



Texas Community Service Association

# Sentenced to Serve

TCSA's eNewsletter

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Harrison County CSCD  
Newsletter Editor

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TCSA is a  
501(c)(6)  
non-profit  
corporation  
dedicated to the  
effective  
development and  
administration  
of community  
service restitution  
programs.

## Conference News

The 2012 Annual Conference, "Community Service Restitution - A Range of Challenges & Opportunities," was held on October 28-31, 2012 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. This was the association's 17<sup>th</sup> annual conference.



The conference got off to a great start when TCSA members were welcomed to San Antonio by Mayor Julian Castro (see photo insert). The mayor was followed by an excellent array of speakers including an inspirational Peace Education Panel that served as the conference finale.

Planning is now underway for the 2013 conference to be held in Ft. Worth. It is scheduled for October 27-30, 2013 at the Radisson Fort Worth Fossil Creek Hotel. Conference registration fee will again be \$125 (includes annual membership dues). Hotel room rates will be \$98 (\$112.70 with taxes). Lydia Villamil, Tarrant JPD Probation Officer, is the conference chair.

For more information on the upcoming conference, please check out our website [www.texascommunityservice.com](http://www.texascommunityservice.com).

## 2013 Board of Directors

- President - Pete Gonzales, Bexar County Juvenile Probation
- Vice-President - Cleo Pace, Smith County CSCD
- Treasurer - Edward Delgado, Caldwell County CSCD
- Secretary - Lydia Villamil, Tarrant County Juvenile Probation
- Historian - Lisa Whittington, Liberty-Chambers Counties CSCD
- Technology Officer - Lonnie Rogers, 33<sup>rd</sup> & 424<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CSCD
- Newsletter Editor – Cruz J. Vances, Harrison County CSCD
- Member – Benita Bennett, Angelina County Juvenile Probation
- Member – Brenda Garcia, Victoria County Juvenile Probation
- Member – Jimmy Don Nicholson, Lamar County CSCD
- Member – Sonia Parish, Comal County CSCD

## Outgoing Board Members



**A**t the San Antonio conference, board members, Brenda Culpepper and Domingo Sanchez, stepped down from the board of directors. They were valued members of the board whose presence is sorely missed.

### Brenda Culpepper

Brenda is always upbeat and friendly. Everready to help out where needed. She served on the board from 2009 to 2012. She held the presidency from October 2010 to November 2011. In 2009, she hosted the TCSA conference in Tyler. She is a longtime employee, 33 years, with the Smith County CSCD where she is a Supervisor.

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*“It was a great time for me on the TCSA board. Through our conferences, we brought great training to community service professionals.” – Brenda Culpepper*

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### Domingo Sanchez

Domingo is very outgoing, sporting his ever-present cowboy hat. He is an original member of TCSA having joined in 1995. He had two stints on the board, 2002 to 2006 and 2009 to 2012. He held the presidency from 2002 to 2005. He hosted three conferences in Fredericksburg - 2000, 2005 & 2010.

At present, he is the Community Service Director for Gillespie County. He has 21 years’ experience in juvenile and adult probation combined, plus 17 prior years as a detention officer with the Gillespie County Sheriff’s Department.

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*“I am most proud of helping keep the association above water financially. The Fredericksburg conferences were very successful and helped with the association’s finances.” – Domingo Sanchez*

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Any information you would like for us to include in the next newsletter?

Please contact the newsletter editor, Cruz J. Vances @  
(903) 923-4016 X1251 or [cruzv@co.harrison.tx.us](mailto:cruzv@co.harrison.tx.us)

# Texas Community Service Association

## Incoming Board Members

Welcome the newest additions to the TCSA Board - Brenda Garcia and Benita Bennett. We are very excited that both were voted on the board in San Antonio.

### Brenda Garcia

Brenda is the Courtroom Services Coordinator and Community Service Restitution Coordinator for Victoria County Juvenile Probation. She also supervises special cases as a juvenile probation officer. And she represents her department at Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG) meetings.

