Components of effective community service programs: implications for Missoula's juvenile program

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COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR MISSOULA'S JUVENILE PROGRAM

by

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B.A. The University of Montana, 1990

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Montana

1997

Approved by:

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1-23-97

Date
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COMMUNITY SERVICE AS A JUVENILE COURT SANCTION

The concept of juvenile justice and, more specifically, sanctions used by the juvenile court have been vehemently debated for the past quarter century. Proponents of a more punitive "get tough" policy argue for less use of probation and an expanded use of confinement, while those who advocate a return to the original mission of the juvenile court embrace rehabilitation and encourage the expanded use of community-based supervision alternatives (Bazemore 1991). Innovative delinquency prevention and treatment programs like midnight basketball leagues and Scared Straight have come and gone, showing little success. More punitive institutional sanctions are seldom rehabilitative, and only temporarily protect society. Probation, the most commonly used disposition in youth court, is passive in nature and consists of warnings to stay out of trouble and a specific list of "don'ts": don't drink or use drugs, don't stay out past curfew, don't skip school. With a growing number of cases and tremendous public and professional uncertainty about the goals of juvenile justice, juvenile courts have begun to look for sanctions that have an impact on the offender and the community. Community service is a sanction that can benefit the offender, the community, and may reestablish faith in the juvenile justice process. Community service offers a proactive sanction that can be used to rehabilitate or punish while holding the offender accountable to the victim and/or the community.

Restitution is the compensation of a crime victim by the offender. Restitution programs usually consist of one or more types of restitution: monetary payments, victim
service and community service. Monetary restitution programs usually require the youth to forfeit personal savings or work on a job until he or she earns enough money to repay the victim. Victim service programs facilitate offender voluntary work for the victim during a specified period of time to repair or replace the damaged or stolen property. Community service programs mandate work for a community agency or organization for a specific period of time to symbolically repay the losses incurred by the community (Galaway 1977).

Although three-quarters of formal restitution programs include a community service component, the function of community service as an effective sanction is still debated within the justice system (Schneider and Schneider 1980). Despite continued questions about its function and effectiveness, community service programs are utilized in most juvenile justice systems and continue extensive use by judges and youth court officers. This paper will focus on the use of community service as a sanction for juvenile offenders. While the paper concentrates on juvenile dispositions, the sections on the history and philosophy will deal with the broadened scope of adult and juvenile community service. Next, a compilation of commonly used components and effective characteristics of community service programs are presented. The components of the Missoula Community Service Program (MCSP) are presented and compared with model program components. Finally, based on this comparative analysis, recommendations are presented that may allow the MCSP to become a more effective penal disposition.
CHAPTER I
HISTORY OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Court orders to perform community service as a sanction or penalty for crimes are rooted in practices that are far from new. Requiring offenders to compensate victims for their loses was customary in both ancient civilizations and in pre-industrial societies. Until the twelfth century AD, societies viewed acts of injustice as private wrongs and the rules of behavior and the administration of punishment were based on local custom. In time, codes were established to limit retaliation and regulate private revenge. Although formal systems with codified law were the exception rather than the rule, local custom usually allowed victims, or their kin, to organize a communal response to lawbreaking. The few systems of codified law which did develop (e.g., Greek, Roman, and Jewish law) all contained provisions for calculating the compensation to be paid by offenders to their victims or the victim's kin (Hudson and Galaway 1975).

In Europe, during the mid-twelfth century, victim compensation fell into disuse when victims lost their central role in the penal process, a development that occurred when formally organized governments emerged and asserted their authority. By the end of the twelfth century, kings and their ministers defined a crime against an individual as a crime against the state. It became the right and responsibility of the state rather than the victim or his family, to punish offenders and collect damages (Hudson and Galaway 1975).

In the sixteenth century, the notion that work and effort atoned for evil permeated education, religious and penal practices. Laws like the 1547 slavery statue and "houses of
correction" were aimed at reforming inmates by means of compulsory labor and discipline. Impressment, or the mandate of labor in the Navy, became a popular penal sanction as a reprieve from other more serious penalties. This punishment was seen as a way to "temper justice with clemency and mercy . . . protect subjects . . . and yield some profitable service to the Commonwealth" (Ives 1914:9).

As impressment fell out of favor in the penal system, public works came to be considered substitutes for short terms of imprisonment. During the nineteenth century, the use of monetary restitution accompanied the sanction of public labor in an effort to fit the punishment to the crime. In 1891, the International Penal Association Congress considered recommendations for the abolition of short prison sentences and the introduction of court ordered restitution as a correctional alternative, but the proposal failed. Fifty years later, British penal reformer, Margaret Fry, resurrected the restitution concept but with additional advantage of offender rehabilitation. In promoting this concept, Fry claimed "repayment to victim and community is the best first step toward reformation that a dishonest person can make . . . it is often the ideal solution" (McCarthy and McCarthy 1991:140).

Given the American penal philosophy of rehabilitation during the 1960s, restitution programs gained support. In 1962, the American Law Institute proposed that offenders placed on probation may be required to make restitution or reparation for the loss or damage they caused. In 1966, municipal court judges in Alameda County, California instituted a program of sentencing people convicted of traffic offenses to perform unpaid labor as punishment. Soon after, legislation was implemented in many states that provided
for the use of restitution in the form of monetary payment and community service. This legislative mandate allowed the court to use these sanctions as a component of sentencing and/or an objective of specific correctional programs. It was not until the early 1970s that the use of community service as a penal sanction became a widespread disposition. This sanction received notoriety and acceptance when England's Home Office instituted a nationwide community service sentencing reform program that was imposed on 8 percent (30,000) of offenders sentenced for serious crimes (Pease 1985).

Influenced by the United Kingdom project, funding for American community service programs commenced during the mid 1970s and an enormous amount of money was given to start-up programs. Initially, this national effort focused on adult community service programs, but in 1978 the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) undertook a $30 million project to set up juvenile programs in 85 counties across the United States. Later, justice philosophies changed and federal funding for such programs dried up. This lack of federal support left programs to fend for themselves, resulting in half of the juvenile programs folding (McDonald 1989).

For the past two decades, community service dispositions have continued to be used as an intermediate sanction that meets a variety of penal goals including punishment and rehabilitation. Many argue that these sentences can be all things to all people and thereby serve several penal purposes simultaneously. Because of this, the number of restitution programs has increased as well as the percentage of programs that include a community service component. A 1988 survey estimated there were at least 500 to 800 programs of different sizes for juvenile offenders in the United States (McDonald
Even though community service programs have increased, only small minorities of courts order these sentences based on agreed penal objectives and philosophies. Because of this multiplicity and imprecision of goals, debate about its proper use continues.

Because of questions about the purpose of community service, the relationship between work and delinquency has been a topic of discussion and the focus of much research (Agnew 1986; Greenberger and Stienberg 1986; Bazemore 1991). Many correction efforts have focused on offender employment and labor. Work is seen as an essential element of an independent noncriminal existence; it is therapeutic and a constructive means of occupying one's time . . . any correctional program that utilizes work as a central element is likely to achieve considerable support because program participation is viewed as time well spent and the after effects of a positive work experience may generalize to post correctional employment efforts. (McCarthy and McCarthy 1991:159).

Although questions remain about the role work experience plays in reducing delinquency, an appraisal of the literature suggests that there are many theoretical and pragmatic successful restitution programs with sound work program concepts (Levin & Ferman 1985). Community service sentences can be used for various penal objectives. The question that must be answered in each juvenile justice system is whether the community service philosophy is meeting local justice, community, and offender needs and whether there are other penal concerns not being met. Can we justify its use as a device for achieving the chosen objectives?

PHILOSOPHIES OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

A major obstacle to broader acceptance and use of community service as a criminal
sentence has been the lack of agreement as to why courts should impose it in the first place. What penal objectives should the court try to achieve with it? Should this sentence be used to rehabilitate offenders or punish them, serve as a deterrent for future criminality, or possibly as a substitute for imprisonment? The answers to this question form the foundation of a select few community service programs. Unfortunately, the philosophies of many programs are formulated in "vague, abstract, and often idealistic terms and seldom specify a single goal or philosophy . . . although this lack of clear goals may cause confusion within the courthouse, it also allows different judges to impose this sentence for different reasons" (McDonald 1988:2).

