A Stake in Conformity: Voluntary Running at a Juvenile Community Correctional Facility

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ABSTRACT

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This project examines the perceived effects of a voluntary running program at a juvenile community correctional facility. It fills a gap in sociological and criminological literature, and explores ways in which social bond theory and social bond theory through the life course can deepen our understanding of the effects of such programs. This project employs within-method data triangulation from a qualitative paradigm, making use of fieldnotes, in-depth interviews, and journal entries. The findings suggest that the running program has the potential to increase the four social bonds (attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief) of participants to society and may, in turn, lead to future desistance from criminal activities.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Thomas M. Vander Ven

Associate Professor of Sociology
To Frank: Your efforts do not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

May you continue to make a difference in the lives of others.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Past research regarding trends in juvenile delinquency concluded that “there is reason to be both encouraged and troubled by recent trends in adolescent offending” (Jenson, Potter, and Howard 2001:49). At the time of the aforementioned research, property offenses by juveniles had decreased or remained relatively stable, while arrest rates for violent crimes were considerably higher than they were fifteen years ago (Jenson and Howard 1998; Jenson et al. 2001; Smith 1998).

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), when discussing more current arrest rates, reports that “Between 1996 and 2005, there were declines in the annual number of juvenile arrests … in nearly all offense categories, with some of the larger declines in arrests for motor vehicle theft, murder, burglary, runaway, larceny-theft, and robbery” (2007). However, when one examines current research regarding delinquency caseloads, rather than arrest rates, similar trends to those above can be noted. According to the OJJDP (2007), “Compared with 1985, the 2004 delinquency caseload contained greater proportions of person (24% versus 16%), drugs (12% versus 7%), and public order (28% versus 17%) offense cases and a smaller proportion of property (36% versus 61%) offense cases.”

Delinquency trends such as those discussed above highlight the current need for the development of innovative community-based programs. Although it appears clear that youth violence is currently declining, juvenile crime continues to exist as a social problem and object of public concern (Jenson and Howard 1998; Jenson et al. 2001). Thus, in order to understand the value and effectiveness of correctional programming,
theoretically informed evaluations are critical. Such an evaluation is the focus of the current study.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Juvenile Justice System

Early research on the juvenile justice system concluded that, in terms of reducing recidivism in juvenile delinquents, "nothing works" when it comes to changing offender behavior (Garcia 2004; Macallair 1993; Walters 2005). These studies were the cause of policy debates concerning the system in the past, but more recent research has continued to show that correctional programs can be effective. It is simply a matter of defining success in order to determine what works. This will aid in the development of new programs and policy (Garcia 2004).

Historical reviews of the juvenile justice system in the United States have shown that policy follows a cycle of justice reform that flows between rehabilitation and punishment. Some researchers have argued that for the system to be effective it should combine treatment and accountability, as neither of these alone targets the causes of delinquency (Jenson and Howard 1998). This balance is difficult to achieve, however, because of the conflicting responsibilities that face the system. As Trupin and his colleagues point out, "accountability, punishment, deterrence, restoration, public safety, and rehabilitation are [all] core obligations of juvenile justice" (Trupin et al. 2002:121). Regardless of the claim that a combination of rehabilitation and punishment would be advantageous, it has been noted that the current juvenile justice policy is shifting more towards punishment in response to a perceived increase in youth violence. This shift is evidenced in the lowered age limit for juveniles to be tried as adults, mandatory
sentencing, and harsher punishments (Hunter and Figueredo 1999; Jenson and Howard 1998).

It is beneficial for those studying programs in the juvenile justice system to be familiar with this research and with the ebb and flow of system policy. Such an understanding will aid in the development and evaluation of corrections policy because it makes it possible to view the context out of which this policy comes. For example, major shifts in the juvenile justice system affect community corrections, and in turn programming in community corrections in terms of funding, sentencing, and public perception of effectiveness.

**Community Corrections**

In discussing the benefits of community corrections, it is necessary to first define what exactly community corrections refers to. Though the term is sometimes used in reference to probation and parole, it is more precisely a form of residence outside of traditional state institutions in which the offender is exposed to the public under supervision of faculty and staff, often through programming and community service opportunities (Curran 1988). Although this is slightly ambiguous, there "appears to be broad agreement that small size, access to the surrounding community, and insecure controls are minimal features of any definition" (Lerman 1984:5).

Community correctional facilities were initially designed to provide individualized treatment for juvenile delinquents, emphasizing rehabilitation and deinstitutionalization. State correctional administrators used their own discretion to shift the juvenile justice system in this direction. Research has shown that there is a high level
of support for the effectiveness of such rehabilitation-based facilities, even though the current juvenile justice system is swinging more towards punishment (Gordon, Moriarty, and Grant 2000; Jenson and Howard 1998; Lerman 1984; Macallair 1993).

There are many benefits of community corrections, including costs, effectiveness, and conditions. Research has shown that community correctional facilities are less expensive than traditional institutions, and a contributing factor to their increasing use for juvenile delinquents was the fact that state training schools and boot camps became too large and expensive (Jenson and Howard 1998; Macallair 1993; Martin 2003). Many studies have also concluded that the treatment and rehabilitation often provided in community correctional facilities are more effective than the punishment-oriented traditional correctional institutions (Curran 1988; Gordon et. al. 2000; Macallair 1993; Martin 2003). Finally, research has shown that the conditions in community correctional facilities are more humane than the violent and decaying traditional institutions. This could be due to the absence of the prison subculture, a result of the differences in costs, or the fact that the punishment-oriented policies we are currently operating under, such as determinate sentencing and other crime-control legislation, drive the populations of state and federal institutions up, bringing the conditions of these institutions down (Lurigio 2005; Macallair 1993).

Opponents of community corrections suggest that this form of corrections widens the net of social control because it may sometimes be used as an alternative to probation rather than to institutionalization (Curran 1988; Macallair 1993). This is referred to as diversion, and it was initially designed so that those in the juvenile justice system could
refer youths to community correctional facilities instead of sending them to jail. It is obvious that enrolling youths who would formerly have been released or given probation in community correctional facilities would have defeated the purpose of community corrections altogether (Curran 1988; Macallair 1993). Though this argument is logical, it seems clear that diversion was the cause of this extended social control, not community correctional facilities themselves.

One characteristic of community correctional facilities that is worth mentioning is that they are not always private; however, public facilities are more likely to be institutional. Within the juvenile justice system private facilities are usually non-profit, but they operate similar to for-profit institutions. Privatization has increased to help cut costs to the state, although the state is still liable for the activities of private facilities (Culp 1998; Curran 1988; Macallair 1993).

One problem that may lessen the value of community corrections is the risk principle. As Lowenkamp and Latessa (2005:264) explain, the risk principle "guides the first step in the correctional process: Deciding who to target for correctional intervention." This principle holds that services and supervision should correlate with the level of risk of the offender: high-risk individuals are more in need of services and should receive more. This is sometimes referred to as "graduated sanctions," and is important because offenders are different and the programs available through community corrections are more effective on certain types (Jenson and Howard 1998; Lurigio 2005). These types include moderate- and high-risk offenders, whose placement in community residential programs can reduce their likelihood of recidivating (Lowenkamp and Latessa
2005; Lurigio 2005). The problem arises when high-risk offenders in the most need of correctional programs are excluded because staff prefer to work with low-risk cases which are easier to manage. Despite research that programs have more of an effect on high-risk offenders and that residential programs are actually "associated with an increase in the recidivism rates of low- and low/moderate-risk offenders," community correctional facilities continue to serve low-risk individuals (Lowenkamp and Latessa 2005:283).

Although research supports these arguments, some still suggest that community corrections are more suitable for low-risk offenders. The decision of which juveniles to place in community correctional facilities and which to send to large state and federal institutions is an important one, and it is beneficial to make rational choices in this regard in order to best distribute resources. Hunter and Figueredo (1999:51) suggest that:

> Placement of high-risk youths in community-based programs may result in further victimization of the public ... and commitment of low- to moderate-risk youths to correctional centers exacerbates the problems of overcrowding and the soaring public costs of operating those programs ... and may contribute to their delinquency by virtue of their confinement in an environment with predominantly antisocial individuals.

It is obvious from these two contrasting views of which juveniles are more suited for community corrections that more research is needed in this area. As will be illustrated in following paragraphs, additional research should also focus on specific programs offered in community correctional facilities.

**Exercise Programs in Correctional Settings**

Research has shown that physical exercise, especially aerobic exercise such as running or jogging, can improve an individual's psychological and emotional well-being, improving self-esteem and self-concept, and decreasing depression and anxiety (Basile, Motta, and Allison 1995; Bass 1985; Bunker 1998; Field, Diego, and Sanders 2001;
Haarasilta et al. 2004; Kirkcaldy, Shephard, and Siefen 2002; Landers 1997; Steptoe et al. 1997). Physical exercise has also been linked to higher academic performance (Field et al. 2001; Kirkcaldy et al. 2002), less participation in risky behaviors (Field et al. 2001; Haarasilta et al. 2004; Kirkcaldy et al. 2002; Steptoe et al. 1997), and an improvement in disruptive or delinquent behavior (Basile et al. 1995; Bass 1985; Bunker 1998; Field et al. 2004; Kirkcaldy et al. 2002). From these results it is obvious why exercise programs deserve the attention of correctional institutions.

Although many studies have illustrated the positive effects of physical exercise on juveniles in correctional settings, others have suggested otherwise. However, most of this work has concerned the mandatory and “extensively rigorous” exercise programs used in juvenile boot camps, as opposed to completely voluntary programs where the right to participate must be earned. This research has shown that boot camps are less effective than the public believes, and studies have generally failed to establish a link between exercise regiments and beneficial effects on juveniles required to participate in them (Correia 1997; Morash and Rucker 1990; Tyler, Darville, and Stalnaker 2001; Van Vleet 1999). It is important here to note the difference in the effects of boot camps and mandatory exercise regiments versus voluntary physical exercise and exercise programs in which the right to participate must be earned.

Some researchers suggest that improved academic performance and behavior are actually a result of higher levels of self-esteem or self-concept (Richman, Brown, and Clark 1984; Vandergriff and Rust 1985). As Vandergriff and Rust (1985:177) explain, "As one becomes more acceptable to one's self, behavior is modulated and becomes more
appropriate to those around." While this may be so in a variety of situations, one study which focuses specifically on the relationships between self-concept, exercise, and behavior has found that exercise itself is capable of improving behavior. Basile, Motta, and Allison (1995) examined the relationship of "antecedent exercise," or exercise intended to reduce later behavior problems, with self-concept and behavior. The authors found that aerobic exercise increased self-concept and decreased rates of bad behavior, but there was no correlation between self-concept and behavior. They also found that "antecedent exercise [was] most effective on minor disruptive behaviors that may be characterized as 'fidgety'" (p. 131). Such an effect would be an advantage in residential centers where order must be maintained, as these “fidgety” behaviors have the potential to snowball into larger disruptions.

In this context, I seek to evaluate the impact of a voluntary running program at a community correctional facility. The following sections will provide a detailed description of the theoretical approach most suited for this evaluation; an account of the methods used during this research; and a lengthy examination of the results of this evaluation.
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL APPROACH

Hirschi’s Social Bond Theory

Although many theoretical concepts can be applied to the effectiveness of certain programs available to youth through community corrections, it is useful to approach the issue using control theories. Control theories, in contrast with most other theoretical explanations for crime, attempt to explain not why an individual commits a certain crime, but why an individual does NOT commit a crime. Control and bond theories hold that a person is free to commit a crime or delinquent act because their ties to conventional society are weak or broken (Cullen and Agnew 2003; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969; Sampson and Laub 1993a; Sampson and Laub 1993b).

The original social bond theory was developed by Travis Hirschi (1969), who theorized that the concept of social bonds has four elements which independently and in combination restrain a person from criminal activities. The first element is attachment, or an emotional connection to another person which often causes a youth to care what that person thinks of them. A youth can be attached to teachers, friends, or others, but attachment to parents is the most important (Hirschi 1969). As Cullen and Agnew explain, "when in a situation where the opportunity for trouble presents itself, [youth] will be restrained from delinquency if they are concerned that such action will disappoint the other person or disrupt this relationship" (2003:231). During the teenage years, youths are not directly controlled by their parents because they are not always with their parents. However, they can be indirectly controlled if the teenager considers how their
actions will affect their parents. When attachment is strong, "the parent is psychologically present when temptation to commit a crime appears" (Hirshi 2002:88).

The second element of social bond theory is commitment. This is the "rational component" to conformity (Hirschi 1969). Cullen and Agnew (2003) explain that committed youths have "brighter prospects ahead and are less likely to engage in acts that will jeopardize their future" while "uncommitted youths - those with little or no stake in conformity - have nothing to lose and thus are freer to break the law" (p. 231). Hirschi (1969) explains how commitment to society and conformity are developed through an increased commitment to activities or aspects of society: “The person becomes committed to a conventional line of action, and he is therefore committed to conformity” (p. 234-235).

The third social bond element is involvement in conventional activities. It is reasoned that idleness may lead to opportunities for youths to be involved in criminal activities, so a high level of involvement in conventional activities will leave no time for crime. Such conventional activities include school-related hobbies, recreation, and other crime-free pursuits (Cullen and Agnew 2003; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969; Hirschi 2002). As Hirschi (1969:235) summarizes, “Many persons undoubtedly owe a life of virtue to a lack of opportunity to do otherwise.” He continues to explain that the person involved in conventional activities “may be simply too busy doing conventional things to find time to engage in deviant behavior” (Hirschi 1969:235).