Brenda holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Houston-Victoria and is pursuing her Master's degree in Business Administration.

She has over two years of experience working with juveniles and over six years with families. This includes prior employment with the Department of Family and Protective Services and the County/District Clerk's Office for Goliad County. She also volunteers her time with local non-profit organizations.



### Benita Bennett



Benita is employed by Angelina County Juvenile Services as a Probation Officer, Community Services Coordinator, and Teen Court Coordinator. She also teaches At-Risk classes and serves as an administrator at Lufkin ISD. Community involvement includes Northside Leadership, Concerned Black Men of Lufkin Inc., and the Chamber of Lufkin.

She is married to Clarence Bennett and together they have three children: Clarence Jr., Malcolm, Valencia and one grandchild, Elijah.

She attended Tyler Jr. College, Stephen F. Austin University, and University of Phoenix.

**Join the Texas Community Service Association**

**Annual Fee is \$25**

**Contact Pete Gonzales, TCSA President, @  
210.335.1840 or [pgonzales@bexar.org](mailto:pgonzales@bexar.org)**

## TCSA Membership

While TCSA's membership is primarily comprised of community service professionals employed by a Juvenile Probation Department or Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD), it is also open to any individual involved in community service programming. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals employed by parole services, advocacy groups, and educational entities.

TCSA members represent the following counties and entities:

### JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENTS

Angelina  
Bell  
Bexar  
Caldwell  
Cameron  
Chambers  
Cherokee  
Cochran  
El Paso  
Falls  
Gregg  
Harrison  
Hays  
Henderson  
Houston  
Howard  
Hunt  
Washington  
Medina  
Midland  
Rockwall  
San Patricio  
Tarrant  
Titus  
Tom Green  
Travis  
Upshur  
Victoria  
Wharton

### OTHER ENTITIES

Bexar County Detention Ministries  
Bexar County Justice of the Peace Court, Pct. 4  
Burnet ISF  
Comal Municipal Court  
Coryell Sheriff's Office  
Dallas TJJD - Parole Services  
Goodwill Industries of San Antonio  
San Antonio Municipal Court  
San Antonio TJJD - Parole Services  
Triple H Equitherapy  
University Health System - San Antonio  
Webb County Youth Village

### CSCDs

Bexar  
Caldwell  
Cameron  
Chambers  
Cherokee  
Comal  
Deaf Smith  
Galveston  
Gillespie  
Ellis  
Harrison  
Hays  
Hidalgo  
Hutchinson  
Lamar  
Limestone  
Milam  
Moore  
Palo Pinto  
Pecos  
Smith  
Tarrant  
Webb

## Report on Graffiti Prevention by TCJC

*.. The following article is reprinted with permission of the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC). It is provided in this newsletter by TCSA for informational purposes only ..*

### PROPERTY OWNERS DESERVE REAL SOLUTIONS FOR STOPPING GRAFFITI

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AUSTIN – Past legislative efforts to prevent graffiti through a strictly punitive approach have been shown to be ineffective, leaving property owners without relief. Such an approach also burdens county and state taxpayers with the costs of prosecution and incarceration, while saddling Texans who engage in graffiti with the lifelong consequences of a conviction.

A [new report issued by the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition](#) (TCJC) offers a fresh look at this problem and spotlights alternatives that, in the long run, will save money for Texas taxpayers and better eradicate the eyesore of graffiti. “Texans deserve real solutions when it comes to addressing vandalism,” said State Representative Joe Moody. **“Victims want their property restored and throwing somebody behind bars doesn't do that. That's an irresponsible use of tax dollars. What we ought to be doing is putting offenders to work in the community to repair the damage they've done. And we should have the option to give some offenders, especially young ones who might learn a lesson from that kind of hard work, a second chance.”**

The cost to some Texas cities to clean up graffiti is over a million dollars a year. State costs are also significant. **From 2009 to 2011, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice spent nearly a half million dollars to incarcerate adults sentenced for graffiti.** This does not count the untold consequences borne by the youth and adults with felony convictions who now face employment and housing barriers, and will be unable to contribute financially to their families or their communities.