More than any other, rehabilitation appears to be the most cited objective of community service. However, with the recent "get tough" philosophy, rehabilitation as a primary goal is receiving less emphasis. The treatment approach, sometimes referred to as the "medical model" of juvenile justice, assumes youth are "sick" and the task of the juvenile court is to make them well again (Schneider 1985). The message of this philosophy is that community service is "good for you" and will help you in your rehabilitation. Because some community service projects place juvenile offenders in the new role of the helping person, many advocates of this sentencing policy claim that it "requires offenders to make efforts toward self improvement . . . and helps them address their personal problems and character defects that alienate them . . . " (McDonald 1989:19). The potential for self improvement is strong in well-run community service programs. The basic habits of reporting to work on time, cooperating with co-workers, following instructions, accepting constructive criticism and finishing a task can be carried
over into life in the community (Maloney and Bazemore 1994). Literature shows that performing community service may strengthen the bond between the offender and the community through providing services to others. By working in voluntary service organizations with public spirited people, a sense of belonging and possible civic responsibility might be instilled in the offender, thereby strengthening their social bond to society (McDonald 1989). These humanitarian benefits of the sanction make it appealing to lawmakers and judges.

Others see the rehabilitative value of community service in its restitutional aspects. Assignment to a particular project and mandating attendance and performance standards demand the offender's active involvement. This active involvement creates a situation in which the offender can elicit positive responses from others in the community when projects and services are completed (McDonald 1992). In addition, if used as an intermediate or pre-dispositional sanction, this may allow offenders to be shielded from the detrimental labeling effects of criminal prosecution and incarceration.

Due to the outburst in juvenile violent crime and the lack of faith in the court's ability to rehabilitate juvenile offenders, the use of punishment as a penal philosophy has seen a reemergence. The punishment philosophy follows the justification of retribution, or *lex talionis*, "an eye for an eye." With community service, offenders repay their debt to society in the form of working off their crimes in proportion to the damage done. Compulsory, unpaid work is seen as a fine on the offender's time. Under this sanction, offenders are put to work on public labor projects such as painting buildings and picking up garbage, where the focus is repayment to the community rather than to the individual.
victims. Under the just desserts principles, punishments must be proportionate to the crime which allow judges to calculate how much punishment should be imposed, based on the seriousness of the crime. This sanction can also be used as a public denunciation or a symbolic aim of retribution, by allowing society to blame someone for criminal offenses (Bryne and Brewster 1993). This community blaming loosely follows Braithwaite's ideas of reintegrative shaming which works as a deterrent in two ways; "social disapproval and pangs of conscience" (Braithwaite 1988). A societal mandate to work at a particular job reinforces the community's objection to offender behavior and illicits a desire to conform to the norms of society in order to obtain societal acceptance (Braithwaite 1988). For less serious crime where probation would be the sentence, community service is often added on and used as a deterrent. Paying the community back in unpaid labor and/or in monetary payments can be seen as a deterrent for future crime. In general, community service is capable of "delivering punishment because it involves significant deprivations of liberty and comfort, visited in a manner that conveys censure" (Hirschi 1969:224). In addition, the U.S. Sentencing Commission's approval of using community service as an addition to probation or condition of supervised release appears to endorse its use as a punitive sanction.

Most criminologists believe detention and juvenile correctional facilities are schools for crime and delinquency and can put a great financial strain on any judicial system. This is the reason that community service sanctions are often advocated as a sensible alternative to incarceration. Many state and local governments are burdened by rising juvenile jail/detention populations and the unaffordable cost of juvenile
imprisonment. Proponents claim that substituting community service for incarceration
reduces the criminal justice cost and permits the juvenile offender to avoid the harmfulness
of prison and the labels that follow. In arguing for reparative penalties as an important
alternative to imprisonment, Austin & Krisberg (1981:378) assert that "crime results from
an estrangement of the individual from meaningful participation in society . . .
imprisonment only acerbates that estrangement . . . community service, in contrast,
permits the offender to undo the damage of his crime as he becomes integrated into
society through constructive actions."

Finally, some courts impose community service as a sanction under the philosophy
of justice. The justice philosophy incorporates the goals of accountability and victim
reparation. In general, both these objectives consist of requiring the offender to restore
losses to victims and communities in a fair and just way. Using accountability and
reparation as a rationale for community service under the justice philosophy reflects a shift
from the traditional parens patriae perspective in that it emphasizes juveniles' individual
responsibility and accountability for their actions. This perspective holds the juvenile
accountable to the victim/community in a manner that is proportionate to the harm done
and to the youth's level of responsibility for the offense (Schneider 1985). Unlike
rehabilitation and punishment philosophies, those who promote a justice philosophy
believe accountability is a goal in and of itself and is worth pursuing even if it achieves no
other objective. Also, the message to the youth is "you are responsible for what you did . . .
and you are doing this for the victim."

A compilation of the above philosophical objectives can be seen in a fairly modern
paradigm called "restorative justice." Under restorative justice, the purpose of the court is to bring peace between participants and restore losses to victims. Community service, grounded in a restorative justice philosophy, ensures that service is linked proportionately to the amount of harm to the community as a result of the offense and meets certain standards regarding relevance to the offense committed (Wright 1991).

In order to address offender, victim, community, and justice system needs, a "balanced approach" of restorative justice is desired, an approach which emphasizes community protection, accountability, and competency development. The community protection objective "explicitly acknowledges and endorses a long time public expectation that juvenile justice must place equal emphasis on ensuring public safety at the lowest possible cost, using the least restrictive level of supervision possible to protect the community" (Maloney, Romig, and Armstrong 1988:4). Accountability refers to the requirement that offenders make amends for the harm resulting from their crimes. Competency development requires that youth who enter the justice system should exit the system "more capable of being productive and responsible in the community" (Maloney et al. 1988:14). Under this paradigm, justice is best served when the community, victim and youth are viewed as "equal clients of the justice system who will receive balanced attention and all gain tangible benefits from their interaction with the juvenile justice system" (Armstrong et al. 1990:10).
CHAPTER II
COMPONENTS OF A MODEL PROGRAM

Restitutional programs and their community service departments in the United States are characterized by diversity in their philosophical underpinnings, structure, and programmatic operation. Even basic components such as goals and philosophy, characteristics of offenders who enter the program, and staff qualifications differ greatly between programs. It is the make up of these components and others that foster exceptional community service programs. Through an extensive literature review, contact with community service professionals, and personal and professional experience within the Juvenile Justice System, common characteristics and components of exceptional community service programs have been compiled. This compilation of characteristics make up "model programs" that meet community and justice needs and are also deemed effective as a juvenile penal sanction. Community service programs such as the Win-Onus Project, Earn-It, and the Minnesota Restitution Center are examples of model programs that incorporate many of these components and characteristics.

Because community service programs in the United States are characterized by diversity there is no true "model" of a community service program. Descriptions of programmatic guidelines and operations have been based upon surveys of juvenile justice restitution programs through a Restitution Education, Specialized Training and Technical Assistance Program (RESTTA) grant in 1986. Too often, "program labels are substituted for clear program descriptions which give little information and understanding
about the program structure and the relationships that underlie the program operations" (Hudson and Galaway 1990:3). Although no empirical studies distinguish and assert effectiveness or success in community service programs, these evaluative terms have been applied to programs that have attained longevity and received community support and recognition from justice professionals. There are many components that make up community service programs, but not all have been identified as important characteristics that contribute to the success or effectiveness of a program. Nevertheless, there is a range of characteristics among community service programs that are considered innovative, effective and/or successful. Model programs include a majority of these components which may account for their effectiveness. Components and activities most commonly used and regarded as effective, fall under three categories: goals and philosophies, program components and operation, principles of balanced service.