The fourth and final social bond is belief in the legitimacy of the rules. As Hirschi (2002) points out, youths who believe that they should follow the rules of society
are less likely to break them. The inclusion of belief as a social bond is controversial because beliefs are a major component of differential association theory. However, there is a distinction between differential association and social bond theories: namely that differential association theorists such as Sutherland and Cressey (1960) focus on beliefs that cause crime, while control theorists focus on beliefs that cause a person to abstain from crime. Hirschi (2002) states simply that ''delinquency is not caused by beliefs that require delinquency, but rather made possible by the absence of beliefs that forbid delinquency'' (p. 198).

Hirschi’s original social bond theory is not without limitations. As Lilly, Cullen, and Ball (2007) point out, as a control theorist Hirschi assumes “that humans are naturally self-interested and thus need no special motivation to break the law” (p. 106). Even if this is true, not everyone may be equally motivated to commit crimes. Therefore, a complete theory must include factors that might make some people more motivated to offend than others, such as strain or learning criminal definitions (Lilly et al. 2007). Furthermore, Hirschi does not explore how social bonds can be “affected by the larger social forces in American society” (Lilly et al. 2007:106). His focus is on bonds in immediate social contexts, such as the family and school, but he largely ignores such macro-forces as gender, race, economic structure, and social disorganization (Lilly et al. 2007).

**Social Bond Theory through the Life-Course**

Sampson and Laub (1993a) further develop social bond theory to explain ''why people start offending, continue offending, and change and stop offending'' (p. 470).
They differentiate between a trajectory, or long-term path of development, and a transition, which is usually marked by a life event. They also stress the importance of informal social control and point out that important institutions of both formal and informal social control vary across the life span. Social capital, the social investment between those in a relationship, comes from strong social bonds and can be a resource throughout the life-course (Sampson and Laub 1993a; Sampson and Laub 1993b).

This modified view of social bond theory is especially useful because it explains both desistance from crime and late onset of criminal behaviors, where many theories fall short. Desistance from crime can be explained by the development of strong social bonds, despite a background of delinquency. Late onset of criminal behavior results from weak or weakening social bonds despite a background of nondelinquent behavior. It is clear that this theory is ideal in examining the effectiveness of community correctional programs because it illustrates how desistance may be achieved.

As the above discussion makes clear, social bond theory through the life course is advantageous for many reasons. First, most control theories developed before life course theory either focused on adolescents or on official social control. Social bond theory through the life course succeeds where these theories fail by examining the processes of informal social control from childhood through adulthood. Secondly, life course theory goes a step further than Hirschi’s social bond theory by including both social history and social structure in an explanation of why individuals participate in criminal activities (Cullen and Agnew 2003). Finally, as has been mentioned, unlike many other theories of
crime, the life course perspective is able to account for desistance from and late onset into participation in criminal acts (Cullen and Agnew 2003).

In fact, Laub and Sampson (2003) later studied their original data set of 500 “delinquents” and examined these individuals’ criminal records up to age 70, in addition to interviewing fifty-two of them. This work concluded that desistance is nearly universal, but that it is difficult to predict when it will occur (Lilly et al. 2007). At this point the idea of agency was added to Sampson and Laub’s theory, and Lilly and his colleagues (2007) note that “the desistance process they describe constrains, but does not fully determine, the choices offenders make” (p. 331). This development is important because, as will be discussed, social bond theory through the life course competes with other life-course theories that focus on individual differences which may cause or inhibit offending.

There are also a couple of limitations of control theories and social bond theory through the life course. First of all, it is possible that social factors or processes besides the social bonds discussed are at work in altering the life course of delinquents and leading them to desist from crime (Lilly et al. 2007). These social factors could include social changes such as developing more positive peer groups. Secondly, social bond and life course theories cannot explain the cases in which individuals that appear to have strong social bonds commit crimes. As Lilly and his colleagues point out, Sampson and Laub’s life-course theory must compete “with life-course theories attributing continuity in offending to underlying individual differences” (Lilly et al. 2007). It is important to
recognize the limitations of sociological and criminological theories in order to determine their usefulness in examining different types of programs.

**Social Bond Theory to Predict Program Effectiveness**

The basic concepts of social bond theory through the life course can be used to deepen our understanding of program effectiveness in juvenile correctional facilities. It is important that such sociological approaches be considered in the implementation of any new program or policy because theoretically sound interventions are more likely to be effective (Lurigio 2005).

Control theories, and social bond theory through the life course in particular, are relevant to examining community correctional facility programs because they focus on factors that inhibit criminal activity. In addition to this, social bond theory through the life course lends insight into what brings about desistance, which is an important goal of many programs in juvenile corrections. Supporters of this theory consider social capital and informal social control major factors in determining the difference between delinquents who go on to become adult offenders and delinquents who choose to desist in their adult lives. From this perspective, understanding what can lead to increased informal social control and social capital, or increased social bonds throughout the life trajectory, aids in the development of effective correctional programs that will lead to desistance from crime. Programs that increase social capital, informal social control, or social bonds will theoretically succeed in bringing about this transition (Cullen and Agnew 2003; Lowenkamp and Latessa 2005; Lurigio 2005; Presser and Van Voorhis 2002).
Other theories are also useful to reflect on when a new program is being considered for a juvenile correctional facility. Social learning theory and strain theory are relevant in many aspects because they provide explanations of why individuals, or juveniles in this case, commit crimes in the first place. Differential association theory is also relevant because it too can explain desistance from crime. These approaches are not as practical as social bond theory through the life course, however, because such a program is designed around the assumption that those it serves have already been involved in criminal activity. The usefulness of these theories to explain the effects of a running program will be discussed in a later chapter.

**Social Bond Theory through the Life-Course to Evaluate a Running Program**

According to social bond theory through the life course, if weak social bonds are strengthened, a modified trajectory will lead to desistance from or a reduction of crime and delinquent behavior. Therefore, if a running program is able to strengthen the social bonds of those who participate in it, they should have a higher rate of desistance than those who do not. Although no research has yet approached the relationship between physical/aerobic exercise and behavior from this angle, the possibility of increasing social bonds through exercise is evidenced throughout prior works.

Attachment, the strong emotional connection to parents, teachers, and other important adults, is alluded to in Field et al.'s (2001) examination of exercise and adolescents' relationships when they report that:

Adolescents in the high-exercise group had better relationships with their parents than did those in the low-exercise group. The high-exercise group reported higher quality relationships with parents..., more frequent touching..., and more family support (P. 3).
An opportunity for increased commitment is highlighted when Kirkcaldy et al. (2002) note that exercise has "a positive effect . . . upon academic performance" (p. 549), and when Field et al. (2001) found that students who exercised had higher grade-point-averages and were involved in more sports. Such an effect on students represents a potential increase in commitment because when students perform better in school, their futures are brighter; they also have more to lose. Those who exercised were also found to participate more often in sports, representing another opportunity for commitment. In many schools, students are disciplined by making them ineligible for participation in athletics; thus, they have their eligibility to lose (Field et al. 2001).

The potential for increased involvement is recognized in the work of Kirkcaldy et al. (2002) as well. They cite Murphy, Pagano, and Marlatt (1986), stating that "it has been suggested that since substance abuse . . . occurs during leisure time, involvement in physical activity may serve as a healthy substitute" (p. 545). They also cite Hays (1999) who refers to Glasser's (1976) work, in pointing out that "the positive addiction to regular exercise such as swimming or running may serve as a replacement or distraction from smoking or alcohol abuse" (p. 549). Similarly, Field et al. (2001) found that students who exercised more were more likely to engage in sports and less likely to use drugs. They note that "the negative relationship between exercise and drug use was not surprising, as taking drugs is not conducive to optimal athletic performance" (p. 4).

Finally, the possibility that running may strengthen the social bond of belief is suggested by Bunker's (1998) work:

Sport and exercise can provide a great venue for exploring strategies to resolve conflicts, act fairly, plan proactively, and to generally develop a moral code of behavior... There are many
opportunities for good moral development...and developing more mature moral reasoning skills (P. 7).

In addition, the research of Kirkcaldy et al. (2002) "shows substantial associations between the regular practice of endurance sport and attitudes, personality, scores for physical and psychological well-being and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle" (p. 548). The moral development and shifts in attitudes mentioned in these works represent a strengthening of belief in the validity of the rules of society, which according to social bond theory, makes youths less likely to violate them (Hirschi 2002).

The discussion above suggests that social bond theory through the life course is a useful way to approach the relationship between a voluntary running program and changes in behavior of those who participate in it. Such a relationship will be the focus of this research project.
CHAPTER 4: METHODS

Research Issues

Several research issues come to the surface after a review of the literature. Such issues include a comparison of community correctional programs with state and federal programs in juvenile facilities, an examination of the effects of voluntary exercise programs in both juvenile and adult facilities, and an intensive study of the actual effectiveness of a specific juvenile community correctional program, such as the running program at The Rural Community Correctional Facility (RCCF)*. The running program at RCCF and its perceived effects on participants’ social bonds will be examined in this research.

It will be helpful to evaluate this program in order to add to the relevant literature concerning community correctional programs, as little known about the efficacy of physical fitness programs in correctional settings. This evaluation will not critically test whether the program is meeting predetermined goals, but will instead use sociological theory to provide a deeper understanding of its effects. It will be possible to evaluate the running program in this way by using a variety of qualitative methods and an exploration of gathered data. Data will be triangulated in order to provide a richer analysis and more detailed account of the processes by which the running program is effective from a control theory approach, namely, social bond theory through the life course. Research methods will be described in much greater detail in following paragraphs.

* Name of facility has been changed.
Description of the Research Site and the Running Program

The Rural Community Correctional Facility (RCCF) is a juvenile residential center located in a rural community, and serves male offenders from surrounding counties who have committed felonies. RCCF is “the highest-rated program of its kind in [its] state” and is recommended by a university study as a “model for future program development” (Withheld Citation 1, withheld in protection of confidentiality). RCCF has a bed capacity of 22 residents, who stay there for an average of six months before they are released (Withheld Citation 2, withheld in protection of confidentiality). In order to be released, residents must work through a series of zones which require a specific number of points and a certain amount of completed “zonework.” RCCF operates on a point system in which residents are awarded twelve points each day for perfect behavior and staff members subtract points if rules are broken. When a resident has earned at least 135 points, he is given the opportunity to participate in various off-grounds activities, including the running program.

The running program was conceived of and is managed by Duane*, the current substance abuse coordinator at RCCF, and has been in operation for fourteen years, since the facility opened in 1993. It involves the optional participation of any residents who have earned their off-grounds privileges, and takes place Wednesdays through Saturdays when this specialist is on duty. Duane is a distance runner who has worked at the center since its opening over fourteen years ago. He is in his mid-sixties and always places high, if not first, in his age group. Duane has been involved in competitive running for

* All names have been changed.
many years, often telling stories of his participation and success in police races during the
several years he served as an undercover police officer. He is a recovering alcoholic who
has been clean for eighteen years, and recognizes in himself the positive effects that
running has on helping him deal with anxieties related to addiction. This was one of his
motivations for starting the running program because several residents at RCCF have
experienced drug and/or alcohol-related problems. Duane discusses other motivations for
the development and continued operation of the running program in the findings sections
of this thesis.

Because of his long history in competitive running, Duane is especially suited for
the management of this program, as he has extensive knowledge about effective practices
for improving abilities and decreasing risk of injury. Injuries are uncommon in an
individual sport such as running, but may include minor conditions such as shin splints,
sprains, and sore muscles. These injuries rarely, if ever, require medical attention and no
runners have been seriously injured through the running program at RCCF.

Throughout my time as an intern and as a participant observer, I witnessed all
physical varieties of residents participating in the running program. Residents with
athletic builds, residents who were extremely obese, and those with average body types
participate on a regular basis. Each day, Duane signs each of the boys out on the
staff/resident sign-out sheet and drives them to an environment safe from traffic where
they can run at their own pace. In addition to these daily runs, the residents are also
occasionally given the opportunity to attend community races where they compete
overall and in separate age divisions. For those who place in these events, ribbons, medals, or trophies are often awarded.

Another aspect of the running program is its openness to parental involvement. Before residents are released from RCCF their parents are required to attend parenting classes, which usually take place on-grounds at the facility. However, parents are invited, though never required, to attend community road races and they are given parenting credit for their attendance at these events. As has been explained in preceding paragraphs, this program evaluation will use a control or social bond theory through the life course perspective to explore the effects of the running program.

**Program Evaluations**

In recent years there has been an increasing interest among researchers in the study of programs offered through community correctional facilities. However, no standard measure of success of such programs has been developed. As researchers define success differently, two or more studies may evaluate the same program with opposite conclusions. For example, some researchers measure success in terms of recidivism, while others examine documented goals in order to determine success. Because of these inconsistencies, the results of all program evaluations cannot be subject to direct comparison. This project contributes to evaluation literature by pushing for a deeper understanding of success that is sociologically informed.

