

# **AMERICA'S THROW-AWAY CHILDREN**

## **AN ALTERNATIVE TO INCARCERATION**

A LOOK THROUGH THE EYES OF AN OREGON JUVENILE  
COUNSELOR

**ALEN K. BELL**

LANE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES  
Retired 1/1/98

Neurological research by Svea J. Gold

**FOREWORD:**

This is not a statistical abstract; it is the description of the changing face of the Oregon Juvenile Justice System and the role played by one juvenile counselor with an iron determination to keep every juvenile delinquent in his caseload from becoming a habitual criminal.

Svea Gold (2003)

In the fall of 1997 a seventeen and a half year old boy was in detention, waiting for a court hearing that would put him into McLaren, the Oregon secure state training center. I was asked by his probation officer to take the young man to court because the counselor would be on vacation when the boy's appearance was scheduled to take place. The hearing was expected to be a simple process, as the youth's record warranted no other choice. His history included outbursts of violent anger, fights with his family, his peers and even his girlfriend. During his fits of rage he was abusive, and both his mother and his girlfriend were often afraid of him. He had a significant delinquent record, which besides some minor offenses also included felonies.

The hearing, I was assured, would be quite straight forward as there was no doubt about its outcome. Nevertheless, I carefully read the prepared Court Report, and a picture of the boy's life emerged that made me reevaluate the entire case. The social history, partially supplied by the "Joe's" mother, revealed a classic case history of a child clearly on the road to disaster.

At the age of four, he was apparently physically abused and knocked unconscious by a violent stepfather. At seven, he was in an auto accident that left him unconscious. At about the age of twelve, he fell from a school breezeway and was again knocked unconscious. He purportedly did not receive medical attention after any of these incidents.

His mother stated that his behavior deteriorated significantly after age twelve. He terrorized his family. He could no longer get along in school, and at the time of his being taken into custody was not attending classes at all.

He had been living with a girlfriend, who admitted privately that she was afraid of him and had been beaten by him in the past.

Prior to the hearing I discussed this history with “ Joe.” He admitted that he was frustrated and angry. He said he struck out at others when things did not go as he wanted them, which was most of the time. He knew that often - with little provocation – he got into an almost blind rage. He felt that he was “no good” and deserved to be locked up, but he no longer cared what happened to him.

I immediately contacted the child’s attorney and met with her and the mother. I explained that after reading the child’s history and talking to the boy, I realized that further assessment of the child’s neurological and psychological status needed to be completed prior to any commitment to secure custody. Even though, I told them, secure custody might still be found to be necessary, the Judge might be able to recommend alternative placement. Neither the lawyer nor the mother had thought this was possible, but both were excited that someone wanted to take a closer look at this young man.

At the court hearing I noted the history of this boy, stressing the probable brain damage that may have been the most precipitating factor in the boy’s delinquent development. The presiding Juvenile Judge stated that he also had been aware of the history and was also concerned about it, but that he was not sure of alternatives. I explained that the Juvenile Probation Department and the Court were responsible for not only the protection of the community, but for the welfare of the child as well. We needed to find answers to serious questions before shipping this boy off to an institution that would, without doubt, provide the first stage of a life interrupted off-and-on by periods of incarceration. The Judge agreed to continue the case while I was to try getting some further assessment of the boy. “Joe” left the courtroom in a state of confusion. The mother was amazed. She simply could not believe that at this stage of the boy’s life anyone would stand up and say: “Stop”

Unfortunately my own problems had just begun. Within fifteen minutes, the detention supervisor had contacted the Assistant Director and I was in the Assistant Director’s office, having to explain why I had gone against the regular counselor’s recommendation.

With the boy in handcuffs and shackles, I drove him to a preliminary functional neurological evaluation. Once there, I explained to “Joe” that I would have to take his handcuffs and shackles off so that Dr. Sharell Tracy could complete the assessment. I also told him that since he was not in secure custody, he could easily try to run away. It would be better, however, if he did not. Perhaps it was time to find out why he had been so angry, violent and destructive. “Joe” made no attempt to run.

It was as if a great weight had been lifted from “Joe’s” mind, when after testing him, Dr. Tracy explained that his rages were not just anger or the temper tantrums of a spoiled child, but something neurologists call “limbic rages.” These are caused by hypersensitivities in the limbic area of the brain, and with proper therapy would eventually diminish. Just knowing what they were would help him control them or warn him to get out of harm’s way when he felt them coming on. These rages were not his fault, but were caused by actual changes in the brain because of the repeated falls and emotional traumas of his childhood. Not only the knowledge that he was not “bad” but also knowing that someone cared enough to try to help him may have already been half of his therapy. From that day on he remained committed to change.

A week after the judge’s agreement to keep the boy at the local detention center, an angry counselor returned from his vacation and – much to my great relief -- demanded furiously that since I had fouled up his watertight case, that I be assigned “Joe’s” case permanently. I continued to transport this young man to treatment until my retirement at the end of 1997. The local group home later reconsidered and accepted him for placement, due in no small part to his subsequent change in attitude and his good behavior in detention. He later then graduated from the program and exited from the juvenile system. His life as an adult, although not entirely referral free, still is such that at the time of this writing, he is free in the community – no small miracle in itself – and is acting as a fairly responsible adult.

Needless to say, I now know an attorney who believes in the ability of a child to change if given the proper assistance.

The first time a child gets in trouble with the law, in the eyes of the world he stops being a child. He no longer is a person with a history of abuse, with problems, with lost dreams and silent screams for help. He is now a juvenile delinquent – a punk. He gets thrown together with other of his ilk and

together they go on to building a long career of more and more scrapes with the law, more incarcerations and a life of repeated crime. In short, they become America's throw-away children.

No matter how much bravado they may show in public – in bed they cry. The only ones to stand between them and such a fate are the members of the juvenile departments and, specifically, the juvenile counselors, the lawyers and the judges. They each have to find a way to treat their charges as individuals with individual backgrounds, often school failures and unrecognized developmental problems. Judges need to have accurate information to make proper decisions. For that they have to be able to rely on counselors, who in turn can only act based on their own background of up-to-date medical and psychological knowledge. Ideally administrators in the education system as well as those in the court system, need to have properly trained personnel. That training should include knowledge of the impact that brain damage or neurological disorganization has on a child's learning ability and behavior.