GOALS AND PHILOSOPHIES OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

The approach used by a juvenile justice system is never totally consistent. The philosophy commonly reported by restitution programs are: holding juveniles accountable; treating and rehabilitating juveniles; punishing juveniles (Schneider 1982). Programs utilizing mixed philosophies are very common in practice and allow courts a wide range of rationales for justifying these sanctions. Additionally, the use of multiple philosophies allow community service programs to impact offenders differently by matching them with distinctive work sites to achieve different penal objectives. Although this multiple philosophy approach may be seen as a correctional panacea, its use can optimize limited
correctional alternatives by providing opportunities to meet several penal objectives. Regardless of a program's philosophical orientation, literature suggests the program's basic orientation and rationale should be articulated in order to guide its operations (Bazemore 1991). Responses to the Department of Justice Program Inventory Survey conducted on 170 juvenile restitutitional programs showed that accountability was the most important goal of restitution programs, followed by offender services and finally, punishment (RESSTA 1984). Although restitution programs seldom specify a single goal or philosophy and adhere to it rigidly, accountability was the most cited philosophy. Community service, when sanctioned with the intention of holding juveniles accountable for their crimes, reflects a shift in thinking about youth, one that emphasizes juveniles' individual responsibility. An accountability philosophy differs from treatment philosophies where the court is doing this "for you," and punishment philosophies where the court is doing this "to you." In contrast, accountability-oriented programs stress the message given to youth is that "you are responsible for what you did . . . you are doing this for the victim or community" (Schneider 1985:9). Although accountability is the most common goal of community service, the choice of approach depends on the basic values of the community and the court. In the absence of a clear philosophical approach or goal, not only is the rationale for the sanction lost, it is also impossible to gauge the effectiveness and quality of the community service experience.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND OPERATIONS

Staff. Directors of community service programs come from a variety of
backgrounds within and outside the juvenile justice field. A common trait of program directors is their outlook on offenders; they see these youths as having basic competencies and capable of making a positive contribution to communities (Skinns 1990). In addition, directors are consistently contacting local news agencies and influential community organizations to inform them of visibly successful public projects. Marketing a program through public relations is used to secure support and funding from the community, legislators and other local decision makers. Effective marketing requires directors to actively seek out public relations campaigns and professionally present their program in a positive light. This promotional relationship with the community can take many forms, some programs hold annual "gatherings" to bring to light the various successful community projects and acknowledge local agency participants. These events have been highly effective in gaining local support for their program, but take a concerted effort, by an informed, charismatic, and energetic director.

Careful selection of work crew supervisors is also vital for maintaining a high quality program. Virtually all effective community service supervisors are those that possess two basic attributes: First, they are competent workers, with thorough understanding of the work to be done; second, they are sensitive to the needs of and able to communicate effectively with the youth workers. There also is a consensus that competency in organizing activities in a manner that best accomplishes program goals is a valued attribute (Skinns 1990). To accomplish program goals, crew supervisors treat workers as essential resources needed to complete a job. This is especially important when tackling tough jobs as staff convey to offenders that they are genuinely needed to
help solve a problem. While some programs require special sets of practical skills (e.g., construction and painting skills), these are less important than the ability to make sound decisions, plan projects, and especially, a willingness to work side-by-side with young offenders in often physically demanding jobs. Counseling or social work experience is much less important than the ability to organize work and function as a work role model. In fact, staff's willingness to work with offenders is consistently mentioned by participants as one of the reasons for their positive experience in completing their community service obligation (Allen and Treger 1990).

**Target population.** Community service programs typically begin by taking only the safest juvenile offenders like status offenders and minor property offenders. Programs that take serious offenders run the risk of a dangerous offender damaging the credibility of the program. On the other hand, programs that take only minor offenders will not make much of a contribution to the juvenile justice system. Over time, confidence in the ability of the program to handle more serious offenders is usually developed. The Minnesota Restitution Center provided an alternative to incarceration by only accepting offenders who had served at least four months in prison and had the capacity to make restitution and work community service within the time remaining on their sentence. This program allowed more serious offenders to "square up with their victims . . . and gain a little knowledge about themselves and about the world that will keep them out of jail the next time" (McCarthy and McCarthy 1991:153). In addition, judges freed up limited jail space for those offenders who posed an immediate and more dangerous threat to society as well as allowed an opportunity for some offenders to get a second chance.
Results from the Two Year Report on the National Evaluation of the Juvenile Restitution Initiative (Schneider et al. 1982) show serious offenders (murder and rape excluded) make up less than 5% of restitution program referrals. This report also claims that serious offenders generally do well in restitution type programs and are just as likely to complete their restitution requirements as less serious offenders; their 12-month re-offense rates were no different.

Chronic offenders, those with many prior offenses, present a different problem. These youths will probably re-offend no matter what disposition they receive so it is worthwhile to place them in the program designed to prevent future offenses. The probability of successful completion for first offenders is almost 90 percent but steadily decreases with each additional offense (Schneider et al. 1982). In contrast to the serious offender, the chronic offender performs at a lower level on both the completion and re-offense rate, although at approximately 75%, it is not very low (Schneider et al. 1982). Most programs do not have written criteria defining the population of eligible clients but use some screening tool to filter out those offenders who may not succeed or may pose an unacceptable risk for the community and/or the program. Although some programs have restrictions on certain types of violent offenders, in time many programs attempt to incorporate more serious offenders into the eligible pool of candidates.

**Work site development.** A challenge to most community service programs is the ability to obtain placements that maximize the impact of this sanction on the juvenile offender. The problem with many programs is the tendency to think of community service as a slot or work site that may not meet public needs or the goals of the program.
Community service placements always involve either public agencies, or private nonprofit organizations.

The most common practice in developing work sites includes identifying potential agencies, making direct contact with agency manager, explaining the program concept and the type of offenders likely to be referred, and discussing mutual expectations and responsibilities (Hudson and Galaway 1990). Although these guidelines are straightforward and uncomplicated, it is how programs use these guidelines that make them novel. A number of community service programs use community volunteer bureaus for assistance in developing work sites due to their experience coordinating volunteer efforts.

Successful programs have little problem acquiring appropriate work sites and in fact, are frequently turning down agencies requesting their services. These programs understand that community needs and the needs of young people to learn and benefit from the work experience are essential. Model programs use two marketing concepts: 1) emphasizing the public value and economic benefits of offender work; and 2) prioritizing strict, consistent supervision to ensure public safety and the quality of project work while promoting a more positive outlook toward offender capabilities (Bazemore 1991). When making contact with potential participating agencies, managers present informational brochures that highlight the mutual benefits of this agreement for the agency, youths, community, and the juvenile justice system. In addition to discussing the value of the potential agencies' work projects to the community, directors emphasize how that value is often what makes the work experience meaningful to juvenile offenders.
Once these agencies have agreed to participate in the program they must be familiarized with their responsibilities. Experienced programs sign a contract with the participating agency, listing the responsibilities of the agency and the community service program. This contract explicitly states the responsibilities of the participating agency and the community service program and addresses specifics particular to the agency. Participating agencies are at times responsible for supervising offenders and reporting back (in a timely fashion) the number of hours worked, punctuality, and quality of work performed. Model programs expend considerable effort empowering agency supervisors to ensure youth's work meets "paying position" standards, and supervisors do not treat youths as volunteers who are able to show up whenever they want (Hoffarth 1979). This understanding of offender performance and supervision responsibilities are one of the most important factors to a mutually beneficial work site relationship.

**Intake/Placement activities.** This process varies between those programs that focus exclusively on community service and those requiring other sanctions or treatments in addition to community service (Griffith and Schneider 1980). For sole sanction community service programs, staff personnel explain program requirements, procedures, and inquire if the offender is still interested in participating in the program (in some cases this is not an option). This intake activity is carried out by staff whose primary interest is insuring only appropriate offenders are admitted into the program.

Although many programs utilize individual work sites where one or two offenders can work off their obligation, it is more common for programs to use work crews. Matching offenders to work sites can make the difference between an effective sanction
with long lasting effects or a meaningless activity that perpetuates an ineffective juvenile justice system. Model programs usually employ two ways of matching offenders with work sites. First, efforts can be directed at placing offenders at work sites in which they are likely to have positive, pleasant experiences. This approach is based on the idea that placements will lead to an increase in self esteem, positive ties to the community, and eventually have an effect on future criminal activity. Conversely, efforts may be made to place offenders on unpleasant tasks assuming that such placements will deter future criminal activity. Although model programs primarily utilize these two placement philosophies, practical considerations (i.e., transportation availability, matching time slots etc.) are also considered in placing offenders at work sites.