In evaluating a program it is necessary to examine its implementation and the principles from which it was conceived. Too often programs are "ill-conceived, poorly designed, and not theoretically driven" (Garcia 2004:252). This causes problems because
when reviewing literature of program effectiveness, one often finds that a large number of studies have concerned "poorly implemented programs in which effective treatment principles are not guiding the programming" (Gordon et al. 2000:197). In addition, the majority of these evaluations focus only on one individual program rather than on trends in programs on a macro-level scale, which may yield different results (Curran 1988:363).

It is important here to note that programs that are not theoretically driven can still have beneficial effects, and can even unknowingly make use of effective treatment principles. Evaluation research must consider these programs thoroughly in determining how best to illustrate their effects. As this study will demonstrate, sociological theories can still be useful to evaluations of programs that are not driven by any particular theory. Such an approach can provide a deeper understanding of the program’s effects and can aid the researcher in assessing what is going on in the program.

Many programs are designed and implemented well but evaluated inaccurately. One proposed explanation for this is that there was no clear statement of the program goals or activities available to define success. Researchers point out that programs are often considered more valuable if they propose a mission statement and are evaluated in terms of their achievement of this mission (Garcia 2004; Presser and Van Voorhis 2002). This is because a program with no established goals or mission will usually be evaluated by how much it reduces recidivism, which is an unfair measure in some situations, as in where more immediate outcomes may be a better measure (Garcia 2004). In addition, the goals and mission statement serve to define success in a particular study (Glaser and Ogborne 1982).
The preceding paragraph points out that program evaluations are often ineffective because they are unclear on how to measure success. Note that programs are considered more valuable if they have a mission statement and are evaluated according to that statement. This does not necessarily mean that programs with mission statements are more effective; rather, it shows that researchers need to be more perceptive in determining how to evaluate programs that do not have a mission statement. Many ad hoc programs are effective and worthwhile, but may not be considered as such if they are evaluated by how well they reduce recidivism, a common measure when programs lack predetermined goals. Therefore, I disagree with the researchers cited in the above paragraph who hold that the best way to evaluate a program is in terms of its mission statement, if one exists. Rather, theoretical approaches should be used to better assess the effects of the program and provide insight into what criteria indicate success.

Furthermore, in the case of new program and policy development, it is important that sociological approaches be considered in implementation because theoretically sound interventions are more likely to be effective (Lurigio 2005).

The running program at RCCF was not initiated through the use of a particular theory nor does it have a documented mission statement. That does not mean that it and programs like it are ineffective or that they are less important than others. Researchers must put more thought into how such programs can be evaluated in terms of theory, and all effects expected after a review of the chosen theory must be taken into consideration. Theoretical concepts can help researchers develop their ideas of success for a specific program.
Faulty measures of program effectiveness can have harmful policy implications, as is illustrated by the decline of rehabilitation. Though studies continue to suggest that rehabilitation can "de-escalat[e] criminal behavior," measures based on recidivism lead to the conclusion that it is not effective (Macallair 1993:118). This led to a public which was unconvinced that rehabilitation was either effective or worthwhile, and eventually to a decline in rehabilitative programs (Macallair 1993). Glaser and Ogborne (1982) propose that studies of the effectiveness of intervention programs should be evaluated through the use of at least two methods in order to better ensure reliability. There is some debate about whether or not the use of multiple methods is able to increase validity, and this will be addressed in a later section.

The effectiveness of juvenile community correctional programs, as has been discussed in the preceding paragraphs, should be evaluated by sociological criteria with the aid of specific theoretical approaches. The running program at RCCF is a program which lacks formal objectives; however, positive effects are noted by faculty and staff, as well as residents. Participants and others involved in the running program, as well as community members, have for a long time acknowledged that it is beneficial in several ways, but in the past have been unable to explain why it has these effects. My intent with this research was to explore the benefits of the running program by using sociological theory to provide a richer analysis of its perceived effects.

**Collection of Data**

Throughout recent years, triangulation, or “the blending or mixing [of] different kinds of data,” has become an ever more frequent practice among researchers (Lofland et
Several fields now recognize the benefits of combining different methods in one research project, evidenced in the use of data triangulation in education research (see Meijer, Verloop, and Beijaard 2002; Rossman and Wilson 1994), health and health education (see Kopinak 1999; Kristina, Majoor, and Van Der Vleuten 2006; Parker and Keim 2004), nursing (see Maggs-Rapport 2000; Williamson 2005), child welfare and youth studies (see Corney 2004; Hess and Folaron 1991), and various areas of social research (see Erzberger and Prein 1997; Kelle 2001).

Early proponents (Denzin 1970; Webb et al. 1966) of triangulation in social science research held “that a hypothesis which had survived a series of tests with different methods could be regarded as more valid than a hypothesis tested only with the help of a single method” (Kelle 2001: paragraph 6). Maxine Baca Zinn (1979), another early researcher to make use of triangulation, cites Denzin (1970:49) stating that “the use of more than one method is the best corrective against contamination ‘because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality’” (p. 165). However, other social scientists have taken issue with this claim, pointing to inherent problems of using triangulation for the purpose of validation (Bloor 1997). These issues will be addressed in the following paragraphs, along with a discussion of other, less problematic motives for triangulating data.

One problem of using triangulation for the purpose of validation is that one particular method may be better suited for a given project, and the findings produced through the use of this method may contrast those of a less appropriate method. As Michael Bloor (1997) points out, the use of methods of differing appropriateness may be
acceptable when findings compliment each other, but becomes a problem when they do not agree. Bloor (1997) emphasizes the fact that “the exercise [of triangulation] cannot be a test of validity only when the findings are corroborated and not when the findings are confounded” (p. 385).

Bloor (1997) points to another problem with using triangulation for the purpose of validation, stating that “all research findings are shaped by the circumstances of their production, so findings collected by different methods will differ in their form and specificity to a degree that will make their direct comparison problematic” (p. 385).

Although these arguments may be warranted, it is important to note that the use of triangulation may still serve a very important purpose in the research community which has little to do with validation. According to Thomas and Smith (2003:7) “the advantage of triangulation is that it benefits from the unique properties of each method, and thus a more full and accurate picture of the phenomenon emerges.” Even Bloor (1997) acknowledges that triangulation “can be said to be relevant to the issue of validity, insofar as [it] may yield new data which throw fresh light on the investigation and which provide a spur for deeper and richer analyses” (p. 395). Several other investigators and scholars agree that triangulation can, in fact, provide deeper insight and a broader understanding of the research at hand (Flick 1992; Kelle 2001; Williamson 2005).

The evidence presented in the above paragraphs suggests that triangulation is a useful tool for researchers who seek to deepen their analyses, yet an ineffective method for ensuring validity. Despite such evidence, many scholars continue to use triangulation for just that, reasoning that when research findings from diverse methods converge, this
is indicative of internal validity (Erzberger and Prein 1997; Hess and Folaron 1991; Kopinak 1999; Maggs-Rapport 2000; Meijer, Verloop, and Beijaard 2002).

In any case, it appears clear that triangulation of data can add much to a given research project, as long as one does not jump to conclusions concerning validity. Within-methods triangulation of data from a qualitative paradigm will be valuable in this program evaluation, and will be described in greater detail in following paragraphs.

**Within-methods Triangulation to Evaluate the Running Program**

As was discussed above, triangulation of data is increasingly recognized by scholars as a way to improve the value of research in projects using qualitative data. Therefore, the data gathered for this program evaluation were obtained through the use of several qualitative measures: participant observation in both routine running outings and the less common road races with those involved in the running program, intensive open-ended interviews with those involved in the running program, and my own personal journal entries from my internship at RCCF in the summer of 2005 when I regularly participated in the running program with Duane, the residents, and sometimes Jerry, the recreation coordinator at RCCF.

Throughout my research at RCCF I played the role of participant observer, participating in the daily routines of the running program, developing relationships with participants, and observing and writing down what I saw, as informed by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995). Throughout my research, I maintained a professional distance from my subjects while still developing relationships with them. As Lofland et al. (2006:68) state, “throughout the course of your research, you will be confronted with the challenge
of achieving both closeness and distance, but at different times.” That is because early on one must develop relationships that allow an understanding of subjects’ points of view, while later one must be able to “step back from time to time to gain a broader perspective” (Lofland et al. 2006:67). I experienced such a challenge during my fieldwork, developing a close professional relationship with Duane in much the same way that residents did, perhaps due to the time we spent participating with him in the running program. However, I was still able to “step back” and analyze his interaction with residents. The professional relationship we shared does not pose a problem for my interpretation of data because, as was discussed in a previous section, the purpose of this evaluation is not to critically test whether or not the running program accomplishes specific goals. Rather, the purpose of this study is to use social bond theory through the life course to provide a deeper understanding of the effects of the running program and evaluate how theory is useful in developing ideas about the success of this program.

I ran with Duane and residents regularly throughout the week, in addition to attending several road races and other extracurricular activities. By this I hoped to gain a better understanding of the reasons the boys participate in the running program, which is completely voluntary. I also hoped to witness for myself whether or not the running program strengthened the social bonds of those who participated. The time I spent directly involved in the running program amounted to roughly eighty-seven hours of fieldwork over the course of six months, from October of 2006 to April of 2007, and resulted in over 100 pages of single spaced fieldnotes. I wrote my fieldnotes as soon as possible after leaving the research site in order to remember events and conversations as
accurately as possible. I often ducked into a nearby café directly after leaving the facility and scrawled handwritten pages of fieldnotes over multiple cups of coffee. In this way I got everything out while it was still fresh in my mind, leaving the typing of my fieldnotes for later in the day when I was not busy. Overall, my fieldnotes contained data from six community road races, one race that Duane set up for all of the residents at RCCF and their families, and two RCCF extracurricular events: a high ropes course and a long hike in a nearby state park.

In addition to participant observation, I also conducted a series of in-depth, open-ended interviews with eight individuals who are either directly involved with the running program or for one reason or another have a deep understanding of it and its effects on residents who participate. These individuals included Duane, the main leader of the program; Jerry, RCCF’s recreation coordinator and a regular participant in the running program as well as community road races; Alice, RCCF’s executive director who has strongly supported the running program since its beginning; two judges from surrounding counties who are responsible for placing juveniles at RCCF, and who have been involved in the running community (whether runners themselves, coaches, or fathers of participants in cross-county or track) for a number of years; two current residents at RCCF who were regular participants in the running program; and one former resident at RCCF who participated regularly during his stay. As this is exploratory research, I did not use a control group of participants unfamiliar with running or the running program. Rather, I explored the perceived effects of the running program by interviewing those who either participated in the program or had some knowledge of or connection to it. For
example, rather than interviewing all judges who place residents at RCCF, I interviewed judges who are part of the running community and who have witnessed the running program in action at community road races when they come to show their support for residents who participate.

Interviews addressed the participants' attitudes about the program, perceived effects of the program, and possible benefits of the program to participants, faculty and staff, RCCF, and the community. The questions for these interviews were developed with social bond theory through the life course in mind, and are included as appendices. The interviews ranged from twenty minutes to an hour and a half, with most lasting between forty and forty-five minutes. This totaled over five and a half hours of tape and resulted in just under eighty-five pages of transcript data. Cassette tapes of the interviews were deleted immediately following transcription. Furthermore, interview transcripts and fieldnotes from participant observation were kept in a locked file cabinet in my locked office upon completion.

My final method of research involved going back through my internship journals from the summer of 2005 when I regularly participated in the running program in order to gather evidence of my first impressions of the program, as well as to supplement the data obtained through participant observation and interviews. As Janesick (1999) explains, the use of journal entries is not only a “viable technique for qualitative researchers” (p. 505), but also offers another opportunity for the triangulation of data. The internship lasted ten weeks from June to August of 2005, during which I spent over 200 hours either participating in the running program or interacting with regular participants of the
program throughout their daily routines at RCCF. The journals took up 140 handwritten pages, throughout which I expressed my thoughts and reactions to RCCF, the running program, and the residents and staff at the center. During this internship I attended three community road races with Duane, Jerry, and the runners, one community road race with my family during which I encountered a former RCCF resident who was recently released, and two 3-on-3 basketball tournaments. Altogether, then, I attended ten races and four extracurricular events with Duane and the participants in the running program.

**Analysis of Data**

The nature of the information collected in this way consists of text files. During analysis of this data I employed classic coding techniques for inductive research, guided by Emerson et al. (1995) and Lofland et al. (2006). I first engaged in open coding, reading my fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and journal entries “line by line” to develop themes, keeping social bond theory terms in mind but in no way limiting myself to them. As Lofland et al. (2006) point out, in this period of initial or open coding “you begin to condense and organize your data into categories that make sense in terms of your relevant interests, commitments, literatures, and/or perspectives” (p. 201). I next engaged in focused coding, being selective with the themes that emerged during the open coding stage and developing them into categories. As Emerson et al. (1995:143) explain, “here, the ethnographer uses a smaller set of promising ideas and categories to provide the major topic and themes for the final ethnography.” My final coding categories and subcategories were constructed with social bond theory in mind and the data were used to
explore ways in which the running program has the potential to develop the social bonds of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief of those who participate.
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

Throughout my time participating in the running program at RCCF, both during my research and during my internship in 2005, I witnessed much evidence suggesting that the running program increases the social bonds of those who regularly participate. I also gathered evidence of these increases during the interviews I conducted with residents, faculty, and others connected to the program. In the following paragraphs, I will provide examples that demonstrate that social bond theory is applicable to an examination of the running program at RCCF and that this theoretical approach is a useful and powerful way to understand gathered data. The following sections show that the running program does appear to increase the attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief of residents who take part in the program. This knowledge is extremely useful to programmers because if these social bonds are increased through the running program, participants will be more likely to desist from criminal activities in the future, as social bond theory through the life course proposes.