#### ***A Smarter Approach: Diversion, Graffiti Removal, and Other Strategies***

TCJC’s report suggests rapid-response approaches to reducing graffiti, community-based programming, and the use of products that deter graffiti.

In addition, the group urges policy-makers to support [H.B. 3494 by Representative Joe Moody](#), which would implement a permissive pretrial diversion program with graffiti cleanup mandates, and better address low-level graffiti offenses.

- ***H.B. 3494 will allow a pretrial diversion program, requiring community service and victim restitution, for long-term reductions in recidivism and its associated costs.*** Participation in a deferred prosecution program, as based on the consent of the district attorney, will require community service, including graffiti removal where possible, and may involve participation in outreach education focused on graffiti prevention and eradication, youth mentoring in art programs, mural painting, or other available community service opportunities. Furthermore, successful completion of the program may result in dismissal of the charges. This will give a fair chance to individuals who have taken responsibility for their actions, helping them avoid the reentry barriers typically associated with a criminal record.
- ***H.B. 3494 creates a new, minor offense level (a Class C misdemeanor) for graffiti that causes up to \$200 worth of damage.*** Currently, all graffiti up to \$500 worth of damage is a Class B misdemeanor, which brings with it potential county jail time.
- ***H.B. 3494 adjusts value amounts for certain graffiti offenses.*** Current offense thresholds for graffiti offenses were set in 1993 and do not reflect two decades of inflation. Consequently, the penalty grades for graffiti do not appropriately correspond to the value of the property that has been damaged. So what amounted to a Class C misdemeanor 20 years ago may constitute a Class B misdemeanor today – a de facto “criminal inflation.” Amending the threshold offense amounts for graffiti will save taxpayer dollars otherwise needlessly spent on incarceration costs for increasingly low-level offenses.

“H.B. 3494 will ease the financial burden on property owners, seek to involve community members in cleanup and beautification, and result in positive behavioral change in graffiti artists, instead of merely seeking harsher penalties that criminalize and punish,” said Dr. Ana Yáñez-Correa, TCJC’s Executive Director.

For more information on TCJC’s report, ***Effective Approaches for Reducing Graffiti in Texas: Strategies to Save Money and Beautify Communities***, please visit [www.texascjc.org/effective-approaches-reducing-graffiti-texas](http://www.texascjc.org/effective-approaches-reducing-graffiti-texas).

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*The Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC) works with peers, policy-makers, practitioners, and community members to identify and promote smart justice policies that safely reduce the state’s costly over-reliance on incarceration – creating stronger families, less taxpayer waste, and safer communities.*

# Texas Community Service Association

## TCSA Mini-Grant

**G**lobal Youth Service Day (GYSD) is an annual campaign that celebrates and mobilizes the millions of children and youth who improve their communities each day of the year through service and service-learning. This year the event will be officially celebrated on April 26-28 with community service projects conducted throughout the month of April.

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJJ) serves as Lead Agency in Texas. This year TCSA partnered with TJJJ by making available \$500 in mini-grant funds. Grant funds are intended to help defray costs associated with implementation of a GYSD project. Eligible applicants are probation departments and TJJJ parole offices who have employees as current members of TCSA.

Congratulations to this year's TCSA mini-grant recipients: Bell County JPD, Bexar County JPD and El Paso County Juvenile Services.

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# 2013 CONFERENCE

Conference is set for October 27-30, 2013 in Ft. Worth. Host hotel is the Radisson Fort Worth Fossil Creek Hotel. To make hotel reservations call 817.625.9911. Make sure to mention "TCSA" to get the \$98 hotel room rate (\$112.70 with taxes). Conference registration is \$125.

Look us up on the Web for more information including the conference registration form.

[www.texascommunityservice.com](http://www.texascommunityservice.com)