## uvenile probation offers programs, counseling

By REBECCA DIMEO Reporter

wenile probation offers re than an occasional talk a probation officer. It inles a host of programs for oung people on probation.

met McNutt, a Brazos
my juvenile probation offifor four years, heads the seling unit for those on ation. Counseling is one of main functions of a juvenile ation officer.

It's a lot different working kids," she says. "You're ing with family and you're king with schools. The issare different.

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McNutt and 10 other juvenile ation officers currently ndle the aprroximately 125 veniles, ages 10 to 17, on proion in Brazos County. "As probation officers, the

law to do are to protect the community and protect the child," McNutt says.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the probation department provides group counseling, community work projects, restitution, a volunteer program and a status offender program.

In group counseling, topics such as job interviewing, peer pressure, drug and alcohol abuse, and family and school difficulties are covered weekly for the older juveniles on probation.

Community work efforts to help beautify local parks use the informal adjustment probationers to pick up litter, cut weeds and plant flowers. Restitution is paid by the juve-nile and his family as a way for the probationer to realize the financial responsibility involved

Individuals and organizations volunteer time and services as tutors or adult role models based on the Big Brother and Big Sister programs.

The status offender program is an attempt to keep juveniles referred to the department for status offenses — skipping day school or running away from F home — out of the court proc-

Other programs aimed to and off probation are the shoplifting diversion program and

The shoplifting diversion program is a one-time seminar into trouble, she says. for juveniles caught stealing items worth less than \$5. Informal adjustment offers a chance for the child and parents to

ditions of probation for six months.

Lengths of probation vary depending on the offense, but all probation periods ordered by the court last for a year and may be renewed year-by-year until the juvenile's 18th birth-

From her experienced as a probation officer, McNutt cites education and community involvement as the keys to rehakeep juveniles referred for mi-nor offenses out of the courts who are recommended for probation mostly from the schools.

Peer pressure and boredom are the reasons juveniles get "Probation is not here to

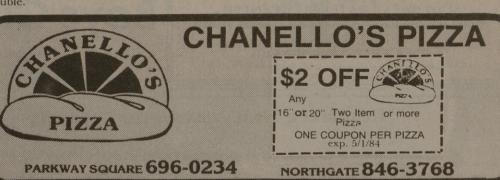
punish and scare and make kids fear the system," she says. "Scaring children is not an effective way to create change.

vidualize the program for each probationer as much as possi-

bation because they've been in tem, are non-existent.

because of the structure of the

ices and resources are lacking transit keeps the juvenile probation officers from finding jobs ble, but she doesn't want to community — two cities side by for probationers who need make it sound too informal. 'This isn't a service kids seek duplication of services while family reasons or to make the out," she says. "They're on pro- others, like a mass transit sys- restitution that may be part of



## Aggies tutoring youth in trouble

By RENEE HARRELL

The Brazos County Juvenile obation Department is re-iting Texas A&M students to tutor young people who ebeen placed on probation. The probation department

Impus organizations.
Response to the request has the encouraging. Phi Eta tyma, the freshman honor sonnot doit ou have to n, sit down! ay, has had about six mem-

ok up to," Charlotte Taylor, xas A&M student develment specialist said. "The lege students will act as a role del for the juveniles."

niles with volunteer tutors from the community and Texas A&M for two years.

the tutoring program.

"I will go over the all of the legalilities with the college stu-

Janet McNutt, administrator of programs and training at the juvenile department, also said a relationship with the juveniles role model for the youth is a that will benefit both of them.

'The role model idea is really a seperate aspect of our program from the tutoring, but it does play a part when college students are involved," McNutt

wolunteer. "However, the college stu-These kids need someone to dents must be dedicated enough to stick with it. Just because a big exam is coming up doesn't mean the student is excused from his tutoring duties," McNutt said.

The juvenile department has Melinda Thompson, juvenile transportation and where it is probated juve-probation officer is in charge of convenient to meet.

dents," Thompson said. "We The juveniles will be able to see someone who might have overcome some problems too and has gone on to further his edu-

The tutors will be trained on a monthly program before they start tutoring. They have a choice to tutor math, English, history or science and must tutor for a minimum of one hour per week for eight weeks.

The tutors and juveniles will be paired according to who has ON TOP OF THE WORLD



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