

EDITOR'S NOTE

I am happy to introduce the first issue of the fifteenth volume of the *UC Davis Journal of Juvenile Law & Policy*. To construct this issue, we considered the idea of “community”. How do we define a community, and who are the members? Who might we exclude from our communities, and by what means do we do so? How do different communities within our society interact with each other? We selected three scholarly articles that explore our ideas of community and how it relates to youth and juvenile justice.

First, communities voluntarily organized around ideas can be a means of progressive social change. Our first scholarly article is written by Thalia González, an Assistant Professor of Politics at Occidental College in Los Angeles, California. In her article, *Restoring Justice: Community Organizing to Transform School Discipline Policies*, Professor González investigates grassroots community organizations that have recently acted against zero-tolerance school policies instituted by school districts. She argues that these grassroots efforts, spearheaded by parents, students and community leaders, are an effective means to address persistent breakdowns and inequities in the public education system. These community efforts, she argues, are especially effective in exposing and fighting the tendency of zero-tolerance school policies to funnel at-risk student populations into the punitive juvenile justice system.

Another way to envision community is the social customs and norms observed by a group of people. A key facet to define this sort of community is language: the means through which members achieve understanding between one another. Our second scholarly article, entitled *Breakdown in the Language Zone: The Prevalence of Language Impairments among Juvenile and Adult Offenders and Why It Matters*, was jointly penned by Professor Michele LaVigne, a Clinical Professor of Law at the University of Wisconsin Law School and Dr. Gregory Van Rybroek, Director of the Mendota Mental Health Institute/Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center in Madison,

Wisconsin. The authors explore the critical ways that language skills effect youth prison populations. They argue that due to language deficits and impairments, a substantial number of juveniles are unable to communicate effectively within their communities, leading to high rates of incarceration and inability to program once inside prison populations. This article is of much interest, as the topic is well known but seldom mentioned among practitioners.

Finally, communities sometimes take active stances in defining their membership, excluding certain persons. Ms. Yliana Johansen, a Boston College law student, wrote our third scholarly article entitled *The Media, Politics and Policy: Taking Another Look at the Development of San Francisco's Policies on Immigrant Juvenile Offenders*. Ms. Johansen explores how the interaction of politics and the media changed San Francisco's safe-haven city status to a policy of actively reporting juvenile immigrant offenders to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a division of the Department of Homeland Security.

This issue aims to open a dialogue regarding our communities through a juvenile justice framework. The *UC Davis Journal of Juvenile Law & Policy* continues to serve as a venue in which legal scholars, practitioners, and children's rights advocates can engage in a discourse about legal reform with children's interests at the forefront.

My heartfelt thanks goes out to the 2010-2011 *UC Davis Journal of Juvenile Law & Policy* staff for their tremendous dedication and hard work. Keep the faith.

Warm regards,

Kim N. Wade
Editor-in-Chief