In order to fulfill this placement philosophy, offenders' skills, experience, aspirations, and criminal record must be reviewed during the initial interview. For programs using the positive experience approach (or a combination of both) and an individual placement orientation, once a potential agency placement has been identified, the offender is sent for an interview with a program letter of introduction. More experienced programs have developed a feedback system in which the agency phones or mails back a card evaluating the interview skills of the offender and indicating whether or not the offender has been accepted.

For programs that use work crew job sites, the procedures required to coordinate a group of offenders to a specific work site is different. Some programs require offenders to call in weekly to receive their work assignment from the group projects available. This procedure requires a more active role of the offender toward his sanction and is thereby
seen as more accountable. Other programs, take on the responsibility by phoning or sending letters to the offender informing them of their work assignments. In all cases, potential conflicts between community service placements and the offender’s schedule are considered in making the assignment, but not in lieu of the placement philosophy.

**Supervision.** An insistence on high quality standards of supervision has been an important guarantee to agencies and the community for their participation within the program. Although program staff recognizes the importance of flexibility with youths who are often unfamiliar with the discipline of work, they argue that it is better to live with a high attrition rate than to sacrifice the integrity of the work program to accommodate some unmotivated youth (Rosenberry 1986). Rules such as program termination for three late arrivals, or two "no shows" regardless of excuses, are common and are seen as vital to ensuring quality performance and adherence to program philosophies. Strictly enforced regulations reinforce the importance of regular attendance and good behavior on the job. Positive incentives (e.g., early release, praise, recognition) as well as an attempt to instill pride in the task, also appear to be at least as important as punitive sanctions in ensuring youth commitment to performance standards (Jenkins 1988). Consistent discipline and the strict enforcement approach to supervision are also viewed as vital to ensuring control and thus providing an important reassurance to citizens concerned with potential risk posed by young offenders in community work settings.

The appropriate number of supervisors at a work site is usually expressed in terms of a supervisor ratio, or the number of supervisors per work site participant. Although there is consistent pressure to raise supervisor ratios, it is uncertain whether the supervisor
ratio is always the most appropriate indicator of the extent of supervision at a work site (Zimmerman 1980). Generally, most work crew work sites have a ratio between 4:1 and 12:1 depending on the project, with a target supervisor ratio of most programs being 6:1 (Schneider and Schneider 1980). Depending on the project and the qualifications of the work supervisor, a wide range of ratios is used. An alternative measure of supervision is the use of hours per week of contact time between supervisors and youth. This contact time consists of a supervisor supplying individual attention wherever needed and employing a supervising approach utilizing positive as well as punitive sanctions.

Monitoring offenders individually placed at a community agency differs from work crews and usually involves two sets of tasks. First, program staff must maintain contact with the community agency and receive information about the offenders' progress and completion of the work obligation. Second, somebody must actually monitor the extent that the offender appears for work on time, performs work satisfactorily, remains for the total scheduled time, and completes his community service obligation. Most model programs set a reasonable deadline for offenders to complete their obligation. Almost always, monitoring and supervising responsibility rests with the work site agency staff and which are instructed to contact the community service program if any problems occur. Most programs also provide assessment forms for agencies to use for notifying them of work performance and completion dates of offenders. Because of the extra effort needed for an influential and successful offender placement, it is imperative for agencies to completely understand the responsibilities of being a community service work site.

Although there are many specifics of an effective community service program,
those components and characteristics discussed above are consistently included in programs regarded as "community service on its highest plane." Additionally, those programs that utilize these components and guidelines have received both praise and support from the youth justice system and their local communities.

**PRINCIPLES OF BALANCED SERVICE**

Programs like the WIN-Onus Restitution Program in Winona, Minnesota exemplify the philosophy of a balanced approach: "It is your responsibility to make it right with the person you have wronged or the community as a whole, and at the same time do constructive things for yourself." (McCarthy and McCarthy 1991:152). Careful screening allows program officers to direct offenders to perform services that help others as well as themselves. The following principles of balanced service maximize the full potential of community service as an intervention capable of meeting the needs of the system, community, and the offender (Bazemore and Maloney 1994).

**Attention to transferable competencies.** An ideal outcome of community service is to impart skills that can be used beyond the community service experience. Basic work skills can be reinforced without much additional effort. For example, those programs that have offenders interview with potential agencies are then able to critique youths as to the importance of interviewing and more specifically, areas that the offender was either proficient or unskilled. Specific skills such as painting, construction, and landscaping can be identified and listed in a letter of reference for the youth and/or used by the youth in a resume. Equally important are social competencies including the ability to work with
others and reliability. These traits can be nurtured while working a community service project and are valued in any future occupation.

*Sense of accomplishment, closure and community recognition.* Whenever possible, projects should be designed to have a clear beginning and end so that youths can visibly see the impact of their efforts. Seeing a project through to completion boosts personal satisfaction, allows staff to formally recognize workers for their contribution, and provides a complete learning experience about the benefits of community service (Maloney and Bazemore 1994). Because youth offenders have prior offense records and documentation that follow them into adulthood and influence perceptions of them, the ability to accomplish something positive and establish a record of success can be very effective. To build on this success, community service staff arrange for recognition through various participating agencies and adult service clubs. Organized through community service programs, these organizations recognize participants with certificates, special luncheons, tickets to special events and other gestures. This positive community response could contribute to youths making better decisions in the future. An example of this positive recognition can be seen with the South Carolina Probation Department. After completing a week of work assignments in South Carolina’s Sumter National Forest, the District Ranger sent letters thanking the forty offenders for their work ethic and professional attitude above and beyond what was expected.

*Worthwhile service projects.* The benefits of meaningful service work should be apparent to youths. A brief explanation of the project and how it affects the community should be a daily routine. Bazemore and Maloney (1994) identify six service categories
that represent "cutting edge" work.

1. Mentoring and intergenerational service. "Service projects where youth and adults work together to improve their community provide an important vehicle for placing both youth and adult (especially seniors) in productive roles which increase bonding while promoting the mentoring relationship" (Bazemore and Maloney 1994:76). These projects appear to break down the barrier between generations while building empathy, a sense of independence, advocacy, and mutual support between generations (Freedman, Harvey, and Venture-Merkelt 1992). In Bend, Oregon, young offenders work alongside adults distributing posters to downtown businesses, stuffing mailings, and stretching banners to promote "Sharelift," a week long fund-raising effort to gather food and clothing and to finance construction of a 26-unit homeless shelter (Maloney and Bazemore 1994). This type of intergenerational work can promote a better understanding of generational differences and lead to a mutual support between generations.

2. Community enrichment. Although Maloney and Bazemore use the term "economic development," service projects should be chosen that have the maximum visible impact on the quality of life for the community. Service projects that are linked to improvements in the downtown business area make this commercial space more hospitable to businesses and are therefore likely to win support. Projects implemented by the Georgia Department of Corrections, earned in one year a total of $128,437 in restitutitional payments, and logged 8,372 hours of community service. In addition, offenders paid more than $150,000 in state and federal taxes, and spent more than $200,000 in the local community for clothing, transportation, recreation, and personal items (McCarthy and
McCarthy 1991:154). Although this program's benefits appear to be based on the financial benefits to victim and community, the community service projects that enhanced the local community solidified support for the program from citizens, criminal justice personnel, and legislators.

3. **Citizenship and civic participation.** Projects should involve youth in solving community problems relating to their social and physical environment, and foster a sense of community. Involvement in cultural, political and other contemporary issues can create a shared sense of community; these projects can promote democratic values and bring youth in contact with persons from a variety of cultures, classes, and racial backgrounds (Umbreit 1991).

4. **Helping the disadvantaged.** There is often a special atmosphere surrounding community service projects that benefit the disadvantaged. Many offenders appear to demonstrate extra sympathy and commitment to do a good job at a higher level of quality (Schine 1989). With this type of service work, offenders assume meaningful roles and respond to societal needs that are real.