Judge Thomas P. McGee has tried to spread the information that most delinquents are learning disabled, but still thousands of school and probation counselors are trying to solve the problems of youth in conflict with little or no understanding of the significant relationship between how a child's brain functions and his or her behavior. My own knowledge was acquired perhaps not as much by plan as by accident and by my desperation at not being able to help some of my charges.

The case of "Joe" is only one example that clearly shows that a child can be a failure because neither the school nor the juvenile system care enough or know enough to intervene successfully. The tragedy is compounded in that this one child is only one of thousands in the United States.

It isn't that juvenile counselors are not well trained. I spent eight years in college and left with high expectations to "help juveniles adjust to society." It was still another 28 years before I learned the most significant and least known, least understood and probably the least accepted cause of juvenile delinquent recidivism. I have talked to many professionals in corrections and in education who wished that someone had told them what I have been trying to share and that I had only begun to learn in 1995. The neurological research to back this knowledge has only been published within the last ten

to twenty years and so no one can be faulted for not being aware of this new insight.

Significant changes occurred in the Oregon Juvenile Justice System during the last quarter of the Twentieth Century. Some of these were beneficial to delinquent youths, while some actually hampered the ability of juvenile counselors to perform their proscribed duties. Economic necessities set the scene for the juvenile system to look more at symptoms of delinquent behavior than at the real causes of delinquency. Solutions tended to be control-oriented because immediate results provided a more credible goal for the public to see. Not enough attempts were made to develop ways to attack the underlying problems.

While this history may not seem relevant to anyone not living in Lane County or even in Oregon, children are the same – in Oregon or in any other state. They learn to love or to hate in the same way. Their heartbreak is the same if they, for whatever reason, do not possess the necessary skills and abilities to succeed - within their family, in school, or in the world of work.

The time has come to shift the approach to troubled youth to a higher paradigm – a new standard of excellence. My hope is that even before these children tangle with the juvenile justice system, schools may be open to explore and learn new avenues to help children succeed. It is equally the responsibility of the juvenile counselor, the teacher, and the parent. It is time for “education tsars” to insist that schools discard failed techniques and catch up on the latest research so that in deed President Bush’s statement “no child shall be left behind” becomes more than political rhetoric.

**The Klamath County Experience:** In the late 60s and early 70s juvenile counselors in Oregon became change agents for delinquent youth and their families. An Oregon juvenile counselor, especially during this time period, could make a positive change in the path of a child seemingly bent in the wrong direction.

In 1966, a graduate from the University of Oregon with a Bachelor of Science degree, I earned an Oregon Secondary Teaching Certificate, and by 1968 received a Masters in Interdisciplinary Studies. Thus well armed with wisdom and idealism, or so I thought, I started work at the Klamath County Juvenile Department as a Juvenile Counselor. The first few months required a quick adjustment to the transition from the guided discipline of the

classroom to the reality of coping with delinquent teens who were often in need of long-term incarceration. I remained in Klamath for two and a half years.

An early incident gave me a reputation as being a no-nonsense probation officer. One husky young fellow on my caseload kept challenging the Court's decision. One morning after he had again violated the terms of his probation, another juvenile officer and I went to the boy's high school to take him into custody to spend a weekend in detention. The young man refused to go with me. I warned him that if he did not go voluntarily, it would be harder for him. He stormed out of the school office and went to a nearby street corner where several teens were gathered. He spouted defiance and bragged of his prowess to his pals. Without hesitation I called the local police department, which quickly responded with three officers. Five of us surrounded him, but he refused to get into the police car. Convinced of his superior strength, he planted his legs and started to lift two police officers – one on each arm – into the air. I ordered: "Spray him!" and the third officer promptly complied. He was then quickly placed into the car with no more resistance. He spent the previously required weekend in detention after which he was released to return home and to school. Unfortunately the boy was allergic to the spray and his skin blistered.

When he returned to school on Monday the blisters on his skin were a testimony to his friends that it did not pay to mess with the law. After that, I seldom had to tell another Klamath youth that when I spoke I meant what I said. Working in the rural areas of Klamath County taught me that a juvenile counselor or probation officer had to be innovative and resourceful, flexible but consistent and be willing to provide meaningful consequences.

The spraying incident, cruel as it might have seemed, had an important result. The boy's mother called to thank me because for the first time in several years her son would listen to her with new respect. The boy later committed another serious offense and was committed to the state training school. He told me at the time that he understood that I had no choice but to recommend this sentence. Just before I left Klamath Falls, he returned to visit me. After having been released from the state institution he had joined the U.S. Marine Corps. He was at the time on leave from his unit stationed in Japan. He thanked me for making him grow up.

One other incident proved the importance of being resourceful and consistent. One of my young charges was in the local detention facility. At the time the Juvenile Department had a log pile that detainees had to saw and split by hand. The boys seldom returned for a second dose of “woodpile therapy.” The woodpile then was located outside the detention enclosure, and this young man decided to run away. The detention superintendent chased him, but was not fast enough to catch up.

I was summoned quickly and soon followed in one of our department cars, which had a siren. He was headed towards the northeast section of town. As he neared the end of a street, I proceeded to come down that street with my siren going full blast. This continued until the street pattern had shortened and he ran out of streets at a farm. He then decided to climb up a high, long ridge that ran northeast of Klamath Falls. Leaving the car at the farmhouse, I asked the farmer to lend me a horse – I had been raised as a horseman - and followed the young fugitive on horseback. Two-thirds up the hill I finally caught up with him. As he swung up behind me on the horse, I asked him if he had learned anything. “Yeah,” he replied between exhausted breaths, “I’m never going to try running away again!”

He never did either and was later placed into foster care. The last I knew about him, his case was closed and he was no longer in any legal trouble. He apparently got the point and made the necessary changes in his behavior and his lifestyle.

Placing a child in foster home placement is often not only a necessary but also a prudent choice. Too many parents have methods of raising children that actually hamper, negate or constrict efforts of the children to change their behavior and their attitude. Many delinquents can be motivated to change, but will fail unless they are given proper guidance and shown new avenues that lead them to do so successfully.

**Lane County -- the formative years – 1971-1979:** the late 60s and early 70s were the years of the deep federal pocket. Many new and innovative grants were available. Over two dozen group homes located across the entire state of Oregon accepted teens in trouble. These facilities developed a variety of approaches to get them straightened out. Unfortunately only a few proved successful enough to secure continued funding to enable the programs to survive the later lean years.