Attachment

The increased attachment of residents to adults, such as Duane or their parents, was alluded to during several of the interviews that I conducted, as well as in my fieldnotes. As was noted in the theoretical discussion, this attachment can be clearly seen when youths think about how their behavior might affect their relationships with adults. I found that Duane, in part due to the time and effort that he devoted to these adolescents, bonded with them in a number of ways. Finally, and of great interest to me, I found that parents developed a better relationship with their sons if they were participants in the
program, influencing their sons’ attachment to them. These attachments were made clear in a number of ways, which I will describe here.

*Attachment to Duane*

One reason that many residents seemed to develop a deep attachment to Duane was the time that he spent with them and the obvious effort that he put into providing the opportunity for each of them to participate in the running program. The residents that I spoke with, when asked during interviews whether they now considered the opinions of Duane or other adults involved in the running program when considering breaking a rule, expressed that they did, as the following example illustrates:

> I think about what Duane would think about it. Because whenever we go on runs and stuff, he’s always talked about how to stay away from all the stupid stuff, negative behaviors, so then whenever you get in that situation, like I can see Duane out of the corner of my eye, or something, I’ll be like, I just have a totally new mindset, cause I’m afraid he’ll look down upon me.
> - Marley, current participant, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

A former resident expressed the same feeling during his interview, as is shown in this statement:

> Like, I feel like I don’t wanna let people down. They put so much effort into helping me get control back over my life, and I don’t wanna disappoint anybody that felt like they helped me. So I didn’t wanna let nobody down.
> - Barry, former participant, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Others who are connected to the running program have witnessed the bond that forms between Duane and his runners, and the fact that the runners are often aware of the effort and thought that goes into the program. Jerry, a faculty member at RCCF who has been involved in the running program in the past, points to this emotional connection and gives one reason why he thinks that it develops:

> Definitely I think that they feel more attached to Duane, you know they’re kind of dear to Duane because he’s initiated the program and he takes them to, if he doesn’t take them to all the runs he’ll provide transportation for them, so they appreciate that and they’ve kind of endeared to Duane. […] I think it’s just a time where they’ve been able to spend more time with one
individual so, you know a lot of them have been neglected throughout their lives and now somebody’s taken an interest in them if they’re wanting to run or participate in any kind of program. So someone shows more interest, spends some more time with them, whether it’s Duane or their parent or whoever, it gives them, you know at least somebody cares for them.
- Jerry, Recreation Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Duane also expressed thoughts on his connection with participants of the running program, reasoning that the program in many ways allows him and the boys to interact in a more natural way, so that they begin to see him as a friend or a competitor, rather than as the bad guy in charge:

I think what [being involved in extracurricular activities with the boys] does is it lets the boys see us in a different light as well as them in a different light. They don’t, a lot of times they don’t see us as the disciplinarian figure, they see us more as one of them, you know, because we’re out there on the field of competition competing equally. It’s not being an order or anything like that or we’re not trying to direct them to anything, you know, they’re seeing us as the competition. It’s in a different light, it’s less authoritative. And I think it behooves any staff that can to try to get involved in some of those type of activities. Again, it gives everybody, and it gives us a different perspective on them too because we can see them in a different light rather than always trying to regiment their behavior or dictate it to them or however you wanna put it. Things are more relaxed when you’re out in those type of settings and you see things happen more naturally, you know, they’re not being directed it’s more of a natural interaction between us.
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

I witnessed several instances when Duane stood up for the residents, siding with them over other faculty at times, making clear his bond with them. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes illustrates Duane’s thoughtfulness towards participants:

Later we again discuss Ralph’s misfortune. They were rear-ended and it wasn’t a bad accident. They went to the hospital and a physician checked Ralph out. He ran yesterday, but was then put on recreation restriction when the RCCF nurse said she needed to look at him before he could run.

“Now see, if I had someone waiting like that, I’d try to get there as soon as possible,” Duane says. “If she doesn’t get him checked out, he won’t be able to go to the race on Sat. or Sun. And that’s too bad because Sun. is the last race of the Winter Series [of the nearby runner’s club] and he’s got quite a few points.” Duane and I figure it’s probably for legal reasons, but can’t figure out why since a doctor already examined him.
(Fieldnotes, Fri. 03/02/07)

Duane’s generosity and effort does not go unnoticed by participants. Throughout the months of my participant observation I witnessed many instances of Duane sharing
everything from money for food to clothing items with his runners. We went out to eat after every race, often at such pricey establishments as the Golden Corral and Ruby Tuesday, with Duane footing the bill for the entire group (including me). Note the following example from my fieldnotes:

We start back towards town and Duane asks where we want to eat. […] I assume we’ll be stopping at the Cool Spot again, as usual, but as we’re driving through [the city], Frank announces we’ll go to Ruby Tuesday.

“You guys said you’d never been there before, so we’ll go try it,” he says, referring to one of our conversations on the way. […] [Inside, Duane] and the boys all order what’s called a “Triple Play.” Its ribs, chicken, and shrimp with a baked potato. One plate is over $16. I get a steak. […] We eat and eat, and when we’re all stuffed, there is still a ton of food on our table. Duane asks our waitress for a box, and when it’s full, he asks for another. He starts loading the leftovers from everyone’s plates into the boxes and tells me I’ll have meals for the next 3 days. […] When the bill comes, Duane refuses to let me pay for my stuff. “Yours was the cheapest one,” he says, squinting and holding the bill away trying to see it.

“Yeah but I can see that bottom number and you can’t,” I reply. The total is $90 and change. Duane puts some money in the small black folder they give you the bill in, then asks if we’re all ready.

We get up, me packing the bag with all of the leftovers. Outside, I say, “Thanks a lot Duane,” and the boys echo me. We load back into the van, now full. (Fieldnotes, Sun. 03/04/07, RACE)

The boys also borrowed toboggans and gloves from Duane nearly every time we went running in the winter. Duane even trusted residents with things that had some sentimental value to him in one way or another, as is shown in this example from my fieldnotes:

Duane comes out and we head for the silver van, which is already running, warming up. Duane now runs to his truck, again looking for a toboggan. He returns with a bright blue one with an Air Force slogan/patch on it and hands it back to Terry.

“My daughter-in-law bought me that, so make sure you don’t lose it.”

“Cool,” Terry replies, taking the hat.

“You can tell what division of the armed forces she’s in,” Duane says. “She’s overseas right now for the second time. She served time over there once and thought she’d be done, but I told her with that kind of technical training they’d use her.” (Fieldnotes, Fri. 12/08/06)
The above example also shows Duane sharing personal information about his life and family with residents who participate in the running program.

The following examples, the first from my journals from the summer of 2005 and the second from my fieldnotes, illustrate the extent of Duane generosity in providing for the races that are such a big part of the running program:

I went to a different race today than the race Duane took the boys to. The race my family and I went to was a four miler – Duane and Jerry took the boys who were able to go to a 5K in [a different city]. I’d told Duane yesterday about the run [we were going to]; it was cheaper so I thought he might like to know. Duane didn’t think the kids were ready for anything longer than a 5K yet, though, so he paid the extra money. Duane is so great to those boys. He pays for all of the races he takes the boys to out of pocket.

(Journal Entry, Sat. 07/23/05, RACE)

We sit in the van a few minutes before climbing out to register. Duane and I have discovered, by reading the registration forms more closely, that the boys and I won’t be able to form a team, since we’re in different age categories. Duane already has the check made out for all of us though (he was going to pay for my entry since we thought I’d be on the boys’ team), so we agree I’ll pay him back next week. The race is $15 a person, so Duane shells out $75 for us all to run.

(Fieldnotes, Sun. 02/25/07, RACE)

A couple of times during my participant observation races were cancelled without any notice. Duane had quite a few residents planning to attend these events, and was very frustrated at finding they were cancelled upon arrival at the race cites:

I call the center and ask for Duane. Bill tells me they’ve been to [the race site] and got back already, but Duane went somewhere. He tells me to call back in ten minutes.

“This is the second time a race [there] has been changed or cancelled. It’s getting old,” I tell Bill.

“Yeah, Duane was pretty irritated,” Bill replies.
When I call back and talk to Duane, it’s obvious from his voice that he was “irritated.”

“They just lost $105 for their organization,” he says. (The race was $15 a person and he had 6 kids going today.)

(Fieldnotes, Sat. 03/03/07, cancelled race)

Another reason that participants of the running program seemed to become attached or bonded with Duane was that he served as a positive male role model for them, playing the part of mentor and coach on many occasions. He offered them advice not only about running, but about life. I also witnessed several moments of obvious male
bonding, as Duane and the boys discussed girls or relationships. Although the concept of a role model, teacher, or mentor may sound much like an aspect of social learning theory, it is very relevant to social bond theory as well, especially in increasing the social bond of attachment. When adults involved in the running program act as role models or mentors, they often fill a place in residents’ lives that is lacking: that of the father figure. It is evident why residents might form a stronger bond with adults involved in the running program which take this position, rather than with other faculty whom they interact with throughout the course of their normal routine.

Adults who kept up with the running program recognized Duane as a role model, coach, or mentor and expressed this during our interviews. Note the following quotes, the first from the executive director at RCCF, and the second and third from the two probate juvenile judges I spoke with:

And I think Duane’s a tremendous role model for kids. You know he has been where they’ve been, he’s been clean for eighteen years, he works out every day, it’s something he believes in. He’s a sixty-four year old man who can keep up with them, and I think they respect that. Very few of our kids have had, first of all, any kind of male role model, let alone a positive one, so I think it’s very important. Wish you could find one in every community that these boys are from.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

[A] lot of the kids or the boys don’t have a real male role model to look up to and I think just want to show Duane they can do it. He’s kind of a fatherly figure, which a lot of them have never had and, quite frankly, probably never will have.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

I think for a lot of them it has I think, part of its just Duane being Duane, the other part of it is the sense of having a coach, a teacher, a mentor, a positive male role model which a lot of them don’t have. So I think there’s a lot of good that comes from that and they do learn that it’s okay to attach to somebody and Duane continually demonstrates positive attributes that just being around and seeing, kids have to have respect.
- Robert, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

One judge even suggested that Duane not only serves as a role model for residents, but for RCCF faculty and staff as well, pointing to Duane’s devotion to the running program.
and to those who participate, and the difference this devotion makes in his relationships with the residents:

I think [RCCF faculty and staff] are very proud of the program. Duane’s a role model to them too. Because you spend all your time with these kids and sometimes you just wanna get out of there and be with a bunch of adults and talk to people with some maturity. And when you elect to spend extra time, and your time, going along doing some of this stuff it speaks volumes beyond your natural commitment.
- Robert, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

I noticed many ways in which Duane played the role of the teacher, but what I discovered, and what other adults noticed as well, is that he does it in such a way that he never comes across as bossy or authoritative to the residents. The following quote from one of the juvenile judges focuses on this unique ability:

They learn [things] from Duane where they’re not just sitting in a classroom getting lectured to, or required to read this material, or learn to answer questions on a test… Duane does a lot of teaching with his coaching that is life’s lessons and teaching that’s kind of, it’s not - He just slips it in there. They don’t know that it’s happening to them. It’s just there; he’s doing it all the time just subtly, and to the extent that they decide they wanna be a better person and do a better job with their life. It’s because of the things Duane has said and demonstrated at least as much as anything they’ve picked up from the discipline part.
- Robert, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

During my research I observed many cases in which residents absorbed life lessons from Duane. His subtle technique of teaching through regular conversation is obvious from the following two selections from my field notes:

On the drive to the section of the bikepath we’ll be running, Duane talks about education. Getting into the van, one of the boys had been singing – “we don’t need no education…” “That’s what I used to think,” Duane tells them. “Then you get older and you realize how important it really is.” I agree.

So during the drive Duane talks about how everyone always expected him to go to college, since he did well in high school. He had a scholarship offer to play ball, but turned it down because he didn’t want to go through two years of school before even getting the opportunity to play, which I guess is the way it used to be. He went to Viet Nam instead.
(Fieldnotes, Thurs. 11/30/06)

Duane tells me about his nephew that died. [He was out for the funeral the last couple of days.] He was only twenty-seven, only a year older than some of my good friends. He overdosed, and Duane names several different drugs that were in his system. “Alcohol, cocaine, oxys, and something else. Maybe Vicodin.”
(Fieldnotes, Thurs. 02/15/07)
The above selections may at first glance appear to be pieces from any normal conversation, but in the context of the corrective environment they become significant. It is clear when present for such conversations that residents often absorb the slight inferences made by Duane. It is important to note here that the concept of the role model, especially in this context, may also increase the social bond of belief. If leaders and other adults participating in the running program can serve as role models to residents, this presents opportunities for moral development, problem solving, and fair-play. All of these were discussed in the review of the literature and represent a strengthening of residents’ belief in the validity of the rules of society.