5. **Crime prevention projects.** The restorative message in community service may be most clearly communicated when offenders are asked to perform work directly linked to repairing damage caused by crime or work intended to prevent further crime (Bazemore 1992). Working on tasks that prevent further crime can drive home the message that crime threatens the safety and quality of life for everyone. This type of service work can also send a message to citizens that offenders can be part of the solution, rather than only part of the problem.
6. **Giving back.** This type of service is similar to "12-step" recovery programs that promote a philosophy of providing assistance and support for those still struggling with problems of addiction (Ehrlich 1987). To assist offender reintegration and recovery, part of their community service obligation may be a requirement to provide assistance to programs helping other offenders. In more advanced stages of rehabilitation and reintegration, offenders may be asked to give something back by presenting educational information. One of the most powerful and restorative service interventions for drug sellers can be service provided to drug treatment programs (Eglash 1975). Service work with victim support groups can also reinforce the "giving back" to the community.

This type of service work is intended to strengthen what criminologists refer to as the "bond" between youthful offenders and the community (Hirschi 1969). It is believed that as offenders take on meaningful roles providing services to others, and as they are viewed as resources rather than problems, they may increase their attachment, involvement, commitment and belief in conventional society. In addition, Hirschi believes these elements influence the offenders' future involvement in conforming behavior.

These "cutting edge" service categories are used in many community service programs that have a rehabilitation philosophy or goal. Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, most established programs utilize an accountability philosophy and may not believe these service areas fit their philosophy. In contrast, effective programs attempt to integrate these rehabilitative service sanctions while maintaining their accountability philosophy. These programs maintain staff that not only fosters public relations, but also view offenders as resources while communicating effectively in work situations. Model
programs standout from the rest in their focused ability to obtain effectual work sites through planning, assertive recruiting, and explicit cooperative agreements with potential agencies. The placement process also takes skilled personnel to assess offender skills and follow program philosophies to appropriately place the offender in a mutually beneficial work site.

Finally, supervision is the cornerstone of model programs in that there are an appropriate staff offender ratio, explicit and consistent expectations of both offender and participating agency, and skilled personal interaction between offender and supervisor. Programs that consist of these characteristics are long lasting, effective, and garner support from the local community and juvenile justice system.
CHAPTER III
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MISSOULA COMMUNITY SERVICE
JUVENILE PROGRAM

This chapter is a descriptive report of the programmatic approach and characteristics of the juvenile Missoula Community Service Program (MCSP). As we have seen, thriving, effective community service programs advance explicit philosophies and are characterized by distinctive programmatic components. These model program characteristics will be compared with those of the MCSP juvenile program.

Like many other programs, the MCSP was established with federal grant money and started operation in 1990 with both a juvenile and adult program. The program operates in cooperation with Missoula Youth Court, Justice Court and District Court. Direct oversight of program operations is provided by an Executive Director who works for a Board of Directors made up of community members. Since the federal grant money that originally financed this program has long dried up, the program now relies on the county, city and client fees for its funding.

METHODS

The MCSP consists of a full time Coordinator, a full time administrative assistant, two part time work site supervisors and a seasonal, part time (summer). An interview schedule was used to collect relevant data from the program coordinator, Administrative Aide, and work supervisor. Questions focused primarily on broad organizational
mechanisms or policies and, secondly, on interactions between offenders, staff, and participating agency personnel (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Data were also collected from observing three initial intake/interview meeting between the program coordinator and juvenile offenders. Upon completion of personal interviews and observing the intake process, a schedule was set up to observe the program supervisor and offenders at project work sites. Work site observations were only conducted on work crews due to the ease and unintrusiveness of observing these sites. In addition, liability issues arise when observing individually placed offenders at their community service job sites. Four different work sites were observed and data were collected from these observations and ad hoc interviews were conducted with private agency staff at the work site. Also, some very informal interviewing (questions asked while working) with a small percentage of offenders added some insight to these work site observations. The research was performed from March through May 1996.

GOALS & PHILOSOPHY

Interview responses from the coordinator, work supervisor and administrative assistant result in a lack of a consensus on the philosophy of the MCSP. The coordinator believed the philosophy of the program was to provide a sentencing alternative to the court and provide a service to the referral agency. In addition, she maintained this program can provide "meaningful volunteer service to the community" while allowing an "opportunity for retribution." In discussing goals of the MCSP, she stated that they adopt the "goals of the client" which usually consist of completing the community service
obligation. Overall, the coordinator believed this program provided a consequence for offender behavior and broadened their sense of community.

The administrative assistant stated the philosophy of the program was actually a "judgement" to punish or rehabilitate made by the youths probation officer. She also stated the goals of the program were to provide an option and an opportunity for offenders and generally believed the program was a service to kids.

The work supervisor initially stated that the philosophy of the program was both rehabilitative and punitive, but later added that her personal philosophy of the program was to allow offenders to have a "positive experience" while ensuring that they "serve the community" and hopefully promote "citizenship." When discussing goals of the MCSP, the supervisor again mentioned the ideas of citizenship and service to community, but added "placement options for work" as an additional goal. She acknowledged that she does not develop job sites using these goals as a guide and to her knowledge, has no measurement of whether they are achieving these programmatic goals.

Given the disparate responses from each of the staff, a clear philosophy is not evident. An established philosophy supports and gives integrity to programs while providing staff direction in making decisions. Furthermore, model programs articulate a philosophy in order to provide a rationale for the sanction and gauge the effectiveness and quality of the community service program.

After presenting an initial report to the Executive Director, I received an official statement as to the mission of the MCSP:

To provide a sentencing and sanction alternatives to the
COMPONENTS AND OPERATION

*Staff: Program coordinator.* The program coordinator has the responsibility of directing all aspects of the program and providing the direct liaison between the MCSP and the referral source. According to the coordinator, her main responsibilities are "very administrative" including interviewing and placing offenders in crew or individual placements, reporting offender status to referral agencies, hiring crew supervisors and filling out extensive paperwork. The coordinator does not appear inclined to actively pursue public relations to promote the program through media coverage, as she did not identify this as one of her responsibilities.

*Staff: Work supervisor.* Like many other programs around the nation, the MCSP requires crew supervisors have a Bachelor's degree. In addition to formal education requirements, this program emphasizes such attributes as working well with kids, an ability to maintain authority and be flexible. Work supervisors are given guidelines and a description of the job responsibilities, but no formal training. This lack of formal training could result in wide variation in how the responsibilities of this position are fulfilled. With a degree in Economics and Government, the MCSP work supervisor that was interviewed meets the formal education requirements and from my observations and interviews she also seems to possess more than the stated attributes. In discussing her job responsibilities, she stated that work site development, scheduling offender job sites,
supervising work crews and reporting successful\ unsuccessful completion of community
service hours are her primary duties.

**Screening.** Referral to the MCSP juvenile program is usually a post-adjudication
process ordered by the judiciary, primarily through consent agreements or decrees from
Youth Court, Justice Court, or Municipal Court. Although referrals may come from
Missoula County District, Municipal Court, U.S. District Court and the State of Montana
Department of Corrections (DOC), there are some distinctions between referrals. A
significant distinction between Youth Court and Justice Court referrals is offenders from
Justice Court are periodically given the option of paying a fine or "working off" their fine
performing community service. Justice Court offenders, who choose community service
in lieu of a fine, can still quit at any time during their community service obligation and
decide to pay their remaining fine instead. In contrast, Youth Court offenders are ordered
to perform community service through a petition or consent decree and have no option to
refuse this disposition. District Court referrals are usually given priority and scheduling is
expedited due to court mandated deadlines. Except for the self-terminating option given
to Justice Court offenders and priority given to District Court offenders, referrals from
both courts are treated equally.

