

# Community Impact in Action

Girls Justice Initiative (GJI),

United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA), San Francisco, CA (Metro 1C)



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**Initiative Name and Year Established:** Girls Justice Initiative (GJI), 2002

## Initiative Mission & Vision

**Mission:** Young women in the San Francisco juvenile justice system receive the appropriate resources and services that will decrease their likelihood of returning into the system.

**Vision:** To reduce recidivism for first-time detained girls, ages 12-18, in the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department.

## Issue or Problem Being Addressed by Initiative

Girls are the fastest growing segment of the juvenile justice population, both nationally and in San Francisco. Approximately 70-90 percent of detained girls have histories of physical and sexual abuse that are directly linked to their delinquency. The majority of these girls will cycle through the juvenile justice system more than once and an estimated 13 percent will return more than nine times.

## Targeted Outcome(s)

To reduce recidivism for first-time detained girls, ages 12-18, in the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department.

## Initiative Lead(s)

United Way of the Bay Area and the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department.

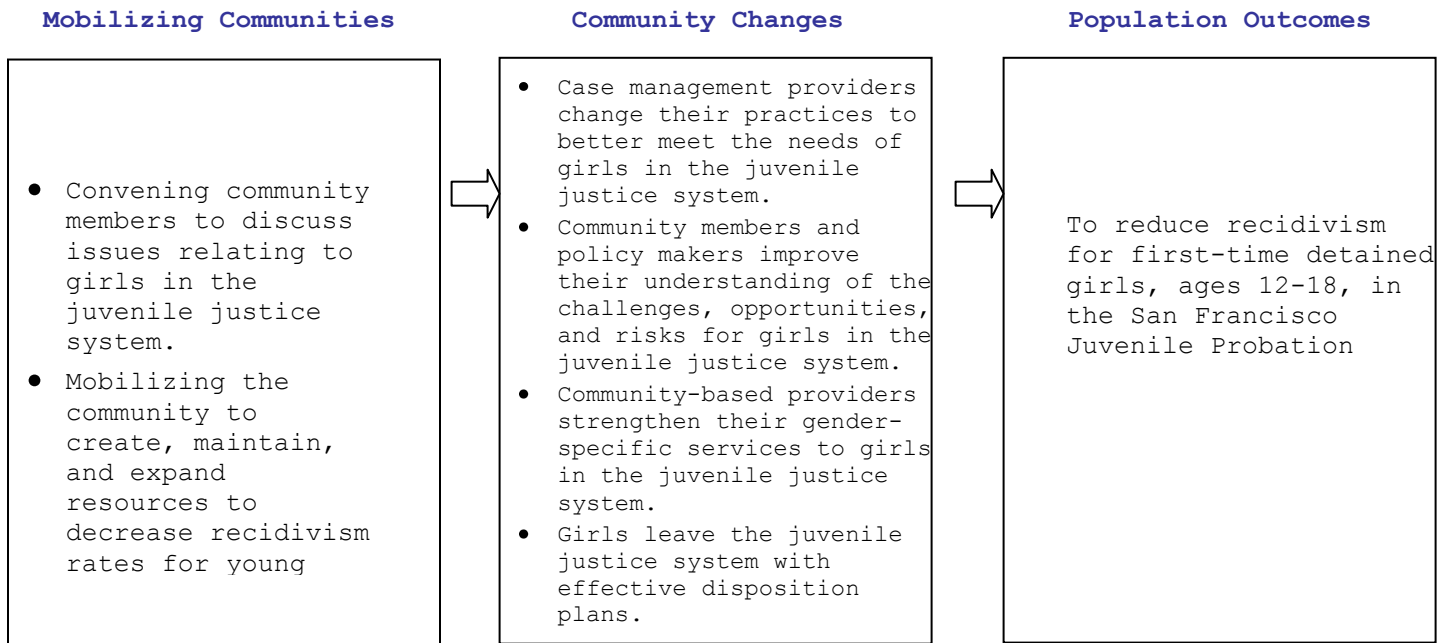
## Catalyst for United Way Becoming Involved

Two local youth advocates, Julie Posadas, J.D. and Gena Castro, MFTI noticed the disconnect between the juvenile justice system and the current nonprofit community resources. As a result, Julie decided to collect data on girls in the system, since previously, data for boys and girls were lumped together. The data Julie collected from intakes and assessments, of girls in juvenile hall, showed the rise in female juvenile delinquency, disproportionate minority confinement, and recurring victimization of girls who cycle through the system. Additionally, the data showed a disproportionately small percentage of the juvenile justice budget dedicated to gender-specific programs that address the needs of girls in the system.

