



For immediate release:
December 10, 2007

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Ferris School for Boys Earns Fourth Consecutive Re-Accreditation

WILMINGTON—The Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families recently received notice that its Ferris School for Boys has earned a three-year accreditation from the American Correctional Association (ACA), a nationally recognized organization that sets standards criteria for adult and juvenile correctional facilities.

Auditors expressed high praise during the exit interview in November, stating that Ferris is an “exceptional facility” and that the educational aspect “should be a national model” and receive the visibility the staff rightfully deserve.

Since re-opening in 1997, the new Ferris School has been lauded as a national model and state-of-the-art juvenile secure care facility. It houses up to 80 adjudicated delinquent males who are committed by Family or Superior Court and is designed to provide improved programs and services to create a comprehensive learning and rehabilitation environment for youth.

“Success at Ferris is a result of our daily hard work, vigilance and commitment to the youth in our care,” said Annette Miller, Superintendent of Ferris School. “This audit represents the quality and high standards we continually strive to achieve as a national model.”

The ACA reviewed several “quality of life” factors at Ferris School including security, environmental conditions, academic and vocational education, social services, fire safety, medical care, food service and conditions of confinement, among others. The accreditation program is a professional peer review process based on national standards that have evolved since the founding of the ACA in 1870. The standards were developed by national leaders from the field of corrections, law, architecture, healthcare and other groups interested in sound correctional management.

“Receiving this three-year accreditation for Ferris School is a testament to the dedication of the staff in this Department to help our teens turn their lives around,” said Cari DeSantis, Secretary of the Delaware Children’s Department. “As we continue to push for improvements in the juvenile justice system here in Delaware, it’s important to be reminded of the pockets of excellence we currently have in place and to use those as inspiration for what is possible for the future.”

The Department’s two detention centers - New Castle County Detention Center and Marion P. Stevenson House Detention Center have also recently been re-accredited by the ACA.

On any given day, the Delaware Children’s Department provides services to nearly 9,000 children, who have been abused, neglected, abandoned, have mental health or substance abuse problems or have been adjudicated delinquent by the Courts. Over 22,000 children in crisis receive services each year through the Children’s Department. Thousands more Delaware children benefit from the Department’s home, community or school-based prevention and early intervention programs and child care licensing. For more information, please visit www.kids.delaware.gov or www.thinkofthechildfirst.com.

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