**Clients and intake activity.** Like most programs, the MCSP does not have written
criteria defining the population of eligible offenders and usually take all clients referred to
it by the court. All juvenile clients are scheduled for a group intake on Tuesday or
Thursday afternoon with the program coordinator. Intakes consist of offenders (a few
with parents\ guardians) filling out forms, confirming community service hours, planning
schedules, discussing general rules and when they will be able to pay their fee. Fees for juveniles are $10 for up to 20 hours plus $25 per hour for each additional hour. The intake processes I observed were done in an informal manner. The intake took the form of an informational meeting that discussed exceptions to written rules and a time frame to pay the community service fee. Although the coordinator frequently mentioned the importance of making their scheduled assignment or at least calling 24 hours in advance if unable, she also claimed that they would accept less notice. She discussed the use of crew type work and informed them that most would be assigned to this type of obligation (during my observations, after questions from two offenders she allowed them to fulfill their obligation in an individual work site). Throughout, the coordinator worked diligently at accommodating schedules and preferences of the offenders assigned to a work crew. A total of five offenders completed the intake in approximately 30 minutes.

**Development of work sites.** Crew work site development is done by the work supervisor while the coordinator negotiates individual work sites. Currently, MCSP has 139 organization and agency work sites but use of many of these is sporadic. With regards to present work sites, the work supervisor states that approximately all of these job sites were in place before she was hired, and according to the coordinator, there is an over abundance of nonprofit or government agencies contacting them for workers. The supervisor developed new work sites following her guidelines of: "the needs of the community and suitable meaningful work." Clarifying these guidelines, the work supervisor stated that any work nonprofit organizations needed done, the MCSP would attempt to help. In addition, she believed working for these nonprofit organizations

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should also be meaningful for the offender.

The supervisor solicits new work sites by reading the newspaper to look for activities sponsored by non profit or governmental agencies and also sends out introductory letters to agencies she believes can benefit from the MCSP. If a potential agency or site looks appropriate, she then contacts the agency, informs them of the program and attempts to secure an agreement with them. Once an agreement is reached, a community service placement agreement is signed designating a specific person as an agency supervisor and outlining roles of both organizations. Contact with most of these agencies is sporadic, as agency activities warrant. However, weekly contact is maintained with some larger organizations, like the Salvation Army and Missoula Developmental Services Center (MDSC), where regular work crews are used.

Placement agreements/contracts exist between the agency and MCSP outlining responsibilities of both organizations, although site-specific needs are not explicitly documented. These contract specifics provide documentation of special needs and wants of the participating agency and depending on the specific work requirements, the ability of the MCSP to match that site with appropriately skilled adolescents.

In discussing their use of the MCSP, agency supervisors expressed a desire to utilize workers to better fit agency needs and schedules, which at times did not match the schedule of the MCSP crew. One agency supervisor expressed a desire for volunteers to work more than once at her facility, thereby better understanding the operation and the clients they serve. She believed this longer commitment (eight + hrs) would cut down on time spent continually orienting new workers and eventually allow these volunteers to gain
some responsibility, trust, and independence while completing their community service obligation. This scenario exemplifies the need for active contracts to include host site specifics in order to maximize the benefit to both agency and MCSP.

**Monitoring and supervision.** The MCSP does not specify a termination date by which offenders must complete their obligation. The reasons MCSP does not specify termination dates are: 1) referral agencies' responsibility, 2) overwhelming numbers of offenders waiting for assignments and only one work supervisor. Offenders received their work assignment through a memo produced by the work supervisor stating the date, time, location, address and type of work they will be performing. Also included in this memo was a notification of hours left to complete obligation and a reminder to call the MCSP if they could not attend a scheduled shift. Most of the shifts were in blocks of three to four hours with double shifts on Saturday. The observed staff worker ratio ranged from 1:3 to 1:5. Workers arrived anywhere from 10 minutes early to one half hour late without any response from the work supervisor.

On all but one occasion, the work supervisor was at the job site prior to most of the offenders arriving but rarely did introduction and work start at the scheduled time, but usually no more than 10 to 15 minutes late. On every job site, the supervisor or an agency representative gave a brief description of what was to be done, then workers were promptly assigned to jobs. In a few instances, the supervisor described why they were doing this type of work and some of the benefits to the organization and/or community. The crew supervisor worked side by side with youths engaging in conversation and instructing when necessary. Depending on the job site, offenders were not always
monitored and at times were left to work on their own for short periods of time. On one occasion, workers were left with no supervision for an extended period of time (45 minutes) with no instructions on what to do when the specific task was complete. Although this happened only once, there was some confusion over supervision responsibilities of the participating agency, especially when the community service crew supervisor was present. A ten minute break was given during each shift with little to no monitoring. Upon completion of a shift or job, workers were released and periodically as reward for a productive shift, were given credit for more time than they actually worked. Except for one situation when an offender acted irresponsibly, there were no performance problems at any of the work sites, and the aforementioned incident was handled immediately and effectively.

**Reporting and terminating.** The MCSP notifies Youth Court with names of those youth who do not show-up for their scheduled work assignments, no further reporting is done until completion or termination. Terminating involvement in the program is usually a result of offenders failing to report to their scheduled work site. The program coordinator has the authority to terminate youths upon missing a work assignment. Due to the numerous chances to amend for missing assignments (in one case an offender missed five scheduled days), most offenders do not get terminated and in fact finish the program. When a termination is necessary, the coordinator initiates this action by sending a letter back to the referring court stating the youth has been terminated due to failing to show up at scheduled times. When applicable, this action is sometimes followed by a citation to the youth for a probation violation. When an offender successfully completes
their community service obligation and has paid their fee, a letter is sent to the court reporting a successful completion of community service. Also, the crew supervisor sends out letters to offenders commending them for a job well done and if appropriate, to use their experience on a resume. In general, there is relatively little contact between the program staff, especially work supervisors, and Youth Court officers or the referring court.
CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has attempted to give an historical view of community service as a disposition\sanction and to identify specific program structures and components characteristic of effective community service programs. Using components of model programs as a guide, characteristics of the juvenile Missoula Community Service Program have been identified and discussed. A brief overview of characteristics between the MCSP and model programs is provided in the appendix. In conclusion, this chapter provides recommendations that may allow the MCSP to more fully reach the goals of effective community service.

PHILOSOPHY

A programmatic philosophy should be decided on by the MCSP. Although many programs do not maintain one strict philosophy, they do clarify what penal philosophy is underlying programmatic operations. The MCSP has a formal mission statement which clearly states the program's purpose, but does not identify a philosophy that underlies and drives program operations. A mission statement provides operational information about the program's objectives and purpose. In contrast, a philosophy provides a rationale and guideline for achieving objectives. According to Bazemore and Malony (1994), what most differentiates the mundane from the sublime in community service is a basic set of principles linked to a clear philosophy that reflect agreed upon objectives.
In model programs, staff utilize principles based on punishment, rehabilitation and accountability in order to achieve the programs objectives. For example, decisions about the type of work assigned are made differently according to the philosophy of the program. Staff trained in the program's philosophy are consistent and better informed in their pragmatic decisions. In using a punishment philosophy, the work is less meaningful, usually physically demanding, and the atmosphere is more strict and intense (although rehabilitative effects can still occur). In contrast, under a rehabilitative philosophy careful screening and placement into a work atmosphere that enhances skills and promotes cooperation and investment in community is desired. Although these are different philosophies, they both can be maintained within MCSP and used to drive its operation. Like many other effective community service programs, various work agreements could be in place and used for different penal purposes. For instance, trash pick up and graffiti removal could be used as a "deterrent site" whereas hours working at Missoula Developmental Service Center or Hillside Manor could be used as a "rehabilitative site." With cooperation from referring courts, and especially youth probation officers and judges, a referral could include the penal purpose desired for this sanction. This would allow court officers to justify their community service assignment and protect against using this sanction as a panacea for all offenses.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND OPERATION

Staff-program coordinator. The MCSP program coordinator fulfills most of the administrative responsibilities of other model program coordinators such as interviewing,
placing youths, and reporting to referring agencies, etc. However, the coordinator should be very active in promoting the program within the justice system and the community in order to draw support for, and possibly illicit, new agencies to participate in the program. Through my interviews and observations this type of promotional work is prioritized behind other administrative duties. Although the coordinator maintains contact with agencies for individual placement of offenders and claims there is a waiting list of potential agencies, the need to recruit eclectic work sites still exists.