In 1971 I went to work in Lane County as the juvenile counselor for Western Lane County. This experience allowed me to develop a new way to view children that would prove essential in years to come. When I arrived in the Elmira and Florence areas the Juvenile Department had gained no respect from the police and the juveniles snubbed their noses at us. Rural community tolerance for crime is not as liberal as in a more cosmopolitan area such as Eugene or Springfield. Delinquent children continued to be more “visible” in a smaller community. My first two years were spent cleaning up gangs of teens who had been roaming the communities almost at will.

During this period I coined the term “thera-punitive” -- meaning that behavior had consequences. No child wished to have to take a second ride with me to detention. A first ride often meant detention time and probation; a second ride meant out of home placement in a group home or other private state institution. My charges and their parents had been explained my philosophy:

- I was not mother, father or teacher. Thereafter I would not repeat myself and I did not stutter. Conditions of probation were to be followed, not broken at will.
- Everyone is allowed to make one mistake. Thus the delinquent I saw had already made his or her allowable mistake – which had led to seeing me for committing a crime.
- The delinquent did not want to learn by experience what “thera-punitive” really meant.

After the first couple of years a relative calm settled over Western Lane County. Florence, especially, saw a period in which I was finally able to look at delinquency in a preventive sense. Most of the hardcore instigators had already been shipped off to institutions or remanded to adult court. Teens in the area had learned that delinquency no longer was worth the consequences one had to pay if and when they were apprehended.

During this relative calm I started to get involved taking young people swimming and out for other fun activities. Over the next one and a half years we created an informal school, police and juvenile department recreation

program. Police officers no longer referred to kids as punks, nor did I hear kids call officers “pigs.” A police officer might take a kid out for a Coke instead of arresting him. We actually had over 25 to 30 youths involved in boating, picnics, overnight camping, a trip to Wildlife Safari or some other informal activity.

Before we knew it, the program expanded to the point that some of my coworkers also got involved. Some police officers volunteered to join us on their own time. One day at the Pier Point Inn, where we took the juveniles swimming, an incident occurred which proved to me that we had clearly changed some major attitudes. One day at the edge of the pool I saw some kids whispering. Next thing I knew, Officer George Weiland was bodily picked up by these kids and, though he was fully dressed (in his off-duty street clothes), tossed into the pool. Was he mad? No, he laughed and joked with the kids. This was a miracle in action. A year earlier George thought delinquent kids were little “punks.” No Florence kid a year before would have dreamed of such behavior with Officer Weiland. Not much later we used George’s personal boat to transport kids to a picnic near one of the local lakes.

Up to this point, I only took juveniles from my caseload for these recreational activities. Then a pre-teen boy whom I barely knew came up to me and asked what kind of crime did he have to commit to get into the program. Needless to say, the program was immediately adjusted to include any Florence area kid who was interested in our activities.

One incident further serves to emphasize the success of this approach. For a year now I had been hearing from the local middle school administrators that I would soon be getting “Jim” on my caseload. A few months after the informal program had been in existence, Officer Peterson invited him to our activities. He finally came, full of his bravado, but slowly he began to mellow out. On an overnight trip he had warmed up to the point where, finally and after much encouragement, we were able to get him to play his harmonica for the entire group.

“Jim” then got his older brother, with whom he was usually at odds, to join us. Prior to the trip to Wildlife Safari, several of us were waiting in a vehicle for Officer Peterson and “Jim’s” older brother. In the van was also a juvenile parolee from New York. He asked what was holding things up. Someone explained that we were waiting for one more boy and Officer Peterson. The

parolee piped up: “ You mean we got to take a “pig”? “Jim” instantly replied, “That’s not a ‘pig’, that’s Officer Peterson and he’s a friend of mine.” End of discussion.

As time passed by, “Jim” was only involved in only one minor juvenile incident, eventually married and became what is so impersonally known as a ‘productive citizen.’ The school administration’s predictions – no doubt because of our preventive interaction – had been proven wrong.

Unfortunately, success became our undoing. This was a period of time when Oregon juvenile resources were in their heyday. There were many group homes to place needy or delinquent youths. Shelter care and foster care slots were available as never before or never since. Both State and private juvenile institution beds were also easily accessible. Grant money could be had for starting many new programs.

In Florence our program became so popular that Florence Police officer Robert Peterson and I were able to secure a grant for two new paid positions: The Juvenile Department got a recreation specialist and the Florence Police a juvenile officer. The condition of the grant was that the person hired could not have been previously employed by the department during the preceding year. The end result was that a new person was hired, but due to lack of departmental funding otherwise, my partner in the program, Officer Peterson, lost his job. This “success” also meant that the new recreation specialist took over the aspects of my position that granted me the most satisfaction.

**THE ADVENT OF THE ADVERSARY PROCESS:** In the late 70s subtle changes took place that slowly eroded the role of the juvenile counselor. He was eventually transformed from being a child advocate and guide (parent in absentia) to being an adversarial supervisory probation officer. Both budget limitations and philosophical changes forced legislators to put a “cap” on the functions of the state and juvenile system. This “cap” ignored the real needs of the growing population of Oregon.

The stage for this transformation had been set by earlier amendments to the Oregon Juvenile Code. In 1969 the legislators had ordained that the description “being out of control of a juvenile’s parent or guardian” was no longer to be the basis for incarceration in the Oregon State Training Schools.

In 1975 the legislature also removed “being a runaway” from being a reason for secure placement. In 1979 the Legislature also significantly restricted who could be detained and set specific conditions to be met prior to detention.

Before this legislation, counselors often protected a juvenile from being saddled with a permanent record by using “being a runaway” or “being out of control” as the legal charge for a youth who might have actually committed crimes such as burglary, theft, or assault. Without this loophole, attorneys were protecting the long-range record of the child more vigorously and in doing so kept the child from experiencing the practical consequences of his behavior.

Interjecting an attorney into the court process was another factor in the rise of the adversary role of the juvenile counselor. During the 60s most Oregon counties seldom saw attorneys during either jurisdictional or dispositional hearings, allowing the counselor to defend the child. The most notable exception was in Lane County, the home of the University of Oregon Law School. Many young attorneys who graduated from there and who wished to set up practice in Eugene or Springfield wanted to gain experience and tried to make a name for themselves by being a “bar representative” at the Lane County Juvenile Court. Only in Lane County did a juvenile actually have to refuse to be represented by attorney, or by default he would become presented by an private court appointed attorney or a member of the local “Lane Public Defender’s” office. By the late 70s other Oregon counties had generally begun to accept the role of the attorney in juvenile proceedings.