In addition to being a role model, I found that Duane does something else for participants of the running program: he trusts them. The extent of his trust is the highlight of the following journal excerpt from my participation in the running program in 2005. This entry was made after my very first day participating in the running program and my surprise at the level of trust Duane had for the boys is evident:

When we began to run, I was surprised to see that Duane directed the boys on when they should turn around to have 3.1 miles and he prepared to run the opposite direction! I jogged along at a slow pace with Duane and he explained that when he brought them out to do things like this he liked to allow them a little bit of freedom without having to see him peeking over their shoulders the whole time. I thought this was really cool and I’m sure it is a great motivation to the boys, knowing they can’t betray Duane’s trust, since he trusts them so much.

(Journal Entry, Fri. 06/24/05)

This trust increased participants’ attachment to him and, according to those I interviewed, affected their behavior because they didn’t want to let him down or abuse his trust. The following lines are from my interview with a former resident and regular participant of the running program several months ago:

[Duane’s trust] encouraged me to actually walk the straight line pretty much for him, because if somebody had that much trust in me while I was here, to actually just let us go running, I mean, that’s a lot of trust.
E: Right, right.
B: So yeah. It pretty much encouraged me.
- Barry, former resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Others connected to the running program also noticed how Duane’s trust in participants encouraged them to stay out of trouble. Jerry, the recreation coordinator at RCCF, discussed this during our interview:

Well it’s just, with the staff, whoever it might be just expressing trust in them. They know they’re gonna run the trail or the course, and it just expresses a confidence, trust in the boys, and again that encourages them, they know they have to come back to the starting point at a certain time. So I think it probably helps them just to know that somebody’s trusting them enough, I can go this way you go this way, we’ll be back here in 30 minutes or whatever. So it’s definitely that, you know. Because here at the center they’re watched 24/7 so it’s a time for them to be out on their own, so it’s gotta help them.
- Jerry, Recreation Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Duane also recognized the effect that his trust had on the participants and stressed the importance he thought this had for the running program and for the boys during our interview:

I think a lot of times when people get in trouble they lose that trust and I think that by showing them that they can be trusted and that they can trust themselves when they’re out like that I think that’s probably one of the better things that maybe I do with them running. You know, like since you’ve run with me, you know when I take them to a run I give them a lot of freedom and I’m not always, you know, trying to think of how to put it… I’m not always riding on their back and stuff like that, I usually use a different term for it.
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

It is important to note here that although the trust that Duane gives residents is perceived to have a positive effect on participants of the running program, there are instances in which this trust can be taken advantage of. I did not witness any examples of betrayed trust during either my internship or my participant observation, but this is likely because residents recognized that they would probably get into trouble for misbehaving in my presence. However, I do recall one instance in which several runners violated Duane’s
trust so severely that he threatened to quit running with them altogether. During one of the other trips off-grounds, a couple of residents stole a lighter from a gas station and also somehow had in their possession a pack of cigarettes. They hid these in one of the seats in the big green van that we often took to the running sites, and would pretend to be stretching while Duane and I left the van ahead of them. They would then stay behind and smoke, and then try to run. It didn’t take long before they were caught, and Duane at first told them that it was the end of the running program. All of the runners were extremely upset, especially those who had not been a part of this little scheme, and it was several weeks before everything was back to normal. Several discussion groups were devoted to figuring out how to deal with this incident, and in the end residents wrote sincere apology letters to Duane, who eventually agreed to begin running with them again. All of those residents who had participated in the smoking incident received severe sanctions at RCCF, most of them falling back multiple zones. They were then required to redo all of their zonework and earn all of their points back before they were allowed to participate in the running program again.

It is evident from the above paragraphs that the running program at RCCF in many way increases the attachment of participants to Duane, who puts a great deal of himself into providing this opportunity for them. I will now move into a discussion of how the running program increases the attachment of participants to their parents or families, and how it strengthens the parent-child bond.
Attachment to Parents

In addition to the bonds of attachment formed between participants of the running program and Duane are the bonds that form between participants and their parents as a result of the time the program provides them to spend together, among other reasons. Duane has, on many occasions gone out of his way to provide parenting opportunities through the running program. He explained these efforts to me once, at the very beginning of my participant observation.

Well, and I’ve gotten family involved. They’ll go to the races and then they get extra time to visit with their kids, you know, and sometimes we’ll have a little picnic for everyone.
(Fieldnotes, Sat. 12/09/06)

I attended several such events during my time at the center as an intern and as a participant observer. As an intern, my very first race with the RCCF running program was a Fourth of July 5K, after which Duane had planned something for the runners and their families.

Today was the 5K race in [a city about an hour away from RCCF]. Duane had a full load in the van, so I followed him down in my Jeep again. […] After the race … we went to another part of the park and had a picnic. Sammy’s dad was there, as well as Jim’s girlfriend and her two kids. We threw a football around a little. […] I stayed for a little while at the picnic and then headed home. It was a really fun Fourth of July!
(Journal Entry, Mon. 07/04/05, RACE)

Another example of the effort Duane put into providing these family occasions occurred towards the end of my participant observation, when he organized a race on the bikepath for any RCCF resident who wanted to participate, providing prizes for each of them and awards for the top finishers. Many of their families came to watch, and afterwards our whole group walked across the parking lot to the community recreation center, where a pancake dinner was taking place. Duane provided the tickets for the benefit dinner,
which were $5 each, for everyone. The following extended quote from my fieldnotes shows the family response that this event generated.

Several of the boys have family there. Ralph has a crowd, Paul’s grandma or mom and a niece, Jeremy’s dad. I let Kasey use my cell phone to try to call his mom. They’ll get an extra hour or so for visiting/parenting if she comes to get him. We wait until 10:30 in case anyone else’s family member/s show up, then head over to the bikepath, which runs right behind the community center. Duane and I both have cameras. […] After the race] when the awards are over, we stay around by the bikepath and picnic tables for a few minutes, taking group pictures of the boys and their families, [which Duane later gives to the boys]. Then we start down towards the recreation center for the pancakes. I let Kasey use my phone again; his mom still hasn’t shown, but he wants to make sure she comes so he’ll get the extra hour visit. […] His mom eventually showed up and he left with her for his allowed visit.

The sky is starting to turn dark, and I’m glad we’re heading inside. It looks like it’ll start pouring any minute. As we approach the community center, Duane makes sure everyone has a ticket. They are $5 each and he hands them out to all of us, boys, parents, and me. (Fieldnotes, Sat. 03/10/07, RCCF RACE)

The above quote not only illustrates Duane’s efforts at including residents’ families in the running program, it also hints at his generosity in encouraging parental involvement and the lengths that he goes to in making parents feel welcome and needed as part of the program. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes further demonstrates the value that Duane puts into this parental involvement:

When we get ready to leave, we ask for boxes. There is way too much food served here to eat in one sitting. Duane tells the waitress to put everything on one check. Then we go to the register. Duane foots the bill for the entire group!! It ends up being almost $80 ($79 and change)!! I try to give Duane my $10 bill, but he won’t take it.

As we leave, Corey’s mom pulls out her purse. “How much do I owe you?” she asks Duane. “Nothing. Just that you came, that’s enough for me. This counts as parenting, too. I always tell the boys to tell their parents to come to these races, because then you get four or five extra hours together.”

“Well – thank you,” says Corey’s mom, surprised at his generosity.

“Yeah, thanks Duane,” says one of the boys, I don’t see who, from ahead of us. (Fieldnotes, 01/07/07, RACE)

During our interview, Duane explained in depth his efforts to involve family in the running program, expressing the effect he believes this involvement has and why it is necessary.
Yeah, I’ve always encouraged boys to call their parents. The parents here are court ordered to have what they call ten parenting classes while their kids are here. And over the years it developed into parenting credit for parenting if they come to watch the boys run and participate. Like sometimes we’ll have a little picnic or something after the run with the parents or sometimes go, parents are invited to come have pizza or something like that with us and I give em credit for parenting for that. […] The more positive activities I think that the parents and the boys can be exposed to, I think that really helps the relationship then between the parents and the child. Cause a lot of times I think these kids get somewhat alienated from the parents cause they really don’t think they care or something like that. Or a lot of times it’s the frustration on the parent’s part of not knowing how to deal with this teenager here. […] And I think from losing that type of, maintaining some type of discipline, the kids just get to feeling the parents don’t really care when such is the opposite. I think the parents just a lot of times just get frustrated because they don’t know how to deal with it. […] And I think that that’s where the separation begins. And I think this kind of like brings them back together, shows that there’s still some positive things that we can do.
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

The boys often times looked forward to events and races that they accompanied Duane to because it gave them this extra time with their families. On our way home from one race, one of the residents expressed his disappointment that his father wasn’t able to make it, illustrating the value that this potential family time has for them:

“My dad probably couldn’t find it,” Terry suddenly says. “It’s kind of disappointing but…”

“Oh, yeah!” I exclaim, forgetting that his dad was supposed to be there today. “He didn’t know where it was?”

“He knows where [the town] is,” Terry says, but the race wasn’t in town. It was up on a hill at a church and out a back road that we probably would’ve had trouble finding if we didn’t know what we were looking for. “He was probably mad,” Terry continues.

“Did he have to drive a long way?”

“An hour and a half.”

(Fieldnotes, Sun. 03/04/07, RACE)

This quote not only illustrates the apparent value of the running program in providing a venue for family interaction, it also makes clear the effort that some family members make in showing support for their children and devoting time to activities that provide an opportunity for them to develop or deepen their relationships with their sons. Duane later focused his attention on the effect that such parental involvement and increased support has on residents:
When the parents get involved in it and show the kids that they care, and I don’t care if it’s the running program or what it is, if the parents show that they care and can get over all of the frustrations that’s been built up over the years, they have a real good chance of making it, making it a lot easier anyway. Cause again they’ll have that positive support that they need. Anything like that that can make it easier gives them better chances of success. And that’s what I say, that’s why I always encourage parents to participate. By participate I mean to come and watch. Cause I think that’s a very important component of it also.

- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Many of those that I spoke with about the effects of the running program felt that the parent-child bond was strengthened because parents were given a reason to be proud of their child, and their expression of this pride improved the relationship. As one of the judges explained:

B: I know some of the kids I’ve had I’ve known here, come back for team meetings, their parents have been here for their release dates, that’s the first thing the parents say is how proud they are, he got second in his age group, he got fifth overall. I think parents, they want something to be proud of their kids about. Sometimes that’s the first time parents have ever been proud of them for anything. And sometimes it’s the parents’ fault more than the kids.

E: And then how do you think that that reaction of the parents, how do you think it affects the kids?

B: Oh I think it affects the kids very well, because kids strive on praise and sometimes they don’t get a lot of positive reinforcement at home so there’s these negative things, you know they’re sometimes told you’ll never do this, you’ll never do that and when you’ve done something maybe it wakes the parent up as well. But kids want positive reinforcement, and you’re only blessed with one dad and one mom in this world and you want your parents to be proud of you no matter what.

- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

The executive director of the center verbalized a similar opinion on the way that pride could increase the parent-child bond:

A: I think that it definitely has increased their attachment to Duane because it is not only running a race, it’s a lot of social interaction. Additionally, the parents who come have often, at least for a long time, not seen their child in a positive light. And here they are running in a 5K race, often times placing in their age group, and this is something that parents can begin to again feel some pride in their child, you know they’re not going to court with them, they’re not reading about their antics in the paper, they’re not waiting for a telephone call saying your kid’s in jail, or dead. So that is very positive. […]

E: Why do you think that they might become more attached to faculty or Duane, that they might be more attached to Duane or their parents?

A: Well I think parents become more attached to them because many of our parents, quite frankly, are burned out on their kids. And to see their kids doing something positively I think, reestablishes or at least nurtures that parent-child bond. And if the kids see that their parents are proud of them that enhances that thought that’s been kind of weakened shall we say by events that have happened.

- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)
Residents, too, noted pride and its significance in increasing attachment through the running program. The following excerpt from an interview with a current resident illustrates this process:

I think I got a little attached to Duane, a little bit. [...] With my parents too, because my parents they was more proud of me, you know, seeing me do something. I never did like to do any sports or anything. They’re just proud of me. [...] We get along a lot better.
- Ralph, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

This quote also illustrates the way that residents and their parents in many cases are drawn together through the running program.

The above data have provided much evidence suggesting that the running program at RCCF can, in a variety of ways, increase the attachment of participants to Duane, who serves as an excellent role model for troubled youth, as well as to their parents and families. I will now explore how the running program increases participants’ commitment to society, often making them work harder to stay out of trouble and giving them more to lose if they continue to disobey society’s rules and laws.

**Commitment**

As was discussed in the review of the literature, an increase in the commitment of participants of the running program to society can be shown in a number of ways, leading them to put more effort into staying out of trouble. For example, improved academic performance and increased athletic or extracurricular involvement can lead to a greater commitment to conventional society because these changes give individuals more to lose if they get into trouble. I found many examples in my research that suggest increased commitment in this way, as well as in other, emerging ways. In addition to school performance and athletic involvement, I found that residents often become much more
committed to society because the running program offers them an enhanced understanding of the freedom they risk losing if they are caught participating in criminal activities. I also found that the running program at RCCF, and running in general, can lead to a much more organized life-style, as self-discipline is a must and deviant behaviors are not conducive to top performance. Participants are working towards a goal and the more organized lifestyle that results causes them to be more committed to society because it gives them much more to lose: all of the progress they have made. Many types of criminal activities would result in the loss of much of this progress. In the following, these aspects of commitment will be explored through the data gathered.

