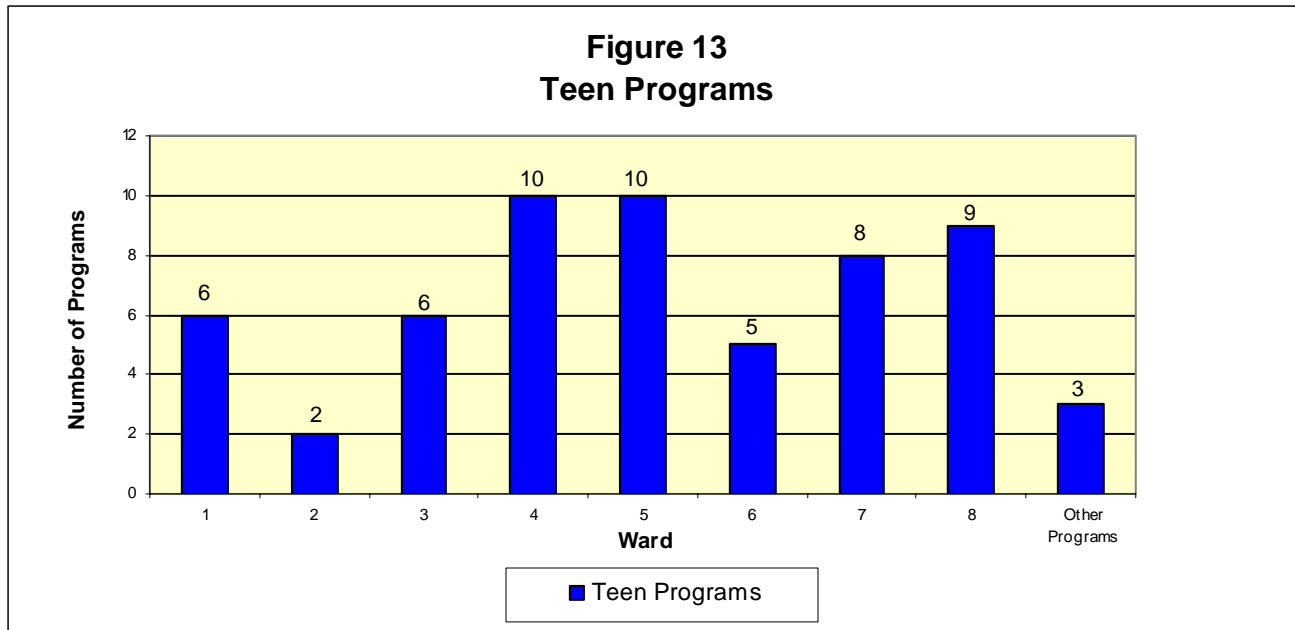
What programs are available for at risk Juveniles and Youth?

It is not enough to ask “what programs exist for at-risk juveniles and young adults”, but also to what extent are these programs available to those who need them?”. Also integral to the discussion are: whether the existing programs are adequately funded for the services they provide; do they have the ability of to accommodate multitudes of juveniles and youth? There are an abundance of programs available throughout the District of Columbia that service at risk juveniles and youth, such as before and after school care, tutorial, and mentorship programs. As they attempt to prevent and reduce the levels of juvenile offending in their communities, most programs have limited space and resources. This presents other significant educational, after school employment opportunities, and recreational programmatic challenges for District juveniles and in particular those in *East of the Anacostia River* communities,

There is also an issue of the close proximity of services already available to at risk juveniles and youth. Many programs available in Wards 7 and 8 are in such close proximity to one another that the possibility of overlapping services to the same group of at risk juveniles and youth should be considered; particularly within the context of other juveniles and youth who have limited resources and limited access to transportation, who are still in need of services. Also an issue is diversity in services provided. This lack of diversity can be seen when examining the various programs offered by the District of Columbia’s Department of Parks and Recreation.

There are 62 recreation facilities (Figure 12) with varied programs and services of which 59 offer teen programs (Figure 13) A number of these programs offered have a focus on juvenile males which has caused these facilities to lack appeal to at risk juvenile females. With a juvenile male population of 57,920 and a female juvenile population of 57,072 programs should have more of a balance for juveniles.





How do Juveniles feel about themselves and their community?

In response to a pilot survey conducted by the Institutes for Public Safety and Justice with District high school students; ranging in age from 14 to 18 in grades 9 through 12, students revealed how they felt about themselves and their community. In analyzing the data from this survey, female students disclosed that they participated in local recreation centers on average at least once per month, while male students participated at least once per week.

When asked how they supported their schools and communities, students gave various answers. Most responding by stating they supported their communities by helping to keep it clean and not littering. Of the students surveyed, the majority of students revealed that they feel most unsafe afterschool and in the evening hours. And when asked who they confided in most, friends, parents and older siblings were the top responses.