In April 2001, Julie and Gena took their data to a UWBA meeting where more than 40 representatives of funders, community-based, health, and school organizations were convened to discuss ways to improve safety for girls in San Francisco. Julie presented on the status of girls in the juvenile justice system on behalf of the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department. As a result of the meeting, a prioritized list of two or three outcomes was established that UWBA's "Safe Communities" Issue Cabinet would use to guide its immediate funding decisions. Arrest rates for girls was identified as the top priority on that list.

Julie and Gena developed a model now known as "Girls Justice Initiative" to address concerns identified in the 2001 meeting. A member of the "Safe Communities" Issue Cabinet, who was passionate about GJI, pushed UWBA to make GJI a priority initiative for the organization. In 2002, UWBA's "Safe Communities" Issue Cabinet decided to make a three-year investment of \$125,000 each year to GJI. UWBA then approached the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department to collaborate on issues regarding girls in detention in juvenile hall.

## Summary of Theory of Change & Strategies



### Strategies and How Chosen

The GJI approach is based on strategies recommended and approved by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. There are three objectives of the GJI:

- (1) Maintain and expand girls' services
  - Develop comprehensive gender-specific responsive intake and assessment
  - Create an exit package, which includes a list of community resources and contact information, toiletries, personal items, bus passes, phone cards, and clothing
  - Provide individual, group, and family therapy for girls, free-of-charge. Sessions include:
    - o Pregnant and Parenting Group
    - o Anger Management
    - o Healthy Relationships
- (2) Strengthen community organizations that serve girls
  - Launch gender-specific training curriculum for community-based organizations that work with girls in the Bay Area. Topics include:
    - o Counseling Youth
    - o Male Providers/Female Clients - Building Healthy Relationship
    - o Conflict Resolution
  - Develop mentorship program, Inside Mentoring, that works with girls in custody
    - o Students from two local universities serve as mentors twice a week each semester, offering girls in the system, support, and guidance.
- (3) Link girls' services within juvenile hall to community-based services
  - Case managers provide individual case plans for girls utilizing a confidential database.
  - Case managers work with probation officers to identify and recommend community organization resources for clients and their families.

### **Partners and Roles**

The following organizations serve as co-case management service organizations, along with GJI. In this role these organizations meet weekly to discuss girls' case management, to ensure that services are not duplicated.

- Center for Young Women's Development
- Department of Public Health
- Standing Against Global Exploitation

The following organizations serve as funders of the initiative.

- San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- The Women's Foundation of California
- UWBA
- Wells Fargo
- Zellerbach Foundation

The following organizations work with GJI to provide direct services to young girls.

- Center for Young Women's Development
- Come Into the Sun Mentor Program
- Community Assessment and Referral Center
- Community Works
- Community Youth Center
- Department of Children, Youth and Families
- Department of Public Health
- Girls After-School Academy
- HOMEY
- Huckleberry Youth Services
- Mission Neighborhood Center
- Oasis for Girls
- Stand Against Global Exploitation
- Sunset Youth Services
- Western Addition Beacon Center
- Vietnamese Youth Development Center

## **Implementation**

### **Communication Strategies**

The GJI webpage on UWBA's website, which includes a video, fact sheet, and data report, serves to educate the public about the issue and the initiative, and tracks the success of the initiative. In addition, GJI has received local television, radio, and newspaper coverage. "Girls on the Edge: A Report on Girls in the Juvenile Justice System" is a report that presents data on young girls in the system and is given to judges, probation officers, and community service providers as a rationale for the need for GJI.

### **Annual Budget**

\$459,000

UWBA made a three-year investment of \$125,000 per year beginning in 2003 and committed an additional \$100,000 beginning July 1, 2005. The City of San Francisco continues to increase its funding of the initiative, from \$150,000 in 2004, to \$250,000 in 2005.

### **Non-financial Resources Mobilized (e.g., volunteers, in-kind services, etc.)**

Office space, computers, janitorial services, and utilities are all provided in-kind by the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department, where GJI and its staff are housed.

## **United Way Involvement & Implications**

### **United Way Role**

UWBA acts as the program planner, program implementer, fund developer, community convener, and conducts public awareness. The staff is fully funded by UWBA.

### **Relationship to Community Impact Goals**

GJI is directly aligned with UWBA's "Safe Communities" Issue Cabinet, one of the four impact areas for the Bay Area, which takes a community impact approach to preventing youth violence and strengthening community services to create stronger, safer neighborhoods.

### **How United Way Departments Align to Support Initiative**

- **Community Impact:** Included in "Safe Communities", one of the four core impact areas under UWBA's Community Impact Issue Cabinet; GJI is also included in documents produced to communicate how donor funds directly impact the community
- **Finance:** Manages the GJI payroll, reimbursements, and contracts with vendors and consultants
- **Human Resources:** Handles all human resources related issues, including hiring, training, termination, benefits, etc. for GJI staff
- **Marketing:** Manages the GJI website and production of publications
- **President's Office:** Invites the GJI Director to speak at events to donors because of its success
- **Resource Development:** Helps with grants, annual reports, and keeping track of donated funds (all donated funds to GJI goes directly to UWBA); Works to leverage existing resources to GJI
- **Volunteer Center:** Organizes companies to do clothing drives, donate gifts for holidays, etc.