By the rise of this approach the juvenile counselor was transformed into being nothing more than a probation officer. No longer would he be viewed by most clients or their parents as acting in the best interest of the child. The role of the counselor had evolved to be primarily the protector of the community.

**THE ADVENT OF THE POPULATION CAP:** By 1984 the State of Oregon Department of Juvenile Corrections also set a “cap” on the total number of juveniles that could be placed in all State Training Schools, and that included the regional parole camps. Each county soon got a maximum allotment of juvenile slots. During the next few years, the total number of beds continued to be even more restricted. In the late 60s the number of juveniles in the entire system was near 1000; the 80s reduced institutional

beds to 615. This occurred, even though there was a significant increase in population and juvenile crime. At the same time group homes were less and less available.

The “cap” also affected Skipworth, the Lane County Juvenile Detention Center. The inmate population, already restricted in the 80’s from anywhere from 45 to 50 children at a time, was set by administrative decree to an absolute cap of 35.

In 1989 the Oregon legislators further imposed restrictions on incarceration. Juvenile detention was restricted to a maximum from 8 to 28 days. Only by review in Court could the temporary detention be extended for up to an additional 28 days. This meant that if a juvenile violated his parole and was apprehended by the police, and even sentenced by a juvenile judge, he might be released immediately by an administrative order. Often then detention was only for new crimes committed.

With these new restrictions, local detention for juveniles was difficult to justify even if no out-of-home placement had been found. Group homes and alternative private institutions were almost impossible to find because those resources had literally been reduced by over 50 per cent of the beds available in the early 70s.

Under these conditions, how could a juvenile counselor provide effective supervision of a youth on probation when consequences for violation of such probation became practically non-existent?

**THE EMERGENCE OF THE BALANCED APPROACH:** Forced by these budget and legal restrictions, the “counselor” of the 80s became, in essence, a resource broker. Besides providing probation supervision, he referred the client to specialized competency programs and other departmental or community resources. Often the counselor found personal satisfaction only by helping facilitate or teaching other special programs.

There developed, especially in Lane County, a new approach to deciding the terms of probation. This planning process incorporated input from the counselor, the parent and the child as co-participants in the design of such a plan. This became known as “the balanced approach.” Rather than merely imposing a set of probation conditions, this was intended to provide a roadmap to guide the child, the parent, the probation counselor and the

Juvenile court judge so that the child could eventually exit the judicial system and take control of his own life.

Developing a case plan took a problem solving approach. To be effective the plan must accurately assess the most serious problems in the child's life that interfered with the child being able to function in society. It had to address three critical but equally important components:

- **Community protection:** Will the child be a threat to the community if we leave him in an open setting? If the answer is yes, there is a rationale for immediate out-of-home closed custody. If the child presents no threat, to let him go home, he had to fulfill certain conditions.
  - Obey all applicable laws.
  - Demonstrate newly learned competency skills.
  - Demonstrate respect for society's values.
  - Demonstrate the ability to function without substance abuse.
- **Accountability:** What do we need to do to hold this child accountable for his own behavior? The plan should:
  - Establish a reasonable community service program, one that is appropriate to the offense and the capability of the child.
  - Establish a plan to pay restitution on a reasonable schedule.
  - Demand the child demonstrate his responsibility: to parents, the Court, his probation counselor, the community and to his victim. (The latter often by restitution or a letter of apology to the victim.)
- **Competency development:** What skills does the child need when no longer under the control of the court, so that he can function without further brushes with the law?

The child needs to complete competency skills programs offered by the Juvenile Department or otherwise found in the community. These programs may include:

- Basic Academic Skills
- Responsible Decision Making Skills
- Anger Management Skills
- Family Coping Skills
- Multicultural Coping Skills
- Social Skills
- Alcohol Education Program

The following example demonstrates a probation history based on this “Balanced Approach.”

One young man who lived in the outlying area had increasingly more serious problems as he progressed through the middle school years. My first contact with him and an older brother actually occurred prior to his sixth birthday. By the sixth grade, supervision efforts were aimed not only at trying to keep the boy from performing delinquent acts, but mainly at trying to keep him in school two or three days in a row.

By the late 80s his family, headed by a struggling single mother, had moved into the city. Finally, extended detention was required because he was involved in ongoing problems. The “balanced approach” used for this boy was my first such probation plan. The plan demanded he perform community service and he had to complete several competency programs. During the next year he spent almost as much time attending competency programs as he did at home or at school.

Part of my function at this time was to teach the “Responsible Decision Making” competency class that he attended. During a discussion about feelings, all participants were handed a list of possible emotions. They were to circle five feelings they had never felt in their lifetime. This boy’s list included the word “safe.” Another such exercise later asked them to name the most important person in their life. This boy listed at the top: “My probation officer” – a touching but sad commentary about the life of a delinquent teenager. During the next year, he actually completed his Case Plan and his case was closed during his sophomore year.

I heard little from him during the next two years, but he asked me to his graduation ceremony from high school. This graduation was no small feat

for a boy whom I could not get to attend school in the sixth grade. Needless to say I attended this ceremony with almost as much pride in his accomplishment as I had for that of my own children at their graduations.

**The DYS Education Center:** In the late 80s I became aware of a further need to change my approach to probation. I began to see many youth who were struggling in school or had already dropped out because of educational deficits. I had long recognized that behind their delinquency was a common thread. Almost all of them were failing in school. With few tools to be successful in school, they quickly found that committing delinquent acts with their friends provided their only avenue for success and recognition, bad though this might seem to those in the “normal” society. Being bad became one thing they became good at and often provided them with their “15 minutes of fame.”

Instead of merely steering them into competency programs, I achieved more direct contact by tutoring those who were struggling in school. At first I did this on a voluntary basis and the positive results were soon apparent. Before I knew it, I was tutoring not only the children on my own caseload, but those of other juvenile counselors as well. The need was so great that I started to recruit volunteers to work with my kids. Most of them were University of Oregon “field experience placement” students. Within three years the Department of Youth Services (DYS) recognized the success I was having in preventing further delinquency and relieved me of some of my caseload duties to spend more time tutoring departmental clients.

By 1990, I had, with the backing of my administration, developed a basic skills tutoring program that was later to become the Lane County Department of Youth Services Education Center. Eventually, I was allowed to move the program to a separate location, away from the Department of Youth Services. By 1992 the program was officially recognized and I was given funds to hire someone to help coordinate the daily activity at the Center. By 1994 two more paid assistants were needed to fill the increased demand.

