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PRESS RELEASE

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SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES ALTERNATIVE DETENTION PROGRAM

Every day in Santa Barbara County over 100 youth are confined in one of two Juvenile Halls, staying an average of 15 days at a time. Probation Staff were convinced that an alternative to confinement could reduce Juvenile Hall population and help at risk youth. Consequently they developed a lower level intervention and implemented the Alternative Detention Program (ADP). This community based alternative to detention was piloted in Santa Barbara in January 28, 2008, and implemented in the Santa Maria Valley on April 8, 2008.

ADP addresses basic needs common among youth in the criminal justice system: a lack of academic achievement, low self-esteem, poor decision-making skills and a lack of supervision and opportunities for positive, leisure activities.

ADP along with the school and the family provides 24 hour supervision. Most youth having completed ADP give the program high ratings. One youth commented, "I think it's a great alternative and gives great opportunities" and another had the profound awareness that "simple things can be fun." Most participants have learned that to be successful and not be one of the 100 youth in Juvenile Hall, they must attend school, attend ADP and remain at home in the evening.

ADP is currently open five days a week, Tuesday to Saturday. ADP addresses the basics - tutoring and homework assistance, career choices and life skills, and exciting guest speakers. On Saturday the youth area involved in graffiti removal, gardening and grounds maintenance and other community projects. The average length of stay in the program is two weeks.

Why **ADP**? It is a smart alternative to incarceration as it provides a cost effective structured learning environment for up to 30 youth countywide. The community benefits from ADP because these youth are learning meaningful skills and giving back to the community. Taxpayers benefit from the reduced costs of ADP and an ultimate reduction in the number of juvenile hall days.

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