I will soon examine the aforementioned ways that the running program increases the commitment of residents to the larger society, making them more likely to want to stay out of trouble. However, it is first useful to provide examples of ways that it results in their staying out of trouble at RCCF, which in itself is a major benefit of the program. As the Executive Director of RCCF confided during our interview,

> With just a few exceptions, I would say kids involved in the running program do not get in as much trouble.
> - Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

During my internship at RCCF in 2005, I also noticed the behavior differences in the residents who participated in the running program. The following journal entry shows the improvement in behavior for one of the residents whom I accompanied to a team meeting, and the appreciation he was shown for this change.

> Today was a long but fun day at the center. I came in early to go to the team meeting with Brian. […] The meeting went great. Lots of praise was given to Brian [one of my fellow runners] for doing better with behavior in a few areas, and they encouraged him to do better. He may be able to be released before school starts in the fall.
> (Journal Entry, Thurs. 07/28/05)
The following paragraphs will now explain how these behavior changes occurred through an increased commitment of participants to society, and the running program.

The following selection from my fieldnotes illustrates an example of how the running program inspires residents of RCCF to behave during their stay there:

As we’re walking down the hallway, Jason says to Terry and Ralph behind us, “That’s the only reason I stayed out of trouble this week: So I could run.” […] We take off for the bikepath. […] I hear Jason from the middle seat, telling Ralph and Terry, “I’m gonna try to stay out of trouble, so I can start running with you guys.”

(Fieldnotes, Thurs. 02/15/07)

I heard much the same thing about why the running program has this effect when I interviewed current and former participants of the program, as the following quotes show:

[The running program] had a little effect on my behavior, you know, if you didn’t do good here, you know. Duane won’t take you.
-Ralph, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

I knew if I got in trouble that they’d take, like if you had your offgrounds and you got in trouble, you’d lose your off-grounds. If you got in trouble here, the staff would stop taking you to do things until you resolved the sanction they put you on. So it helped. And I always wanted to get out and do stuff so, you know, I know I didn’t, I mean I tried not to get in trouble and I tried to think things through more…
-Barry, former resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

One of the judges that I interviewed reasoned that the fact that the running program is a privilege that is earned through good behavior and other requirements (rather than a mandatory or regimented exercise requirement) is one of the things that makes the program effective. He explains in the following extended quote how having to earn the privilege to participate helps residents try harder to stay out of trouble:

Well one thing is it is very much a privilege to do this. There’s no right to be part of this. The whole nature of the program at HVCRC is about earning, earning respect, earning freedoms, earning liberties, earning privileges, and you do that by demonstrating that you deserve it and it’s not just “I’ve been a good boy for an hour, give me a piece of candy,” it’s the, you know, how have you done for a series of weeks here living under the rules and restrictions, and you’ve demonstrated that you’re ready to go to the next level, and earn more of your freedoms and
privileges. So the fact that it’s privileges is an important part of this. There have been some very, very disappointed young boys who have lost the privilege and didn’t have a chance to participate in the next race or the next event. And there’s a lesson to be learned in that as well, so I think the fact that it’s an earned privilege is one of the best requirements, it’s an earned privilege. That’s one of the best things about this program.

-Robert, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

Jerry, the recreation coordinator at RCCF makes a similar point, noting how good behavior is necessary for those who wish to participate in the running program:

Here at the center they’re not allowed to go off grounds if they’ve encountered any kind of problems behaviorally while they’re here at the center. So if they wanna stay with the running program, they have to behave in a proper way, or we won’t take them off grounds. So if they wanna continue to run they have to maintain their behavior.

-Jerry, Recreation Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Duane also points out that residents often follow the rules while at RCCF. However, he goes a step further in noting that circumstances are much different when residents are released, especially if they have drug or alcohol problems. The following quote from our interview makes this clear, as well as points out the presence of the major aspect of commitment to following the rules: knowing what one has to lose.

While they’re here I think, yeah, they definitely know that they should follow the rules. Uh, again like I say, you know, if you understand addiction you know that when they get out and they’re faced with that again that is a real tough adversary. […] And I think that sometimes they get out there and they get involved in all of this and it’s going on around them and they’re trying to stay involved in it, but again, they have that tendency to relapse right back into it. I think they’ll do well for a while, but after that… But again, like that one question alluded to, I think they know what they’re gonna be giving up.

-Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

This statement not only highlights the challenges that individuals with drug and alcohol problems face, along with Duane’s understanding of these challenges, it also gives evidence of an increase in commitment. Although Duane notes how easy it is for those who are addicted to relapse, he also points out that residents now realize what they could be giving up by doing so. I will now move into a discussion of how the running program
at RCCF has the potential to increase youths’ commitment to conventional society and to staying out of trouble through improved academic performance.

*Commitment through Improved Academic Performance*

As was stated in previous paragraphs, an increase in commitment can sometimes be caused by an improvement in academic performance. This is because better performance in school often leads to a brighter future, as was explained in the theoretical approach of this paper, and the prospect of a brighter future gives youths more to lose if they get into trouble.

As was noted in the previous section, one very important aspect of the running program is the fact that it is a privilege to be earned. Not only are residents who wish to participate in the program required to behave, they are also required to perform at a certain standard in their academic classes. If residents’ grades drop, they are not permitted to participate in the program until the grades come back up. Note this example from my fieldnotes:

Soon after we’re outside and starting across the parking lot, Greg sticks his head out the front door.
“Jason,” he yells over to us. “You’re supposed to be on supervised study!”
“I got my grade up!” Jason yells back.
“She says she hasn’t graded it yet, come back in here.”
Jason looks at Duane. “Sorry Duane,” he says apologetically, sincerely sorry.
“It’s alright,” Duane replies. “Go on back.”
Jason hands Duane’s toboggan back and goes back into the center.
(Fieldnotes, Thurs. 02/01/07)

Duane and the other faculty members and teachers at RCCF keep track of academic performance, and residents who are falling behind in school rarely slip through the cracks and participate in extra activities when having problems with school. I should note here that this is one of the only good examples of this in my fieldnotes, but in a way this
makes good sense. If participants in the running program understand that their grades have to be in decent shape in order to participate in the program, they will work harder to keep them that way. Thus, it seems reasonable that there would be few examples of runners having academic problems to the point of being restricted from participation.

One of the judges pointed to the way the running program sometimes inspired residents to work hard on their schoolwork or zonework, providing a motivation for keeping on track with the workload:

The three that I’ve had that I’m aware of have been there, have all, well I’ll say this, three of them got through pretty quickly. One of them, one of them didn’t, but the running thing kind of kept him going. At least got him to do some of his zone work, maybe a little slower than the rest of them, but at least he did it.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

This same judge also makes note of the way continuing to run after release, such as with a track or cross country team, may keep former residents on the ball with their schoolwork. He shares his perceptions of the effects of running with school athletic teams on academic performance in the following quote:

And it helps you I think, if you do have a kid that goes to like Hocking Valley and goes back and runs on his cross country team, generally your cross country kids are your 4.0 students that are running, because they’re self-motivators… Maybe a little better kid than what you had before and you raise your grade point average, your self-worth and self-esteem, things like that.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

Not only does this quote point to the benefits of running and being around a group of people who are also working hard, it also brings to our attention the effect running has on self-worth and self-esteem. This is a very important part of the running program as well, and it will be discussed in detail in later sections.
Commitment through Athletic/Extracurricular Involvement

The ways in which athletic or extracurricular activities can increase the commitment of youth to staying out of trouble was also discussed in the theoretical approach. As was mentioned, those who exercise regularly participate in more sports, and since many deviant or illegal behaviors for youth, especially the use of drugs and alcohol, are not compatible with prime athletic performance, they risk losing their places on the team. Also, because many schools restrict the eligibility of athletes who are in trouble, their eligibility is at stake.

It stands to reason, then, that if the running program, a very regular source of exercise, is able to increase the involvement of participants in athletic or other extracurricular activities after their release, that this should increase the extent to which the youth is committed to society. This increased commitment in turn can lead to a desistance from criminal activity. I have gathered numerous examples of this process, but since involvement in conventional activities is itself a social bond, I will wait until that section to provide such evidence.

Commitment through an Enhanced Appreciation of Freedom

One factor that emerged during my data analysis was the concept of freedom. Specifically, participants learned that freedom was a privilege that could be taken away; both freedom granted through the running program and general freedom after release. My research suggested that the running program gave participants an enhanced appreciation of it, leading them to be more committed to society because they realized after this transformation that they have their freedom to lose if they do not desist from
criminal activities. The meaning of freedom for these boys was transformed in this way, as they began to recognize it as a “privilege” rather than a “right.” As will be shown in following paragraphs, this commitment affected their behavior at RCCF as they committed to follow the rules in order to earn the freedom that participation in the running program afforded; it also made them more committed to following the rules after their release because they now understood that their freedom could be taken away if they failed to do so. The following example has been used in a previous discussion regarding the trust that Duane has for participants of the program. However, it will be useful again in order to illustrate my initial reaction to the great deal of freedom participants are given. This excerpt is taken from my journal entry from the very first day I participated in the running program with Duane and the boys:

> When we began to run, I was surprised to see that Duane directed the boys on when they should turn around to have 3.1 miles and he prepared to run the opposite direction! I jogged along at a slow pace with Duane and he explained that when he brought them out to do things like this he liked to allow them a little bit of freedom without having to see him peeking over their shoulders the whole time. I thought this was really cool and I’m sure it is a great motivation to the boys, knowing they can’t betray Duane’s trust, since he trusts them so much.
> (Journal Entry, Fri. 06/24/05)

The following example from my fieldnotes also illustrates the freedom residents are given through the running program:

> When we park by the bikepath and load out, some of the boys start to stretch. “I forgot you were coming today,” Terry says to me. I tell them I was going to come yesterday, but no one went running.
> “Which way do we go?” Don asks.
> “I’m going this way,” Terry states, pointing back towards [the center]. “Duane usually goes that way.” He points towards [the other direction] now.
> (Fieldnotes, Thurs. 11/30/06)

It is clear from the above conversation that not only do residents appreciate this freedom, their actions are often dependent on it. Terry deliberately runs in an opposite direction as Duane in order to gain for himself some sense of being truly free.
During our interview, Duane further describes the freedoms awarded by the running program and why he thinks residents appreciate it so much. He goes on later to point out why such freedoms are important. Note the following two selections from our interview:

The ones that run with me probably like it better than most of the other programs, cause again you get out, I give em a little more freedom, they’re meeting other kids their age. We’re an all male resident program and they actually get out and talk to some girls their own age and stuff that’s involved in there and everything, and they kind of like that. And you know if I was a teenager in all honesty I would like that too. [I laugh]
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

And so I try to give em that freedom and everything like that, to let em have that experience so they can talk with other people that’s at the run, because a lot of runs we have a lot of youth, a lot of younger kids at the run. Some of them are runners themselves for their schools and stuff. And our guys will talk with them a lot of times. And so, again, they’re interacting with kids their own age that aren’t in trouble. And again, they’re seeing different people under different situations. It’s the same way like with me as a staff member, they see me in a different light like that because you know, we’re no longer staff and resident, we are now you know, on an equal footing out here running, and I give em that freedom that they can feel that way.
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Duane recognizes the importance of freedom to the running program and in many instances, as the following selection from my fieldnotes shows, he bases decisions about which races to attend on where he will be able to let residents have more freedoms:

I ask Duane if he’s called about the upcoming race in [a city a couple of hours away].
“I’ve decided not to do that race,” he tells me. “I talked to my sister who lives up around there, and she says there’s usually 1,500 – 1,600 people in it, so I’m calling about one in [a small town].”
“You don’t like to run the bigger races?”
“I have to keep a better eye on the boys. I like to give them a little freedom when we go to the races, and just can’t at those big ones.” Duane tells me [this town] is just a dot on the map, so it should be a good race.
(Fieldnotes, Sat. 12/09/06)

The following example from my field notes demonstrates this freedom Duane gives his runners at the road races:

After I register I hang out with them for a while. Duane is mingling with other runners as well, giving the boys a little freedom, and giving Corey time to hang out with his mom and friends (siblings, girlfriend?). I see runners from other races to talk to, plus a guy friend from high school, plus my family, so I’m back and forth not spending all of my time with the boys before the run.
It's okay, though, I think the boys appreciate that. Its part of why the running program is so different from other facility programs: the boys have an opportunity to interact like normal teenagers with the constant supervision of some faculty member, watching their every move. Duane gives them space to be normal. No one would ever know they are residents at a place like RCCF. (Fieldnotes, 01/07/07, RACE)

Duane comments on why he makes such an effort at not only letting residents experience a sense of freedom, but on giving participants an opportunity to feel like normal teenagers through this experience. He points to the fact that residents often make sacrifices in order to participate in the program, and so he feels he should have the same consideration for them:

So, but again, you know, they’re giving up a lot of their free time that they could be doing zone work, which is part of their movement. Lot of times they tell their parents to come visit at another time, so they do make sacrifices and I think that it behooves me then, since they’re making sacrifices, to do something a little better. And I do do that. And again, you know, that’s why I think it’s probably one of the few programs that we do here where they actually get to feel like they’re quote quasi-normal kids again.
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

During my interviews with current and former residents, the topic of freedom came up often. Residents noted that they were motivated to participate in the running program because it gave them an opportunity to leave the grounds, and afforded some semblance of freedom. The following three quotes, from the two current residents and former resident who I interviewed provide an answer to why residents choose to participate in the program:

E: [W]hy do you like the running program? What is it that, you know, that makes you wanna go and run three miles?
R: A lot of people just like getting out, you know, enjoying ourselves. Me, I like getting out, enjoying myself, and getting away from here.
- Ralph, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

E: And did he ask you to start running, or did you see how he goes up and kind of makes the announcement –
M: Yeah, I knew it got me out of the building.
E: Um-hm, got you out of the building. I’ve heard that a lot from everyone. Um, how would you describe your experiences with the running program?
M: Good. I really liked it. Meet new people, go different places I never been.
- Marley, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

B: Well, it got me to get out from here, and also go to see other places, like I really hadn’t ever been around here, so it was pretty adventurous. […] Cause, I got to like go outside and actually get away from… I could forget about what was going on in here and just like, concentrated on running and like, seeing the outside. And I think that’s why… And plus, I used a lot of energy, so I think that’s what had a lot of effect on me.
- Barry, former resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

One current resident goes even further in describing why he thinks the running program helps residents realize that their freedom is on the line if they get into trouble after release, as well as while at RCCF. Note the following selection from our interview:

E: Do you think you might feel that you have more to lose now than before you were sent to HVCRC?
M: Yes.
E: Yeah?
M: It’s all the little things, like, we get our freedom taken away, and it’s all the little things that we realize that we miss.
E: Little things like…?
M: Like eating whatever I want to when I want to, how I want to, talking at the dinner table, uh, talking on the phone whenever I want to, to whoever I want to call, going outside whenever I want to.
E: Right. Do you think that the running program has helped you maybe realize in any way what is at stake if you do get into trouble?
M: Yeah, because when Duane gives us our freedom, if we get in trouble at all during the week, he don’t let us go to the run. So that shows us that we need to stay out of trouble, to keep what we got, that way we can go.
- Marley, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Duane recognizes how the freedom provided by the running program plays a role in helping residents deal with their time at the center, and the fact that many participants initially just want to leave the grounds. He echoes many of the above feelings of participants in the following extended quote from our interview:

And plus here it gives you a way from the routine. I went through a treatment center in Columbus myself and I find that there’s a lot of tension that builds up with being locked up like that. You know, when you’re freedom’s kind of restricted, and just to get away from it, and you know that’s the only reason even that you’re going out to run is just trying to get away from that tension and that edge just building up there. And you know, it’s good for you while you’re here so you know, hopefully you’ll follow through with it, but if not if it’s here it serves that purpose, while it’s here it gets you away and get rid of some of that edge and tension that just builds up with being in a
place like this and… People that’s never experienced being deprived of their freedom like that
don’t really, wouldn’t really understand what I’m talking about. I mean they might think they do
but they really don’t understand what it really is like, cause there’s that little tension that builds up
each day, and sometimes you’re not even aware of it, you’re just kind of on an edge each day just
from having that, not being able to do what you want to and you’re, you have to repress so much
that you’re not used to doing, and it kind of helps release some of that. You know, when you get
to run it releases some of that tension and some of that repressed feeling that builds up.
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Other adults connected to the running program at RCCF also recognized the importance
of the freedom residents experienced through the program and pointed to ways in which
this freedom could make them more committed to society, affecting behavior after
release. The following three interview excerpts, the first from the executive director at
RCCF and the second and third from two juvenile judges, suggest that freedom is in
many ways a state of mind, and that residents can learn a lot about it and how to keep it
by participating in the running program. Through their experiences in the running
program, the meaning and nature of freedom is being transformed for them as they begin
to view it as a “privilege” that can be taken away rather than a “right.”

But I think that being locked up, being incarcerated, is more of a state of mind than a physical
thing, at least here. I mean a prison obviously is a pretty physical thing, but I think that when
they’re placed at the center they do have that state of mind that they are incarcerated. I think being
out and running, in a physical sense as well as in a spiritual sense, gives them that concept of
freedom. Um, and maybe an appreciation – a more enhanced appreciation of what freedom really
means. That, you know, we’re all free as long as we can stay within the white lines. And they’re
pretty- lot of latitude in the white lines to have a good time. Uh, but you step outside of those
white lines and somebody’s gonna curtail your freedom.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Oh, I think just like any kid that’s in the program, when you’re out there running free, doing a 5K
course, 3.1 miles, and you’re out in the woods, and you think Oh, I could just bolt from here,
they’ll never find me again (which they will, cause they always find them), I think that he says I
got this moment in time where I can make a decision to free myself maybe definition-wise by
running, but in a way I can free myself by doing what, serving my time, doing what I’m supposed
to do, and kind of a Shawshank Redemption type thing, cleanse my soul and move on with the rest
of my life. […] Kids that make the decision on their course to finish the race, show back up the
way you’re supposed to do have learned the lesson that they’re there for.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

RCCF is, as you know, having interned there, is what is considered in our industry as staff secure,
so it doesn’t have lockdown doors and it doesn’t have fences and barbed wire, and bars on doors,
and those kinds of things, so at any given time, with not a whole lot of planning, the youth can go out one of those doors and take off running if they want to. So when you take them, and take them out and put 'em in the woods, or take them to another community someplace, and the gun goes off and they start running, you know they could always turn right when the group turns left and, you know, we don’t find them a half hour later. And we realize that they bolted on us. So it presents that opportunity. And I’ve seen some of them just really proud of the fact that they got back on that bus, and went back like they were supposed to, that they were out there and, you know, part of their brain probably told them “If you wanted to, you could get away,” but the other part told them “But [indecipherable]. Just go back.” So you give them a little bit of rope and see what they do.
- Robert, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

The above quotes make it obvious that the running program plays a large role in transforming participants’ understanding of freedom, both small freedoms granted during their incarceration and the larger freedom they will have after release. Duane also points out the difference between RCCF and other correctional facilities, especially in regards to those small freedoms:

You know, it’s like I just answered a while ago, if you get into trouble again you have a chance of losing your freedom, you know. And again, we do a lot with the kids here that aren’t done at other facilities. And again, so you know, try to make them understand that they jeopardize going to a place that’s gonna be a lot stricter, there’s gonna be a lot less for them to experience at those place, cause those places are mainly lock down places, you know. The people that work there are gods. Their only responsibility is to see that you go from point A to point B. That’s it, that’s the only thing they’re there for. They ain’t worried about how you might be upset or why you might be upset or how you’re feeling that day or if they see you, they ain’t interested in those things. You know, you’re going from point A to point B. Period. You know, that’s it. They ain’t worried about, is there something here I can do that might be a motivator for them, to get em to maybe wanna change things, that I can introduce them to. They ain’t interested in that. You’re going from point A to point B. And again, we’re about trying to introduce the kids, and on my part too, the parents to things that can do positive things. So again I think, yeah they have to realize that that’s at stake. You know, of losing that.
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Duane points out the way he tries to introduce participants of the running program to positive experiences through the freedom he grants them, so that when they are released they’ll have a deeper understanding of just how much they have to lose. As he explains, many of the residents at RCCF have never been incarcerated before, and losing their freedom has shown them what is at stake. Furthermore, by granting them small freedoms through the running program, Duane demonstrates to them that freedom must be earned
on a small scale as well as on a large scale. As he points out in the following extended quote, this freedom allows them to appreciate what they have to lose after their release:

I think that you know, they get used to having a lot of good positive experiences and I think that a lot of them do realize that when they go back out, if they start doing some of the things that they used to do, yeah there’s a lot to lose. Cause for a lot of them that come here, this is their first time with being locked up. And I know when we first started the interview I mentioned the word freedom, and you know when you get locked up you lose your freedom cause here, we tell you when you can go to the shower, you have to go to the bathroom, we tell you when you’re gonna go to school, we tell you when you’re gonna go to group, you know we tell you whether or not you can do whatever it is, you know. Basically, so we’re basically in control. Bedtime, getting up, whatever. What you’re gonna have to eat, you know. You ain’t gonna walk out and go down to the corner and get a pizza or a sub if that’s what you feel like. You know, it don’t happen. And so, again, like I say, you’ll understand that if you go out, cause now you’ve been reintroduced to what you really can lose. And I think that that’s the freedom. […] And so like I said, you learn to appreciate that, and like I say, the kids you know when they leave here, know that they put that in jeopardy, because now some of them have experienced what it’s actually like being locked up. And they know that that’s what they stand to face again.
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

In summary, the freedom that Duane shows the residents that participate in the running program is a very important aspect of the program and can often increase participants’ commitment to society. The following interview quote illustrates just how much this freedom means to residents:

E: So how would you rate this program in comparison to other programs at RCCF?
M: The best.
E: And why is that?
M: Cause the freedom Duane gives us. Freedom the Big Dog gives us.
E: And so, how important do you think that that freedom is to the running program?
M: Like I said, I mean, one way or another I think kids are going to go through [RCCF’S program] even if they don’t run, but it just shows a little bit more freedom. The freedom’s just, any way you look at the running program, I see freedom. An easier way out. And to me that’s- I’m getting showed freedom, and all I gotta do is jog for a couple miles, hey, freedom it is.
- Marley, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

**Commitment through a Goal-Oriented Life**

Another emerging aspect of the running program is that it appears to increase the self-discipline of residents, leading to an increased commitment because they develop a more goal-oriented lifestyle. Their goals are then at stake if they get into trouble; they
are committed to these goals and have them to lose. The recreation coordinator at RCCF points this out during our interview:

Some of them I think are a little more disciplined. They have a goal in mind now, they’re preparing to run in a race, a 5K, or whatever it might be, so they’re a little more disciplined here at the center and you know they might work out in the fitness room or just do some more things on their own that they probably wouldn’t have done if they weren’t preparing for a race. So it helps them a little bit, you know, that way.
- Jerry, Recreation Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

A former resident and participant in the running program echoed this sentiment, describing the way he’d learned self-discipline through the running program and didn’t want to lose the ground he’d gained:

E: Do you think that running here at RCCF taught you anything, and if so, what?
B: I think it taught me a weird thing about discipline, really, cause like I wasn’t really in physical shape to actually be able to run anywhere so it was, I had to push myself to do it, and I couldn’t, and it just like actually taught me self-discipline really. A lot of good to lose.
- Barry, former resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Adults connected to RCCF or to the running program recognized the ways in which self-discipline can aid residents in staying on track with their behavior after their release.

Note the following quotes, which illustrate the importance of running in developing self-discipline, and self-discipline in attaining an organized and crime-free life:

And I think it does teach self-discipline. I mean to go out and run every day takes self-discipline. And it takes that same self-discipline to abide by kind of the big rules in life and to not allow yourself to become addicted to drugs and alcohol, to be self-disciplined enough to go to school and to work so that you can accomplish more of your goals. See I think it teaches self-discipline, and you know, that’s the best skill you can teach somebody.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Again, to run you have to be disciplined in some respect, so I think it could help them, it could help them if they applied some of the running principles to their life, you know, discipline and that definitely should help them in the future because they know they’ve achieved something, they worked towards a goal, and running and preparing for a race, so they meet with some time of success. Running has definitely I think, will carry over into their time once they’re released from the center and go back to their school or job or wherever they go.
- Jerry, Recreation Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

I think that even a participant in anything with running, you’ve got rules, whether they’re written or not, you gotta do for your own body in terms of events, or eating the right thing, and I think that it teaches you to honor the structure of your own being, then to further honor the rules in
structured society, whether it be rules, probation officer, your court, I think it just makes you, running makes you an extremely organized person. [...] You look at that, you do everything you do is worth it, I gotta get this done so I can go for a jog or, I can’t eat potato chips after 10 o’clock because I don’t wanna get sick, or can’t drink pop, you know etcetera, so it just makes you, you’re just more organized.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

The above quotes illustrate how the running program at RCCF increases the self-discipline of those who participate, and how this self-discipline has the potential to carry on in their lives after release. If the self-discipline they develop does continue to be a part of their lives after they are released, it may make them more committed to society, giving them a reason to desist from criminal activities and obey the rules and laws of society and the criminal justice system. As Alice, the executive director at RCCF, also explained, this organization and concern is often an important step in dealing with alcohol or drug addictions:

We kind of touched on it but I think that participating in the running program makes people a lot more concerned about other aspects. Kids that I’ve seen start watching what they eat, not in terms of reducing, but at least having some basic understanding of what foods create muscle and carbohydrates. And they seem to have just a general, more concern with their health. Which I think is another building block in helping with addiction.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

The process of how the running program can aid participants in dealing with addiction will be described in more detail in following sections, but it is worthwhile to note here that self-discipline plays a role in helping youths commit to staying out of trouble in this way.

In addition to an increased commitment on the part of participants, many of my adult interviewees focused on the way that this development of self-discipline benefited RCCF itself. One judge laid it out in this way:

One of the things I’ve found in my time around runners is that it takes self-discipline. You do it, one of the typical t-shirts that you’ll see when you go to a cross country event is the “Our sport is
your sport’s punishment.” And some people feel it that way, you know, “I gotta run? Oh, God, I hate that.” Well, people that learn this and do this tend to be more organized, more structured, more self-disciplined, and those… We can all benefit from those kind of characteristics, and these kids in particular who have probably never been that way. So RCCF benefits by the collateral aspects of it. Of what’s learned through discipline, organized running and they also tend to get kids who, as they build up their strength and their health, tend to be more alert in their classrooms, counseling sessions, they’ll sleep better at night, a real sleep instead of just, you know, passing out.