### **United Way Board Member Involvement**

The board supports community impact through the Issue Cabinets, a general committee that determines the priority impact areas in the Bay Area. The "Safe Communities" Issue Cabinet serves as GJI's advisory group. GJI staff regularly report to the Cabinet on its progress. The BOD is not involved in the day-to-day operations of the initiative.

### **Benefits to United Way**

#### **Perception of United Way's Value (internal and external):**

- o UWBA is perceived as an action-based organization that produces direct results in the community.
- o Donors have more evidence of the return on investment in their communities.
- o UWBA employees see their daily work making a direct impact in their community. Programs that are conducted outside of UWBA are not as real, as they don't see the day-to-day work being done behind the scenes.

#### **Growth of Resources:**

- o The funds raised for the GJI are included in the overall UWBA campaign funds.
- o Existing resources are used to leverage additional funds for UWBA. For example, looking to give to a specific initiative or cause, Wells

Fargo gave \$48,000 to GJI.

**Additional Community Impact Work Catalyzed:**

- o UWBA is working towards creating more community impact initiatives like GJI in other geographic areas.

**Long-term Strategy for Involvement**

UWBA continues to commit funds to the GJI, despite an unclear strategy for its long-term involvement.

## Lessons Learned

### Key Success Factors

- Partnering with the juvenile justice system, individuals, and organizations that had significant experience with young girls at the start of the initiative.
- The community was ready for change and GJI received very little resistance from the community when it was created.
- UWBA studied the issue and acted simultaneously, rather than study first and act second.

### Challenges

- Adjusting the probation officers' (who were not ready for change) perception of and behaviors towards girls in the juvenile justice system.
- Getting the juvenile justice system to understand that boys and girls in the system are different and have different needs.

### Course Corrections & Lessons Learned

- Initially the founders thought GJI would mostly be an information resource and did not think it would be involved in providing direct services. However, throughout the course of the initiative, case managers were hired and mentors were recruited who provided direct services to girls in the system.
- GJI leaders thought they could find existing organizations that could meet the needs of all girls in the system. However, they quickly realized, they had to create some internal services that would serve the needs of girls.
- GJI leaders believed the initiative could make "quick fixes and a big impact," however, it was soon realized that girls' issues take an enormous amount of work. The plan should have required smaller short and long term goals that take into consideration the complexity of the problems of both girls in the system and the system itself.

### Advice to a United Way Looking to Establish a Similar Initiative in Their Community

- Reach out to the community first to learn what services are currently offered, as to not duplicate any existing services.
- Partner with community organizations and individuals with experience with the target population of your initiative.
- Find key leadership, both internally and in the community that will support your initiative to help make changes that need to be made.

## Tracking Progress and Results

### Intended Community changes

#### Community change

Case management providers in San Francisco increase their support for girls in the juvenile justice system.

### Evidence of success

#### Evidence of success:

Evidence is pending. Release of project evaluation of GJI by outside consultants is scheduled for summer 2005.

Case managers provided individual case plans for approximately 275 girls this past year. Client's needs, strengths, and progress are tracked in a confidential database.

**Community change**

Community members and policy makers in San Francisco improve their understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and risks for girls in the juvenile justice system.

**Community change**

Community-based providers in San Francisco strengthen their gender-specific services to girls in the juvenile justice system.

**Community change**

Girls in San Francisco leave the juvenile justice system with effective disposition plans, which include therapy sessions, referrals, and an exit package.

**Evidence of success**

Probation officers in San Francisco have shown significant improvement in their awareness of GJI, based on surveys and focus groups conducted by GJI staff and volunteers.

Court judges are taking into consideration the GJI assessments and recommendations by signing off on the girls' disposition plans.

**Evidence of success**

New tools developed by GJI for tracking intake, assessment, and case plans now track recidivism and accountability of girls.

Mentors are provided, to girls twice per week, to offer support, guidance, and assistance.

Training is provided to more than 50 agencies who work with girls involved in the juvenile justice system, on skill development, and techniques for working with girls in the system.

**Evidence of success**

Evidence is pending. Release of project evaluation of GJI by outside consultants is scheduled for summer 2005.

**Target outcome**

To reduce recidivism for first-time detained girls, ages 12-18, in the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department.

**Evidence of success**

The number of girls detained decreased from 22 in 2002 to 15 in 2004, reflecting a 31.8 percent decline. Recidivism rates will be available in 2006, when GJI publishes its results in comparison to 2004. Prior to GJI, recidivism had never tracked by the San Francisco juvenile justice system.