Coordinators of model programs see one of their primary responsibilities to be consistently establishing working relationships with justice and community agencies and promoting their programs through the local media. This necessary component could be realized in a number of ways. The MCSP could hold semiannual training/recognition sessions for all agencies already participating and those that may be interested. These sessions could be used to disseminate information about how the program benefits the justice system, community and participating agencies by drawing attention to successfully completed projects and discussing future endeavors. These sessions could also be used to recognize and reward agencies (possibly with certificates) for their continual participation in the program. This type of community recognition is an added incentive for agencies to both attend these training sessions, and resume their participation in the program. Of course, the local news media should be persuaded to attend.

Promoting and maintaining good public relations is another important facet of directing a community service program. Besides informing the various news agencies and influential community members of awards ceremonies, keeping the community aware of
the program is essential. With community awareness and involvement in a quality program, the community service program and local juvenile justice system can be seen in a positive light and future support maintained. This program marketing can be promoted through radio, TV, and printed news and can report on the successful completion of community enhancing projects, exceptional agency participation and uplifting incidents of offenders helping the disadvantaged. With consistent media solicitation and carefully chosen topics, the community will hopefully come to recognize the merit of the MCSP and therefore support its continuance.

**Staff-work supervisors.** Although there is no clear pattern demonstrated in respect to staff qualifications, many programs hire staff with professional qualifications emphasizing public relations skills, organizational proficiency and the willingness and ability to hold offenders accountable (Hudson and Galaway 1990). The MCSP does not specifically use these prerequisites, but the current work supervisor possesses the ability to effectively accomplish these various operational requirements of the position. Interviewing for future hiring should attempt to thoroughly examine the candidate’s experience and potential in these areas. Although a candidate may possess many of these traits, training sessions should also be instituted that assist in adopting effective strategies for supervising offenders.

Adopting a training regime could standardize the expectations and requirements of the position and allow those with little professional experience to gain valuable insights and tools in order to best fit the needs of the program, community and the offender. This type of training could take place with other correctional/mental health personnel or could
be devised and implemented specially for work supervisors. Specialized training guides were available through the now defunct RESTTA Program and further technical assistance can be obtained through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

**Target population.** The MCSP does not actively peruse clients and is usually not involved until post-adjudication. Although the coordinator has the ability to deny acceptance of a juvenile into the program, this rarely takes place. Most clients within this program fit the profile of the "safe juvenile offender," committing status offenses and minor property offenses. In order to serve the juvenile justice system in a greater capacity, the MCSP could begin serving more serious/chronic offenders. This amplified change in target population would have to be initiated by the referral agencies, especially Youth Court, Justice Court and Municipal Court. In order for the MCSP to effectively serve this population, certain facets of the program would have to be modified to ensure safety and compliance, especially supervision techniques and work sites. At this time, or until modifications in the program are made, the MCSP should continue servicing its current clientele.

**Intake/placement.** The intake process is used to identify and assess potential skills, experience, goals and criminal offenses, and appropriately match them with an appropriate job site. The MCSP appears to use intakes as an administrative process that provides a general orientation and obtain signed agreements on community service hours and a payment date. Through my "official" observations and participation as a guardian of an offender, there were no obvious screening and assessing of offenders. Although during
my observations, two offenders were assigned individual job slots, there seemed to be little, identification/assessment of offender traits, with most offenders quickly assigned to the work crew. Without a programmatic philosophy, it is less meaningful to carefully screen offenders in order to match them with a meaningful work site; the intake process forfeits its ability to be used as a placement tool and is then relegated to an administrative process. The MCSP can still use this intake process to thoroughly assess individual suitability for different types of work situations. These placement decisions could be achieved a number of ways starting with an initial screening of an offender's work history, special skills, aspirations and criminal offenses at least one week prior to the initial intake. In this manner, information gained through the intake interview could be used to support placement decisions in addition to setting up interviews between offenders and individual job work sites and discussing work crew assignments. Although practical considerations such as transportation, time schedules and availability play an important role in work assignments, we must remember that community service is a sanction for some criminal activity that may inconvenience the offender.

**Work site development.** Although the MCSP has an abundance of work sites, many of these fail to fully maximize the impact of this sanction on the juvenile offender. As mentioned earlier, various goals of community service work will require different work sites. Using work site development to match a particular philosophy mandates actively pursuing specific agencies for their potential effect on the offender. Although this may not necessarily change the guidelines already used by the MCSP to solicit sites, it does require thoughtful planning, the necessity to turn down work sites (in the case of unsuitable work
or uncooperative personnel), and a very explicit cooperative agreement between the program and the agency with the potential work site.

Once agencies have been identified and an agreement has been reached about participating in the program, it is imperative that the MCSP have a thorough understanding of the agency's needs and expectations. MCSP uses signed agreements that discuss responsibilities, but do not thoroughly address the specific needs and circumstances of each potential job site (e.g., preferable skills required, co-supervision requirements, behavior management, minimum hours desired etc.). A meeting between the agency supervisor and work site developer is essential in order to discuss and determine how offenders can be utilized to the mutual benefit of both parties. As an example, the work site at Hillside Manor is used approximately once a month with three or four new offenders each month. For the most part, offenders are used to help with BINGO, read books to residents, and hand out mail. Each month different youth are quickly briefed by the director of the home and are informed what they will be doing that day. Some workers thoroughly enjoy the experience working with seniors while others are obviously less than enthusiastic.

I spoke with a director who had some splendid ideas about how the MCSP could better serve her organization while providing a meaningful experience for the offender. Her ideas included interviewing potential candidates and then using appropriate workers weekly in order to form relationships with residents and understand the schedule of the home. It was her hope that these suggestions would cut down on orientation time, allow a sense of responsibility and creativity to emerge in offenders, and provide more useful and
meaningful encounters between offender and resident. A cooperative contract with these types of specifics could easily be reached between these two organizations upon meeting and discussing how to best serve each other. This type of meeting could greatly increase agency participation satisfaction and MCSP efficiency while decreasing agency discontentment.

**Supervision.** Supervision is the nucleus of effective community service programs and is characterized in model programs by clear and strictly enforced rules and an insistence on quality work. Although generally meeting these standards, MCSP could enhance its supervision component. Time schedules are not strictly enforced, clear explicit rules are not always given, and appropriate supervision is not always provided. Enforcing these and other supervision issues serve as a guarantee to participating agencies that these offenders will provide an effective work force.

Supervision standards discussed in the model program section could be maintained by the MCSP through a number of methods including using positive and negative sanctions. On the negative side, failure to follow rules and perform adequately can result in a negative sanction. Stages of responses or "graduated sanctions" like working overtime, added community service hours and fines, and finally, referral back to formal court can be used to prompt offenders to comply with program rules. In contrast, positive sanctions like additional breaks, early release and letters of recommendations can also be used to motivate workers and illustrate the value of quality work. Although I observed the crew supervisor occasionally using positive sanctions, it was generally applied without the connection to the quality of work. Negative sanctions were never witnessed because
no behavioral problems or rule violations occurred during my observations.

Staff to worker ratio is suitable as there were never more than five offenders to one staff. During my observations, the supervisor was very engaged with all offenders and worked alongside them at all sites. Working with offenders appeared to provide her a greater feel for the competency and attitude of the group. Due to her positive attitude and considerate treatment of offenders, the crews appeared to respond very favorably to her. In addition, her ability to relate to clients' experiences and desire to work alongside offenders allowed her to gain their respect while insuring quality work.

At sites where workers are spread out and supervision is more challenging, the use of participating agency supervisors is often needed. In such cases, the agency supervisor did an adequate job monitoring workers in various locations but lacked specific instructions in order to effectively supervise the offenders. At one point, five offenders (two offenders were on their first community service assignment) were left to work without appropriate supervision for almost one hour due to another supervision commitment for their crew supervisor. This very dangerous situation came about due to an unclear agreement between the MCSP and the agency, and more specifically, a lack of clear supervision responsibilities between the work crew supervisor and the agency liaison. Although crew members handled themselves very appropriately, this supervision breakdown could have been disastrous for the MCSP. When this type of situation takes place, it is imperative the work crew supervisor and agency liaison have a clear understanding who is responsible for different aspects of supervision.