The DYS Education Center was by now receiving local, statewide and some national and international attention as being a successful alternative to the regular school setting. Many techniques and programs were integrated to fill individual needs. Both cognitive and motor skills were being taught. The

SOI (Structure of the Intellect) and IPP (Integrated Practice Protocol) programs were the primary methods we used for teaching at this time.

I began to recognize learning differences that kept children from being able to succeed. Public schools, instead of making allowances for such variations, continued to use the same ways of teaching for all children. In classes for those who were failing the same method was used only on a slower and more basic level. This was done on the premise that the fault was with the child, and not with the system. My approach was to adjust the system to the child, not the child to the system.

**THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH:** In the late spring of 1995, a special demonstration project proposal would force me to create a new paradigm. This project would dramatically change my outlook not only on delinquency, but on the entire process of educating a child. Juvenile Judge Ann Aiken, Superintendent Jamen Kent of Springfield School District 19 and DYS Director Steven Carmichael collaborated on what could easily have become my “Waterloo.”

They proposed that 30 Springfield middle school students be referred to the DYS Education Center for a summer vacation project. These were to be a special group of high-risk but pre-delinquent students from Springfield. What I learned from this project was totally unexpected and astounding to me.

Of the 30 students referred from Hamlin and Springfield Middle Schools, only seventeen showed up for an initial assessment. Thirteen of these seventeen were found to have neither the basic motor control nor the vision skills that would have been necessary for them to begin even the most basic academic training program.

Now what should I do? I began to suspect that their underlying problems were not just lack of effort or desire to succeed. Something more dramatic was taking place. These kids were not just faking it, as the assessment techniques we used were unknown to them and therefore hard to anticipate. Since they did not know what I was looking for, they could not give me what they thought I wanted to see.

These were the children of whom the schools had despaired. They had shown the most serious behavior problems in school, in the community and

probably also at home. So far they had not been referred to the Department of Youth Services for delinquent acts but their teachers wanted to protect them from what seemed to be the next step. I began to suspect that they had brain deficits, brain trauma or some other injuries that kept them from being capable of making good choices.

Not only the teachers, but the parents as well, had all searched for solutions. Most of these children, I was told, had, even in elementary school, worked hard but with little success. Why? Perhaps they lacked the appropriate brain pathways. Imagine the heartache and frustration of a child who is told, “Just try harder!” when their classmates could do the work easily. They had already tried hard, failed and finally given up.

- With tears running down his face, a middle school dropout challenged me: “You just don’t understand, I have worked hard in school. I didn’t want to fail – I just finally quit trying!”
- “I am really not like other kids,” he wanted me to know. Why? He dressed the same; he used the same pencil and paper; he attended the same classes – at least until he was put in special class for learning disabled where they tried to teach him the same stuff he could not do.

He was right. I just did not understand. In Court I referred to this kind of teen as “walking to the beat of a different drum.” But none of us then knew the drumbeat. I didn’t know why Johnny could not learn. For years I dutifully shipped many like him off to institutions to be cured. They did not know how to help either and so it was an exercise in futility – a total waste of a human life.

My thirteen summer referrals were like firefighters expected to stop a fire without tools and with only their bare hands while others had bulldozers, helicopters, sky jumpers and water drops to help. The other students could read and comprehend; math came easy for them; they could keep pace at school. My problem children did not have the necessary mental equipment to succeed.

For 28 years I had no clue as to what tools to give such a student. Since I did not know what to look for, I certainly could not supply the correct answers except occasionally by blind luck. Now somehow the old cliché “Just try harder!” no longer seemed to be even relevant. If one of these learning

problem children had been shipped off to an institution, he inevitably learned to become more delinquent there. Unfortunately, as I began to realize more and more, there they also did not have the key to unlock the mind of such a child. What is worse, eight long years after I reached this conclusion, most of the personnel in the juvenile justice systems, either locally or in State programs, still don't have a clue as to how to "fix this different kid."

In an interview in 2000, administrative personnel at the Lane County Department of Youth Services stated that they did not need any neurological program as they had a success rate of 69-70 per cent. This is the accepted norm by national juvenile justice standards. Unfortunately kids do not get graded on a curve: the 30 to 31 percent of the Department's failures were striking out with C- at best.

This does not mean that the techniques that save the 69 to 79 per cent delinquents should be ignored or discarded. We need to use the new insights for those that fall through the cracks. Many of them go on to a life of crime. Each child we lose that way will cost society between 1.7 million to 2.3 million dollars. (Cohen, M.A. *The Monetary Value of Saving a High-Risk Youth*. Journal of Quantitative Criminology v.14, ppe-33) Apart from the personal tragedies of such failures, this is too high a price to pay for even a fraction of the departmental incompetence. I dread to think of the staggering cost we have cost our society over the last quarter of a century, because I consider myself just one of several thousand juvenile counselors in the United States who had been trained to share such a nearsighted viewpoint.

An 1898 Yearbook of a State Training School in New York had already documented that 80 of their inmates did not know how to read. For almost twenty years Judge Thomas McGee has alerted other judges and correction officers that learning problems are rampant in the delinquent population. It is only in the last ten years though, that the neurologists have come up with the research that is behind the neurodevelopmental program that finally gave us a clue as to how to save these children who might otherwise become throw-aways.

In 1995 then, when the schools dumped on me their most obvious failures, I was faced with the fact that in spite of all my idealistic dreams to help these children, I did not have the tools to do so. I was on the spot. I must either admit defeat – which would have been just what these kids needed: one

more whack in the face -- or I could look for non-traditional educators and other professionals in the community who might have insights into “why Johnny can’t learn.”

Svea Gold was a fellow member of the Eugene Public Library’s “Learning Differences Committee.” A few times a year this group tested adults with reading problems to see if they had visual, auditory or neurological problems that might have kept them from learning to read. Depending on the results, those who had come to the testing were then referred to professionals who could help with their specific problem. Svea Gold checked if there were neurodevelopmental aspects involved, and I must admit that at first I thought that her theories on brain organization were crazy. When I was faced with trying to help these impossible children, however, I asked her to have a look at them.

Just watching her do a functional neurological screening was an eye opener. Under normal circumstances a child whose test showed that there was a problem with neurological organization would be assigned to do specific developmentally-oriented exercises at home. The kids on my caseload, however, rarely had parents who had the time or the inclination to work with them. Few had a bedroom of their own where they might have done the work; some even slept in dumpsters. The answer was to work with them at the DYS Education Center.

