

# Carol Cramer Brooks

## Director of Training and Confinement Education National Juvenile Detention Association 1996 - 2005



Carol Cramer Brooks' career in juvenile justice has spanned thirty plus years across the continuum of juvenile justice services. Currently, Ms. Cramer Brooks is an independent juvenile justice consultant with the Juvenile Justice Associates, LLC and the National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS). Her primary focus areas include providing training and technical assistance for staff and agencies in leadership, trainer and program development (confinement education, behavior management, and cognitive behavior training) as well as writing training curriculum for staff.

Ms. Cramer Brooks is the former Director of the OJJDP's National Center for Youth in Custody (NCYC), a training and technical assistance center created to assist staff in juvenile detention, corrections and adult facilities serving youth and the past Chief Executive Officer of the NPJS.

Ms. Cramer Brooks has experience in detention (county operated, pre-adjudicated status) and corrections (state operated, post-adjudicated treatment) facilities, government grants, and detention education. She is the former Director of Program Development and Support Services for the State of Michigan's Department of Human Services, Bureau of Juvenile Justice (BJJ). In this capacity she was responsible for the education, quality assurance, policy and resident assignment units for the BJJ. Prior to her position in state government, Ms. Cramer Brooks served as the principal of the Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home Schools in Kalamazoo Michigan, where she also was a special education teacher for sixteen years.

Ms. Cramer Brooks served as the Director of Training and Confinement Education for the National Juvenile Detention Association's Center for Research and Professional Development at Michigan State University (CRPD). At CRPD, Ms. Cramer Brooks co-authored the "National Training Curriculum for Educators of Youth in Confinement" and the Detention Careworker Training Curriculum, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

Ms. Cramer Brooks' first introduction to NJDA was at the fall conference in Cleveland in 1996. Dave Roush had visited her classroom at the Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home School and had invited her to conduct a training in Conflict Resolution Skills for Detention Staff at the conference. This was the beginning of a relationship that eventually led to Ms. Cramer Brooks working full time for the NJDA Center for Research and Professional Development at Michigan State University as the Director of Training and Confinement Education.

When Earl Dunlap stepped down as the Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Cramer Brooks agreed to take on the position. Internally, her goal was to lead the organization through this transition period. Physically, the organization had left

Eastern Kentucky University and that successful departure needed to be facilitated. Additionally, the NPJS Board was going through a turnover and the purpose and function of membership organizations was being questioned by the membership. Ms. Cramer Brooks stated that the goal was to continue to keep NPJS relevant by reinventing itself, redefining the function of the board and the purpose of the organization for the new workforce. During this time, NPJS identified new strategies for the annual Symposium, partnering with the state agency, conducted smaller regional trainings, and increased its social media footprint. All of these efforts increased knowledge of and loyalty to the organization.

Unfortunately, externally it was a time of much political infighting, specifically between the agencies and organizations vying for the same pots of money and support from OJJDP and setting the juvenile justice agenda. NPJS was dealing with loss of funding from OJJDP and the decision of the OJJDP administration to divert funds from the National Center for Youth in Custody to a different funding mechanism source that excluded NPJS and facility training. This loss was a huge hit to NPJS that still has the organization in recovery mode. Meanwhile the impact to the field is greater, facilities are dealing with outdated training resources. The last time there were any updates to training material for line staff in facilities – either detention or corrections – was in 2003 when OJJDP funded the CRPD to develop the NPJS Detention Careworker Curriculum 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition and 2004 Corrections Careworker Curriculum. The material in these training curricula is now very outdated, but is still being used because it is all that is available to the field.

Going forward, NPJS needs to continue to explore sustainable funding sources for the organization either through earmarks or through private funding. Second to that, NPJS, staying true to its mission, needs to identify and develop plans to create and disseminate current and relevant training material to facilities to use for their staff training programs.