If standardized work site discipline, attendance, and other program standards are
to be used at the work site, then these standards must be clearly communicated to the agency liaison prior to the start of work and included in the cooperative agreement. This type of agreement and other site\work specific concerns or instructions should be discussed prior to starting the work shift. The MCSP crew supervisor can arrive approximately one half hour prior to starting in order to discuss specifics of the job requirements, offender expectations, supervision responsibilities, and outline timetables for completion. If more discretion concerning work site practices is desired by the agency, then these practices must be reviewed to see whether they conform to the MCSP principles and guidelines.

MEETING THE PRINCIPLES OF BALANCED SERVICES

Although the MCSP conforms to some of the principles of balanced services presented earlier, other principles are not addressed. As mentioned in the model programs section, basic work skills can be reinforced without much difficulty and provide offenders with useful skills to help them through life. Various work sites such as the canning operation at the church and the Missoula Childrens Theater provides MCSP offenders with novel work experience as well as unique skills that may be used beyond the community service experience. Although skills needed for this type of work are quite specific, they still may be listed in the youth resume to convey a diverse work experience.

Programs that value reintegration and skill building foster work competencies such as job searching, interviewing and developing resumes. Although not promoted in the MCSP, these are the types of skills model programs cultivate as a worthwhile effect of
participation in a community service program. With some programmatic changes in the screening process (actual assessment and placement according to philosophy and need) and impetus given to the offender, some of these vital employment tools could be implemented within the MCSP. Also, with some of these changes, social competencies such as the ability to work with others and reliability, could also be promoted.

Due to scheduling practices and the few hours of obligation, offenders only work a handful of shifts and are usually assigned various work sites. This hopscotch approach, although providing a variety of work experiences, may not provide an opportunity for the offender to fully obtain a sense of accomplishment/closure through seeing a project through to completion. Also, explaining not only the work required for that shift, but the impact of that effort on the completion of the project can provide offenders with a sense of accomplishment. During screening and assignment, offenders can be scheduled to jobs that will allow them to fully complete projects. Although this was accomplished on occasion, MCSP crew supervisors can also make a concerted effort to explain how their work fits into a larger picture of community well being.

Related to this sense of accomplishment, community recognition impacts offenders positively. For example, the EARN-IT program in Quincy, Mass supervise young offenders ordered to complete community service. These supervised offenders constructed props for the neighborhood theater group and then received free tickets to the opening performance. These projects prove to be a source of pride for offenders and a tangible, cost saving product for taxpayers (Maher 1994). Special recognition for successful completion of visible community service projects can be accomplished with
Grizzly athletic event tickets, special event passes and certificates. Presently, the work supervisor does send out letters thanking offenders who complete projects\obligations which touches on the principle of public recognition. For example, offenders who helped prepare the Southside Little League fields for the upcoming season could have received a thanks from the league and possibly tickets to a Missoula Mavericks baseball game.

EFFECTIVE SERVICE AREAS

In comparison with the six service categories mentioned in the Balanced Services section, the MCSP is active in some of these areas but could benefit from a concerted effort to recruit work sites that include these meaningful service sites.

*Mentoring and intergenerational service.* Although community service work sites at MCSP often require offenders to work with adults, these adults are usually paid employees of the agency and do not take on a mentoring role necessary to provide meaning to the work experience. In addition, work involving seniors is also undertaken at MCSP, but this work provides services to seniors and does not involve working together with seniors on intergenerational projects. These types of projects may be accomplished by contacting the Missoula Ageing Service and discussing how the program could fulfill needs of their organization and foster this type of interaction with youthful offenders. Contacting the Senior Citizens Center directly could also provide opportunities to help with dances, rummage sales and other special events.

*Economic enhancement.* MCSP does an adequate job choosing work sites that have a visible effect on the quality of life for the community. Working at sites such as
Southside Little League and the Downtown business area provide a valuable service to the community. To continue this type of service work, contact the Missoula Downtown Association or other civic groups for their ideas about projects.

**Helping the disadvantaged.** This is another area where the MCSP does an effective job. Work at MDSC, Hillside Manor, and the canning plant at the Montana Foodbank Network provide offenders with meaningful roles in fulfilling a real need in society. With more attention given to offender screening, providing this type of service may promote more positive experiences and impact the offenders.

**Crime prevention projects.** Although I did not observe any work sites that ask offenders to repair damage caused by crime or prevent further crime, I was told there are such projects. This type of work can be used for offenders with various criminal records and can impart on them how destructive and expensive crime is to the community. Contact with Missoula police, sheriff, crime stoppers, and citizen crime watch groups to inform them of MCSP's desire to assist with crime prevention projects may allow the MCSP to expand this type of service work.

**Citizenship and giving back.** These service areas usually result from meaningful experiences providing services to others and gaining insight and appreciation for restorative work. Although the MCSP engages in some of the above service areas, promoting civic participation and restoration can be further accomplished with a directed effort to follow some of these guidelines mentioned above.

From the above study and description of the MCSP, it is apparent that the program provides a valuable service to the court and to the community. In addition, they are
meeting some of the characteristics and program guidelines present in successful model programs. Nonetheless, there is probably room for improvement. Based upon this assessment a few key recommendations are offered:

- Adopt a programmatic philosophy and recruit work sites that promote that philosophy.
- The coordinator must promote and maintain dynamic marketing/public relations through the media.
- Work supervisors must receive training and have a clear understanding of supervision requirements at all work sites.
- The intake process must be reorganized to allow assessment and appropriate site placement based on offender documentation. This may include placement at work sites developed for specific purposes.
- Work site development must include meetings with potential agencies to thoroughly understand specific needs and objectives of the agency.
- Develop additional work sites that provide meaningful service areas.
- Agreements with potential agencies must be very clear and specify unique needs/wants of the agency, especially in terms of supervision and objectives.
- Supervision must be maintained with clear, consistent, and strictly enforced rules.

By following some of these recommendations, the MCSP may be able to not only increase its effectiveness in providing a service to both the court and the community, but may also have a meaningful impact on the lives and future decisions of the juvenile offenders who come through the program.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENTS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS</th>
<th>EXCEPTIONAL PROGRAMS</th>
<th>MISSOULA COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHILOSOPHY</td>
<td>clearly stated, explicit, may be multiple, based on goals of community and local justice system</td>
<td>unclear; not explicit; mission statement replaces philosophy; referral agency responsible for placement philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>DIRECTOR: actively pursue PR and media coverage; provide training SUPERVISORS: formally trained; view youth as valuable resource, skilled in working and communicating with youth</td>
<td>DIRECTOR: limited PR activities; sporadic media coverage; provides no formal training SUPERVISORS: no formal training; previous experience or expectations varied; skilled working with youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POPULATION</td>
<td>begin with “safe” status and property offenders; gradually take on more serious offenders; use a screening tool to filter out inappropriate offenders</td>
<td>clients are safe status and property offenders; serious offenders not referred; accept all referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTAKE</td>
<td>screen for appropriateness; extensive interview process used to evaluate skills and needs; work site placement based on assessment from intake</td>
<td>take all referrals; administrative; informal; sign forms and paperwork; limited assessment; arrange payment plan; usually assignment to crew work sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORK SITE DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>specific work sites that match philosophy, continual solicitation of new sites, contracts outline site specific needs of work site</td>
<td>work sites seen as “slots” not philosophically driven; sites used sporadically; contracts outline legal issues but not site specific needs of organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPERVISION</td>
<td>supervision ratio up to 1:10; positive and negative incentives used; supervision specifics identified and agreed upon</td>
<td>supervision ratio 1:5; sanctions not systematically employed; supervision responsibility occasionally unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BALANCED SERVICE</td>
<td>emphasizes: transferable competencies; sense of accomplishment, closure and community recognition; worthwhile service projects</td>
<td>not seen as a job development; no community recognition; some projects seen through completion; some impactful service sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPORTING &amp; TERMINATING</td>
<td>close contact with referral agency, termination policy set by community service program</td>
<td>infrequent contact with referral agency; termination usually influenced by referral agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