With Gold as a volunteer and later with interns whom we trained to work with the children, we embarked on a new journey together. The schools and the corrections community finally had to recognize that some children, no matter how much we cared, simply could not succeed. A developmental program that took no more than 30 minutes a day, spent individually with each child, finally let us see progress, from month to month, sometimes even from week to week.

Within a few months other members of the department noticed the changes in our young clients and we were asked to work with more and more teens, both those on probation and direct referrals from schools. Each child was treated as a complete individual, not as a statistic, and we sneaked in as much behavior modification and emotional support as possible. We recruited a psychology intern to advise or help the parents cope with their changing child. Because the developmental exercises often released long repressed

emotions, she was also needed to help the child with that. Perhaps one example will help to demonstrate the difficult situations we faced.

This boy was 11 years old at the time he was referred to DYS Education Center. Already marginally delinquent, he was a chronic runaway. He had been suspended from school several times. A special education student, he was basically educationally illiterate.

During the first interview he could not sit still; he was literally bouncing off the walls. Even his father was unable to control him. Bent over like an old man, he peered cross-eyed over bottle-bottom glasses that, we were told, he had worn since babyhood. It seemed impossible that he was able to focus at all.

The neurological assessment showed that the child was cross-lateral, meaning he used one side for hearing, another for seeing and basically did not know which was his left and which his right side. This has been known as mixed dominance, and the optometric society recently reaffirmed that children with mixed dominance do not read as well as those either totally right or totally left sided.

He had no head-righting reflex, meaning that the head did not adjust itself to counteract the movement of the body. It is a sign that the visual, the vestibular and the proprioceptive systems of the body do not coordinate. If a baseball player runs across the field, his body is in constant movement, but the computer in his brain that coordinates input from these senses keeps the ball steady in his focus. For children such as this one, that does not happen, and they are under constant stress trying to make their world stand still.

All tests of his motor functions showed him to be completely uncoordinated.

To make sure the vision problem was neurological, and not due to the shape of his eyeballs, we had a developmental optometrist check his eyes. She wanted to put +5 lenses on him to straighten his eyes. Fortunately the parents did not order the glasses and he broke his others. Even though he was hard to work with, after only a few weeks his eyes began to look straight. Whenever that happened we told him

how handsome that made him and showed him how delighted we were at that.

Often the only way we could get him to cooperate was to stop pleading with him to do the work and simply turned away and paid no more attention to him. Then, almost immediately, he did his work, and we spent time with him. After six weeks, when school started, his eyes worked together except when we brought an object really close to him. Since he would need glasses to go back to school, we sent him back to the optometrist and this time she wanted to put only +1 lenses on him and those to be worn only for reading. His delinquencies became less and less and running away became less frequent. At age 15, when we last heard about him he was, however, still having occasional brushes with the law.

It is wrong to presume that the neurodevelopmental program makes other intervention unnecessary. Now that this boy was able to function without glasses and that he no longer walked like a little monkey, he no longer looked weird so that others stopped making fun of him. That was not enough, however. When the words on a page now stand still for a child, but he has not seen for the rest of his life, he still has to be taught to read – from the start. If his eyes did not function as a team before, he still has to be taught the math concepts that he missed! Now that he looked normal, the school did not give him this help.

This particular boy had also lost his mother at age four – she was the only one who had made allowances for his visual handicap. When monkey babies are separated from their mother they first cry piteously. Then they become stony. After that they acquire a strange smile that is both ingratiating and aggressive at the same time. This boy had this same smile that said, “I know I’m driving you nuts, but I am only kidding, so you can’t hurt me!” Whenever we managed to stop that infuriating grin, he was not only charming, but touchingly affectionate. The authorities, however, did not understand his defense mechanism. His family – grandmother, grandfather and a rarely available father-- were not sophisticated enough to help him cope with his academic problems or the loss of his mother.

He broke our hearts when he once said quite matter-of-factly: “The only way I ever get anything I want is with my fists!” And this was a very slight and not at all strong little boy! In spite of his visual and neurological problems,

he was very street smart and chances are that somehow he knew that Juvenile Hall was the only place where he got at least some help.

### **A NEW PARADIGM – THE NEURODEVELOPMENTAL**

**APPROACH:** The changes we saw with the neurodevelopmental program were not only academic but emotional as well. This led me to advocate for a basic change in the current philosophies in school and in the correctional settings. It is less expensive in the long run to prevent delinquency by providing early intervention than to wait and to pay for more costly and intensive corrections later on.

My way of looking at children, education, delinquency and the function of probation made a dramatic impact on the lives not only on my charges but on my own life as well. Little did I know then that when I retired too soon after these new insights, I would commit the rest of my life to make others realize that “children need not spend their whole lives in defeat” but that a shift to a new paradigm can make positive changes in their world.

Unfortunately not all children get equal chances. Even when the neurodevelopmental program was used at the DYS Education Center most clients, for various reasons, had to stop the program before the full impact could be felt. It is not surprising then that not all became flaming successes. It is most remarkable, however, that so many came so far with so little help in so brief a period of time. Knowing that our time with each individual was extremely tenuous, we attempted to get as much done in a brief period as we could.

In the second part of her book: *If Kids Just Came With Instruction Sheets!* Svea Gold tells of our experiences. She calls the Introduction to that section: *No Miracles*. This second section details not only the tests and the therapy we used, but tells of the trials and the heartaches of these children who have a daily struggle just to survive in a world they do not fully understand.

One fifteen-year-old I introduced to her was so depressed that she described him as “walking like a beaten mule.” He was so withdrawn and unresponsive that I was concerned that he might be suicidal until Svea Gold assured me that he was actually too defeated to even plan such a step. That fear might become more real as he progressed to the point where he realized

that he might have had more potential and still be defeated by circumstances over which he had little control. Little did I realize then that would actually happen.

Just when this young man was beginning to succeed - he was actually smiling and beginning to crack jokes - circumstances beyond my control, beyond Svea Gold's or even the boy's - drastically altered his life again. The Department of Youth Services had just received a grant to develop a "Serious Offender Program." All clients who fitted the required profile were to be transferred immediately to a specially chosen probation worker. Thus, over my strenuous objection, this young man was assigned to this new unit. His new probation officer there would not allow him to continue in our program because he felt the boy needed to complete some "community service" more than first he needed to develop basic survival skills.

This boy had received from us just enough skills to frustrate him if he was not allowed to continue what he had experienced as amazing changes. If thwarted or threatened, he now had just become a real candidate for serious juvenile or adult criminal action or even suicide. Sometimes the wheels of justice, even in the juvenile system, not only turn slowly, but also sometime even turn backwards. I do not know the last chapter of this young man's life, but I fear for the worst for him.

