

Juvenile crime sprouts from family decay

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

Parental irresponsibility and breakup of the family are two major contributors to juvenile crime, says the Farmington Hills Police Department Juvenile Section supervisor.

"A lot of the juvenile crime we see is because of the decay in the family unit," Sgt. Charles Nebus said.

You can strive to prevent juvenile crime, "but you must recognize the limitations on how much you can prevent," he said.

Nebus' remarks came in the wake of a special Senate-appointed panel that spent four months examining juvenile crime. The panel decided prevention is the best cure.

The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, appointed last fall by the Senate Corrections Committee, decided government should do more to prevent young people from turning to crime, particularly by keeping them away from drugs and alcohol.

"We MUST begin to deal with the prevention," said Robert Lemieux of Kalamazoo April 1 in presenting the committee's 26 recommendations.

"It is clear from the high level of juvenile involvement with the use of

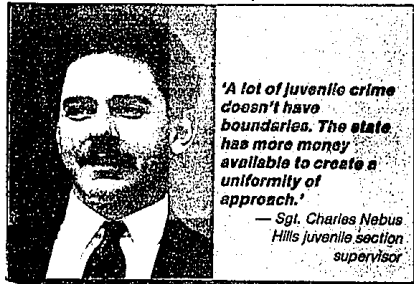
alcohol and illicit drugs, and from the tragic victimization of juveniles by perpetrators of physical and sexual abuse, that our prevention efforts have been largely inadequate," the committee chairman told senators.

Among the committee's suggestions is creation of an umbrella agency to coordinate government programs aimed at helping young people.

"Unnecessary duplications of services and jurisdictional conflicts must be eliminated and a clear system of checks, balances and accountability must be established and maintained," the committee's report said.

An umbrella office for children's services "offers an effective answer to the confusion, conflict, competition for funds, duplication of services and lack of accountability that hampers our present system," the report said.

Such an agency should have the authority to oversee services to children now provided by the Office of Substance Abuse Services; the departments of social services, education, health, mental health, corrections, and the probate court system,



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— Sgt. Charles Nebus
Hillsville section supervisor

the committee said.

Nebus ISN'T opposed to such an intergovernmental agency. "A lot of juvenile crime doesn't have boundaries," he said. "The state has more money available to create a uniformity of approach."

The state also could test programs that communities could later adapt, he added.

But Nebus doesn't want to give up local control.

"Each community has its own set of needs to meet and problems to attack," he said. "Juvenile problems in Detroit are generally different than those in a rural community."

He cited drug abuse, alcohol abuse and sexual abuse as among the few common problems.

The committee said it learned juvenile crime is "essentially inseparable" from the problems of underage drinking, drug abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse and pornography. Its recommendations tried to address all those topics. Among the recommendations:

- Legislation banning telephone dial-a-porn service.

- Beefed-up obscenity laws.
- Local ordinances banning the sale of drug paraphernalia.

- More money for services for children who have run away from home.

- Work camps for juveniles who commit crimes.

- Elimination of contractual "bumping" privileges "that presently allow unqualified and/or untrained workers to assume positions in the juvenile justice system."

- Public school programs on resisting alcohol and drugs.

- Drug screening in pre-employment physicals for all school employees and others who work with children, plus random drug testing of all school employees.

- A ban on billboards advertising tobacco products or alcoholic beverages.

- Restricting radio and television commercials advertising alcoholic beverages to between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m.

Nebus SUGGESTS mandatory public school programs detailing why young people should resist the lure of alcohol and drugs. He'd like to see such programs made part of the regular curriculum in both middle school and high school.

"Alcohol and drugs are big contributors to both adult and juvenile crime. At least 75 percent of the people we take into custody are substance abusers or under the influence of some substance at the time of their arrest," he said.

Nebus also likes the idea of work camps.

"One of the best methods of prevention is to have a deterrent," he said. "A work camp is certainly the kind of penalty that could act as a deterrent."

Associated Press contributed this report.

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Poor farm boy carries a respect for the past

Continued from Page 1

'I don't cherish anything. What I have, I want others to enjoy.'

— Wall Sundquist

which he received a Michigan beautification award that prompted his entry into the Michigan Beautification Hall of Fame — to pinpointing problem areas in the neighborhood and encouraging friends to decorate their yards with flowers, he is constantly looking for a reason to improve.

Last year, he and other local businessmen planted 2,000 flats of flowers in an effort to landscape the Masonic Temple lawn at the corner of Farmington Road and Grand River. The corner now stands as one of the more attractive spots in the city.

At the Veteran's Memorial on Grand River, just west of Farmington Road, new sod, trees and flowers were planted at Sundquist's urging.

HIS INTEREST in beautifying the area was furthered by his once-active involvement in the Farmington Beautification Committee. He concentrates now on the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, where he hopes to take a more active role in shaping the city's future.

"We've got to get people who own stores to pay attention to the way they present their businesses to the community," he said. "There are too many business owners who walk through their front doors in the morning with the idea of making a

buck and walk out those same doors in the evening, having made a few dollars and never look around them or see their stores after they leave for the evening."

True success, he said, lies not in how much money you make doing something, but how much concern goes into your efforts.

"A friend once told me that if it was upmost in my mind to make a buck, forget it, I'd never be a success."

Sundquist's success can be measured in terms of his compassion for his work. As a funeral director, he is in daily contact with people who look to him for comfort and peaceful resolutions to their losses.

The funeral home represents Sundquist's solution. People who se-

lect his home are treated to room after room of antiques displayed so that the objects and furniture can be touched and handled.

IT'S SUNDQUIST'S way of compensating them for some of the loss they feel.

"It's a diversion," he said. "You have a woman who's lost her husband, who is tired and upset. She gets tired of telling everyone about his death, and offering explanation after explanation. But she'll suddenly up and say, 'Hey, come look at this room in the basement.'"

Sundquist conducts preliminary discussions with clients in the basement rooms, where the warm lighting and rustic furniture are designed to put the bereaved at ease.

Older folks, he said, appreciate the

familiarity associated with antique, iceboxes, gramophones and a hard wood furniture.

"It brings back a lot of memories for them, and it helps at times when they are experiencing a loss," Sundquist said.

Sundquist said he is constantly looking at and analyzing different settings and landscapes, whether at a friend's home or walking through the business district in town. His gift for design and his love of woodworking come naturally and with no formal training.

As he put it: "It's a detriment at times. There are times when I just want to relax, but I can't help myself from imagining how something would look here or how I could improve the looks of something."

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