When students were asked where they saw themselves 3 years into the future 30 out of 55 students responded still in school or in college; 13 were female, 17 were male. Of the 55 students who responded to the survey the most revealing answers came from female students. The outlook presented by female students for their lives' was an unexpected revelation. Some responses were having a child, hanging out, or maybe working. This is indicative that programs need to be developed and implemented that do not just deter students from crime, but programs that give direction and purpose and are specific to the needs of the children in the various Wards in the District of Columbia.

Summary

There were some marked areas indicating an overall decrease in juvenile arrests for the time period May through August of 2006, 2007, and 2008. It is not apparent, however, if this decrease was attributable to an actual reduction in juvenile offending, initiation or cessation of a particular law enforcement initiative, or to some other unidentified change in law enforcement practice. Poor record keeping and data collection by law enforcement agencies can affect the accuracy of the data, so that juvenile arrests would seem to be declining in the District of Columbia while it could actually be on the rise as seen in the data by police districts in Table 4.

Also apparent in the data was the fact that although there are programs with the District of Columbia that service at risk juveniles and youth, in some of the more challenging areas of the District of Columbia such as *East of the River* communities those programs overlap. While these outreach programs, recreational and community service facilities are geared towards helping with a variety of at risk juveniles and youth issues, the central concern would be the coordination of such programs so that they effectively engage all juvenile and youth age groups and genders.

It is a given that young people do not commit crimes, while they are constructively engaged. An effective response to juvenile offending involves not only knowing who, what, when, why, and how juveniles are committing crimes, but also, what alternatives exist in their communities and what additional resources are needed. An effective crime strategy should ultimately be, not about the number of arrests that occur, but about the number of arrests that are prevented. School-based programs, recreation programs, faith-based, and other after-school community-based programs do not simply meet the education, recreational, etc. needs of the individual juvenile participants, but if strategically deployed in geographical areas represent an investment in young people and ultimately the reduction of juvenile crime.

Questions to be considered:

Has the curfew in place for juveniles in the District of Columbia been effective in stemming juvenile offending and recidivism?

Why do juvenile females utilize programs and facilities less than males?

Are community based programs and services broadly advertised to juveniles and youth?

Should a centralized database of all community based programs be developed to more effectively provide information on programs and services available to juveniles and youth?

Things to be strengthened:

Programmatic initiatives that equally target male and female juveniles;

Measures to target and track programs that specifically identify at risk juveniles and youth;

Juvenile and youth summer opportunities for internships and employment; as well as

Active engagement of the DC Youth Advisory Council in issues involving juveniles and youth..

Data Source:

U.S. Bureau of Census. www.census.gov

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. *CJIS Juvenile Arrest and Charges 2006*. May 1, 2006 to August 31, 2006. Download date: September 4, 2008.

<http://data.octo.dc.gov/NewCalendar.aspx?datasetid=2>

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. *CJIS Juvenile Arrest and Charges 2007*. May 1, 2007 to August 31, 2007. Download date: September 4, 2008.

<http://data.octo.dc.gov/NewCalendar.aspx?datasetid=2>

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. *CJIS Juvenile Arrest and Charges 2008*. May 1, 2008 to August 31, 2008. Download date: September 4, 2008.

<http://data.octo.dc.gov/NewCalendar.aspx?datasetid=2>

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. *ASAP Citywide Crime Incidents 2006*. May 1, 2006 to August 31, 2006. Download date: September 3, 2008.

<http://data.octo.dc.gov/NewCalendar.aspx?datasetid=3>

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. *ASAP Citywide Crime Incidents 2007*. May 1, 2007 to August 31, 2007. Download date: September 3, 2008.

<http://data.octo.dc.gov/NewCalendar.aspx?datasetid=3>

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. *ASAP Citywide Crime Incidents 2008*. May 1, 2008 to August 31, 2008. Download date: September 3, 2008.

<http://data.octo.dc.gov/NewCalendar.aspx?datasetid=3>

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department *Attributes—Offense—MPD*
Date: September 3, 2008. <http://data.octo.dc.gov/Metadata.aspx?id=3> (MPD Offense Definitions).

**INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY &
JUSTICE**

STAFF

Director

Sylvia I.B. Hill, PhD

Training & Distance Education Coordinator

Sinclair Jeter, PhD

Community Outreach Coordinator

Thomas A. Blagburn

Research Associate

Cotina Lane

Research Assistant

Charnita Wilson

Homeland Security Emergency Management Program

Director

Angelyn S. Flowers, JD, PhD

Project Manager

Chimere J. Jones