**THE SCHOOL AS A PARTNER IN THE NEURODEVELOPMENTAL REVOLUTION:** The schools today are facing the struggle of teaching an increasing number of children who:

- can't pay attention
- are physically and/or mentally restless
- are unable to learn or to make friends
- demonstrate symptoms of depression, aggression or detachment

Even in a class of five year olds, it is easy to spot a child who is likely to eventually drop out of school, turn to substance abuse and possibly end up being an abusive and negligent parent. The issue has been for the teacher, not just to identify such an at-risk child, but to find out what could be done to help such a troubled child.

School administrators now often respond by providing intensive training for staff and by giving the child individualized instruction. Some schools now

utilize a variety of instructional methods and try to enforce clear behavior guidelines and consequences for breaking rules. Still, for the most part, schools make little progress because the cause of the child's problem is not known and so it can't be addressed.

Our DYS/School District 19 demonstration project opened the doors to a new era of inter-agency preventive cooperation. Within a few months of the inception of the project, school administrators took advantage of the project and instead of suspending them, referred maladjusted students to us. They began to see results that they had not been able to achieve in the regular school setting. To my delight, the center was soon viewed as a cooperative partner as opposed to being considered a competitor. Both agencies had the common goal of seeing that the child acquired the necessary motor and academic skills to allow him to succeed in the public school setting.

Since retiring in 1998, I have been active as a board member of "The Brain Center" in promoting a cooperative partnership between the community, the juvenile departments and the public schools.

In winter and spring of 2002, "The Brain Center" provided \$10,000.00 to Springfield District 19 for a demonstration project at Page Elementary School. This project paid for the services of a former Springfield teacher who also had intense specialized neurodevelopmental training. She worked with the students in class and then taught the teachers how to use simple neurodevelopmental exercises as part of their regular classroom activities. These simple movements also allowed teachers to spot children with more severe problems so that they could receive individual and more intense therapy. The project was too brief to have much documented proof of the results, but teachers, parents and students were excited about how much these methods helped them in school and even at home.

Kim Sullivan, a staff writer for the Springfield News, wrote up the experiment in an article "Brain Power" (The Springfield News, February 2, 2002, pp. 1, 3.) In the article she cited several students' comments. One ten-year-old volunteered that he did not know why, but math was now easier "and even shooting hoops at home was better!" Ms. Sullivan wrote further:

This child's testimonial is common at Page where students are boosting their brainpower through a type of cranial calisthenics -- exercises for the brain. The pilot program, Brain Train Express, is

based on educational kinesiology, using natural movement to promote learning.

In essence, integrated movements promote efficient communication among the nerve cells and functional centers throughout the body, stimulating a flow of information that frees up the natural ability to learn and function at top efficiency.

One Page Elementary School teacher whom I interviewed told me that her only regret with the program was that she learned of these helpful techniques only during this, her last year of teaching. This is why I - along with others with similar knowledge and commitment - am trying to tell professionals and parents about the direct link between the brain and behavior.

Neurological research is coming up daily with proof that the brain is plastic and new connections can be made – even in older adults. Similar school based programs are beginning to prove successful in Europe and Australia and New Zealand. Statistics have emerged that have proven such programs to work at the New Vision School in Minnesota and a \$700,000 government grant allowed their “SMART” program to be disseminated to teachers in many schools in the Midwest.

What is exciting is that the children love the physical part of the program, as if they realized that it also affects how they feel, how they behave and how they learn.

**THE ROLE OF THE BRAIN CENTER:** The Brain Center of Eugene is just one of the growing number of similarly oriented programs in the United States. It is a non-profit organization made up of professionals and lay members. They are concerned for our children who are today more learning disabled, more violent and are being given more Ritalin and other drugs than ever before.

There is an overwhelming amount of research that demonstrates the role of developmental problems and brain injuries as a cause of high-risk or violent behavior. The “New Visions School” in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is one of the foremost leaders in using neurodevelopmental concepts in education. They have provided statistics from the past 15 years to document their

success The statistical design was supervised and evaluated by Winona State University.

The difference between a behavior modification approach and neurological therapy, is that the behaviorist looks only at what comes out of a child, while the neurologically oriented educators look to see what is not going in, what is not connecting for the child. Poor brain organization is the direct link to an individual's inability to function. We tend to think that the brain controls everything we do, but the structure of the brain depends on the information received from the body. (Even the ancient Romans were aware of that: *Mens Sana in Corpore Sanum* – a healthy mind in a healthy body.) Sensory motor programs have been advocated for over 50 years, but only in the last twenty years or so have neurologists admitted that the brain is plastic. Nerve growth factors have been studied since the early 1920s, but only recently have we learned that specific chemicals guide axons as to where in the brain they need to go. Specific movements following normal human development will therefore help establish proper organization in the brain.

The Brain Center – and centers such as the Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology, in Chester, England, or ANSU which is now known as The Learning Connection, in Paddington, Australia - are going into the schools to show teachers how to use these techniques in the classroom. While the vocabulary they use to spread this information may differ, they are all essentially doing the same thing: they are showing ways to eliminate problem conditions in our children before it is too late and they are at risk of becoming school drop-outs or delinquents.

The Brain Center's mission is also to spread general awareness of what can be done to keep children from becoming our throw-aways. This stops not just at the neurological approach, but encompasses awareness of genetic influences and how to counteract them. They look at structural problems of the child's skeleton and teach parent to think of nutrition as a contributory factor in the child's behavior. (At DYS we found that about 80 per cent of our teens had zinc deficiency.) All this does not mean that they discount emotional needs.

The experiences we had at the DYS Education Center are part of what motivated the origin of the Brain Center. At the time, when they came to observe us, it may have been shocking to see a six foot tall teenager down on the floor moving like a marine under fire or crawling like an infant. He was

not doing it because he was forced to, but because he saw the difference this and other exercises made in his life.

It was not unusual to hear:

- “I didn’t think it would work, but I can learn now. I could not learn before.”
- “I’m doing better in school.”
- “I have better balance. I can tell on my bike. . . . . And I can look at you now!”

So now even after I retired, The Brain Center takes up much of my time and energy.

**PROLOGUE OR EPILOGUE?** Corrections administrators and educators in the United States are at a critical cross road. If our children are to succeed and with none left behind, we must accept a new paradigm – a new standard of excellence -- in the way we treat them. A partnership must be formed: correction officers and educators must agree to develop a joint strategy.

Parents, teachers and correction workers must start to view troubled children and youth from a different perspective. If some children are not able to learn, they must realize that the fault may not lie with the parents, with the schools or with society. There may be neurological realities that don’t allow these children to live up to their capabilities. All children are not created equal!

There are easily recognizable clues to neurologically based disorders, no matter what their cause. Common indicators include academic and/or behavior problems, the inability to interact easily with normal peer groups or with family members and unwillingness to accept the demands of the larger community. Neurologists have established that early victimization or abuse will cause actual changes in the limbic part of the brain. Changes there may cause uncontrollable and even irrational anger outbursts (limbic rages) or create seemingly self-imposed withdrawal or isolationism. Exaggerated sexual appetites may be the aftermath of a brain injury. Any and all of these conditions should be a cause to have a functional neurological evaluation.

Early developmental failures including toxicity in utero, premature birth, high fevers or illness can cause damage. Improper diet, vaccinations or

injury to the head, physical or mental abuse – all may interrupt normal brain development. We do not teach our parents that too much use of swings, playpens or walkers will not allow the children enough time on the floor to learn to creep and crawl. In doing these movements the child learns the space perception and the hand-eye coordination skills that are later needed for reading and writing. Indeed, failure to creep or crawl in the normal fashion is usually the first sign that something is wrong and the child must be given help to undo the damage that might have been done in utero or at birth. Doctors and nurses are beginning to spot problems early but should also be up-to-date on neurological research to reverse the symptoms they see.

In this age child abuse and neglect is all too common. This may have been true throughout the ages, but now we have the knowledge to recognize the effects and the research background to undo the damage. We also see the effects when mothers have abused alcohol and other drugs while pregnant. The damage done to the fetus has become known as fetal alcohol syndrome. It was considered irreparable, but this too has been shown to yield to neurodevelopmental therapy.

In Denmark a study looking at the social background of delinquents has found that poverty alone does not cause delinquent behavior. If a child has developmental problems, a combination of poverty and an unstable family situation seems to be the factor that tips the scales as to whether the child is at risk of getting in trouble with the law. Especially it is the lack of stability in the family that does not allow the child to overcome physical problems. Good parenting and good early health development may compensate for neurological difficulties. Early intervention to help both the child and the family are the first step in preventing delinquency.

Awareness of our ability to improve the brain does not mean that the educators need to discard all the other knowledge they have acquired over the years. This new tool simply allows us to reach those we have not been able to reach before. Indeed, once their world has begun to make sense for them, they will need every skill of the teacher or psychologist and every social skill taught by correction officers to make up for the time when they were unable to learn what came easily for others. We can no more predict the future for them than for other children, but now finally they have a chance!

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## FURTHER SUGGESTED READING

Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma – any volume  
 Research on the effects of these, as they relate to social adjustment and criminal behavior.

**fernridgepress.com** has articles for downloading on screening for functional neurological development, developmental exercises and the rationale for the techniques used in each..

A copy of the collected neurological profiles of 25 (anonymous) teens when they were first evaluated at DYS may be obtained upon request from [fernridgepress.com](http://fernridgepress.com).

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Childhood. Alen Bell was born in Fallon, Nevada, where he lived on a dairy farm and attended school until Christmas of his freshman high school year. In 1954 the family moved to the State of Washington where he again lived on a dairy farm. He attended Bethel High School in Graham, Washington. In 1955 he was awarded a prize purebred heifer calf by the Parkland Kiwanis Club. He graduated from Bethel in 1958.

College education. He attended Bible Standard College in Eugene, Oregon, from 1960 to 1963. He then transferred to the University of Oregon in Eugene. In 1966 Alen graduated from the University of Oregon and obtained a Bachelor's Degree and an Oregon Secondary Teaching Certificate. In 1968 he received a Masters Degree from the University of Oregon.

Occupation. In August of 1968, he went to work for the Klamath County Juvenile Department where he remained until April of 1971. In May of 1971, he went to work at the Lane County Juvenile Department, later changed to be called the Lane County Department of Youth Services, where he remained until he retired on January 1, 1998.

From 1972 to 1985 he worked primarily in the rural areas acting as intake screener, court worker and probation officer. During the later part of the 1980s while working with Springfield youth, he began to recognize that something must be done to help teens who simply could not succeed in school. He helped them develop their basic learning skills. He then, in 1991, started the Department of Youth Services Education Center, which he coordinated and enlarged until May of 1997.

During this period of time he found that many of the youth he served could not benefit significantly from any cognitive based learning approach. Further basic but cognitive oriented programs merely exacerbated their frustration and sense of failure.

He began to learn from neuro-developmental practitioners in the Northwest about the use of neuro-developmental work in the pre-cognitive part of the child's brain. These principles he began to

use with his own clients.

In 1997 he received the Eugene Education Association "Golden Apple" Community Volunteer award for his work with delinquent youth and their educational problems.

Community activities. From 1971 to 1974, he was a member of the Florence Rotary Club. From 1972 to 1976, he was on the Board at the Goshen Assembly of God Church. In 2001-2003 he was a member of the Springfield Twin Rivers Rotary Club.

Since his retirement he continues to be active. He still raises and shows Appaloosa horses. During 1999 to June of 2000, he was a member of the Lane County Sheriff Department Citizen Advisory Committee.

He is currently on the Board of Directors of The Brain Center He is also an Oregon community and service club presenter, helping to educate the public about the connection between the brain and behavior.

#### ABOUT THE CONSULTANT;

In 1984 Svea Gold procured a grant from what was then the Department of Health Education and Welfare to produce seven video tapes to provide information to parents that would keep them from abusing their children. This was done under the auspices of the Eugene Public Library and the tapes made available to libraries all over the United States. This involved the using the knowledge of child specialists in different disciplines.

Svea Gold won the Delta Kappa Gamma Educator's Award in 1986 for her book *When Children Invite Child Abuse*. In 1987 she won the ALSK award from the Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology in Chester, England.

In 1996 she was awarded the "Golden Apple" from the Eugene Education Association for her volunteer work at DYS Education Center in a hands-on neurodevelopmental program.

1998 she won a further award from the Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology for "Extra-Ordinary Achievement."

In 2000 she produced a video *Autism and behavior problems on the vast spectrum of autism, such as elective mutism, oppositional behavior, tantrums and ADD/ADDH: Neurological Research and Neurodevelopmental Therapy*. It is being distributed literally all over the world.