-Robert, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

This quote very effectively illustrates not only the way that the running program can increase commitment through self-discipline, but how it also has an effect on other aspects of their lives, including their general health and their schoolwork, as was discussed in earlier sections. The following extended quote from Duane also brings together all of the different aspects of commitment that have been discussed here, and will serve as a conclusion to this discussion of commitment:

Most of em that start running with me, you rarely ever hear about them getting a write-up, which means they’ve done something that violates some type of rule or something here. You rarely see em getting any point losses, uh, they usually keep their schoolwork up pretty good, get a good grade in it, so a lot of that stuff kind of changed for em. Like the one boy I alluded to earlier that really likes being here, when he first came here he really struggled with his schoolwork. But then when he found out that he couldn’t run with me if his schoolwork’s behind, he is now ahead in his schoolwork. Well two of them actually are ahead in their schoolwork but before they struggled with it. But again, so I think that in some areas it does have a positive effect because I try to make em earn that privilege of going and doing the running, like telling them they have to keep their schoolwork up, they have to be participating well in everything else that’s part of the program here, and they can’t get write-ups. If they get a write-up then they don’t do anything with me like that for a week. Uh, so again, it’s a combination of everything: they have to keep the grades up, and have to keep the behavior in check, and have to be just about- And I try to do it just like it was when I was going to school many, many years ago where we had a coach that if you screwed up you missed playing that week. And I always thought that that was a good motivator for me and I see it as a good motivator for them, and like I said, and through the years I’ve had a lot of kids like that, that once they realized what it was they did do better with their behavior and stuff so, yeah, I think it does have that positive effect on them here.

-Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

**Involvement**

The literature presented in the theoretical framework for this project suggests that regular exercise increases the likelihood of being involved in sports and similar activities.

This increased involvement in turn may lead to desistence from crime or deviance.
because it acts as a healthy substitute, especially in regards to drug and alcohol use. My research agrees with these conclusions, as the following paragraphs will show.

Through participant observation and interviews I found evidence that suggests that the running program at RCCF might increase the involvement of participants in similar activities after their release. Note the following examples from my fieldnotes:

I ask the boys if any of them have been to any races yet. Kyle and Tyler haven’t, but Jim says he’s been to one.

“The Indian Summer Run. But then I got into trouble and couldn’t go to a couple of them. I did pretty good, though. Duane said I could probably do pretty good at Cross Country.”

“What’s your 5K time?” I ask.

“20… - What was it Duane, like, 20 something?”


“Duane said its pretty fast for my age. I never really got into running before Duane. Not unless it was for sports or something. But now I might do Cross Country, that or football, maybe both. My cousin does Cross country, she goes to [a nearby college].”

(Fieldnotes, Wed. 12/13/06)

Duane has picked up some registration forms for upcoming races, and we look through those. Many are in the upcoming months.

“I can just meet you guys at that one,” Terry remarks. “It’s only fifteen minutes from my house.” Terry will be released soon and apparently is planning to continue running.

(Fieldnotes, Sun. 02/04/07, RACE)

Current and former residents also expressed the desire to continue to be involved in athletic endeavors after their release during our interviews, as do those in the following excerpts:

E: Did participation in the running program here at HVCRC cause you to become interested in similar activities, such as like when you’re released, do you think you’re gonna do other sports, or?
R: Yeah, I thought about playin’ some baseball, or some basketball. Join the track team or something.
E: Cool. Yeah. Do you think you’ll still run on your own?
R: Yeah, when I get out.
E: You plan on it? Are you gonna still go to the races?
R: Yeah. I probably will. I’m gonna come back up here and run with Duane.
-Ralph, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

E: Um, do you think that participation in the running program maybe caused you to become interested in similar activities after you were released?
B: Yeah, like I wanted to go out, like walk through the woods, and I like to go hiking a lot, or do a lot of hiking, a lot, and I think that’s, I didn’t go hiking very often before I came and started
running with Duane and them, but now I like to go out and hike, and I actually can hike more than five miles, and I actually feel good so…

- Barry, former resident, HVCRC (Interview Excerpt)

The executive director of RCCF recognizes the role that the running program plays in increasing the involvement of youth in extracurricular activities after their release. She held that the running program increases the desire among kids to participate in various activities and notes that while many former participants join either track or cross country teams, or other athletic programs, very few were involved in such activities before coming to the center:

E: Well in terms of maybe residents or past residents that get involved with other school or club athletics or that kind of thing, do you think that the running program might have had any role in motivating them to pursue further involvement?
A: Yes, yes I do. I could count the kids on one hand who came here and had ever participated in any kind of organized sport. That’s 800 kids.

- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

These examples show how the running program at RCCF inspires participants to pursue other types of involvement after their release. During our interview, Duane discussed how the running program often reestablishes this interest in athletic involvement:

D: Couple of em played football, baseball for their schools. I know some of em have been involved with other sports, of course, we play those sports with them here also. But yeah they did stay involved in some of the sports.
E: And why do you think that is, if it was something that they didn’t normally do before they came here?
D: I think a lot of them kind of like did it when they were younger and then when they started hanging with older kids and started getting in trouble, they kind of quit doing it. They got to experience it again and kind of liked it and saw again the benefits that they could get from it, and they just kept it up again. They re-found that interest in it, shall we say.
E: So do you think that the running program had any role in reestablishing that involvement?
D: Yeah, for most of em that played the other sports that we do here also ran, so I think that it just reconnected them with that, oh, what would I wanna say… That competitive thing with them and you know to do again, get it in them, and they took that to the sports that they felt they were good at.

- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

One of the judges that I interviewed expressed this same thought that even if former residents who participated in the running program didn’t continue to run, they often took
what they learned from the running program and applied it to other sports programs they
joined after release. In the following excerpt from our interview, he discusses one
individual who, after participation in the running program, not only played football for
his school and performed very well, but also changed his life in other ways and kept him
out of trouble.

My involvement has been, and I’ve encouraged several kids from here, actually a couple of them ran Jr. High track and stuff and got in trouble and went over there. We had a kid that was in a lot of trouble here, and he’s just a good athlete. I know him well, seen him since he was a little kid, he got in some trouble over there, he actually did a lot of running, came back, made all-state football here, so it was very good. Very good. [He] wants to go in the army, he’ll do very, very, very well. He’s gotten a very good job now, he’s gonna be a senior, I think it turned him around completely. Got him back into athletics and things, which is what he needed to do, he’s gonna graduate maybe early, so I think it’s had a very positive effect on any kid.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

The executive director at the center mentioned this same former resident, pointing out
how proud the above-quoted judge is of him, and the difference the increased
involvement made in his life. She notes that this individual is one of the boys I ran with
regularly during my internship in 2005, and I also remember him well.

A: I know that [Mitch] participated in the running program, I think he ran some with you, is all-state football player.
E: Really?
A: So he continued to pursue athletics and I’m sure that, I think he’s a running-back… wide-receiver - He had to run.
E: [Laughs] I don’t know either.
A: And that, you know, I’m sure that the running program assisted him in his athletic endeavors and he could, his judge is very proud of him. He could go to college, but he’s going to probably enter the military. He could go to college on a football scholarship, but he’s going to enter the military and… Would it help kids to entering the military? Well sure it would, cause you know you gotta be able to run. I don’t know how long if they do five mile runs or ten mile runs that they have to participate in, and I think that anything that would help you build up your physical endurance would help you through basic training. And the military is quite frankly one way for poor kids to be able to have a vision of the world and of what they and of can do and to finance that vision. And to be the one in control over that.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

During my participation in the running program through my internship at RCCF in 2005 I
witnessed other examples of the way the running program was able to lead to an
increased involvement in extracurricular activities, whether in school-funded athletic programs or an individual effort to continue running and attending road races regularly, as the following excerpt entails:

I didn’t actually put in any hours at the center today, but I felt it was appropriate to devote a page to the race I ran with my family this morning for one reason – I ran into Ronny [a former resident]! […] Anyway, Ronny is from [the race site], so he’d come to run the four miler I was at. I was so glad to see him, since I’d forgotten to come in early Monday to say good-bye before he and Jake were released. I talked to him before and after the race for a while, told him Jerry said ‘hi,’ etc. He seems to be doing really well so I hope he keeps it up.  
(Journal Entry, Sat. 07/23/05, RACE)

Several of those that I interviewed informed me that they all made the effort to put participants of the running program in touch with coaches at their schools after they were released, making a recognizable effort to help them stay involved. The following two interview excerpts from a probate juvenile judge concern this effort:

R: Yeah, I know there’s at least a couple [of participants who continue to stay involved after their release]. One of them from [my county] that I know of for sure, and then every once in a while we’ll get letters, the facility will get letters or cards from graduates and they’ll say something that they’re telling, there’s a clipping where they got eighth place at a 5K or 10K or something like that, you know give this to Duane. So I know that some of them do follow through with it. Like I said, it’s been my practice when I counsel children and I know that Duane has made some efforts himself too, to contact the home schools of this youth and say, “we’re getting him whipped into shape for ya,” you know. And running programs never turn people away, and in the smaller schools, rural areas, the more the better because you never know who’s gonna be sick or hurt or whatever. And you never know who’s gonna develop. Today’s star may be your third best runner next year.
E: So do you know if any of the residents might have participated in other sports or club athletics after their release? Or maybe even continued running on their own?
R: I know a lot of the residents, it seems like a lot of them end up at least going out for the football teams when they’re done, and they get smaller schools that every warm body is welcome, so your willing to play by the rules.
- Robert, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

[When he gets kids that are probably naturally athletic … we like always try to hook them up with their cross country and track coaches at their home schools when they return to their home, and say these are the kinds of peers you want to be with, this is the kind of program you wanna be in, believe me, spend your energy out here, you’ll have less of it for mischief.
- Robert, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)
Note that in the last quote the judge points out that positive peers can often be found on athletic teams. Alice also reasons that those who participate in athletic activities through their schools are less likely to behave in certain illegal acts, namely drug use:

I think [the running program] has increased the desire among kids to participate. But then I think one thing they learn is that, and I’m not saying football players or athletes don’t use drugs, but they don’t use them on the grand scale that the Crips and the Bloods do. So it is one place to perhaps find a more positive peer culture for them in that way. There are bad people everywhere but, you know, less likely than streets.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

One reason why this might be is that athletes who are found to be using drugs are often punished by losing their eligibility, as the section discussing commitment pointed out, and so their desire to participate in athletics makes them less likely to engage in criminal activities or use illegal substances. This will be discussed in more detail in later paragraphs.

These above quotes make clear not only that adults involved with the running program in one way or another try to help released youths continue their involvement, they also allude to the effect that this involvement can have: that participants are “willing to play by the rules,” and have a legal way to spend their time and energy. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes takes a similar step, showing how an increase in involvement in such extracurricular activities can help participants stay out of trouble after they are released.

“Jay’s pretty quick,” I tell [the older woman who is here with him].
“Yeah. He’s always been into sports – football, basketball. He’s good when he’s got something to keep him occupied, but when he’s not busy, that’s when he gets into trouble.”
(Fieldnotes, Sat. 03/10/07, RCCF RACE)
Alice points out during our interview that any increase in involvement that can be brought about by the running program is positive in that it gives them something to do with their time that does not involve risky or illegal acts:

Our kids are teenagers and part of the developmental task of being a teenager is to find challenging activities. And if they don’t find legal challenging activities often times they will find, or most often times they will find illegal or risky challenging behaviors and running is something that’s inexpensive to do and you don’t need a team to do it. You can do it by yourself and all you need’s a pair of running shoes, and you compete against other people and you compete against yourself. And I think that provides a healthy challenge for kids. And cheap, cheap way to do it. You know, it’s not snow skiing or golf that are very expensive sports.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

She also points out here that running is something that participants who are released can continue to do without it being prohibitively expensive. Residents that I spoke with also appreciated the ease with which one could go running. They recognized it as a way to occupy their time in place of deviant or illegal behaviors, and pointed out that it is something that can be done without having to be the best or compete for an active position on a team. For example, one participant told me:

Now I know that there’s another way to spend my time, uh, instead of going out and getting in trouble, I can just do something. And like I said earlier, not everybody has to be fast. Or quick. Or be able to run for a duration of time. It’s just, you can be out there, you can do it.
- Marley, current participant, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

A former participant also describes the way the running program helped him stay out of trouble after being released from RCCF, and noted the regularity with which he ran on his own as a healthy and legal way to occupy his time:

B: I ran on my own for like, especially when I first got out, cause that way, like I figured if I could run on my spare time it didn’t give me no time to get myself into trouble in any way, so I ran for the first six months on my own when I got out, and then I just more, as I was able to think things through more I just slowly like quit running and then I started doing, focusing on other things.
E: How often did you run those first six months?
B: Um, at least once every day.
- Barry, former participant, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)
It is obvious from the above paragraphs and examples that the running program increases involvement of participants to similar activities after their release. Furthermore, this involvement aids residents in staying out of trouble and finding legal ways to stay busy when they leave the center.

In the following section I will provide several selections from my data which illustrate how involvement can often be a substitute for a specific problem facing many of the residents at HVCRC: alcohol and drug use, abuse, and addiction.

**Involvement as a Substitute for Drugs and Alcohol Use and Abuse**

During my interview with Duane, he pointed out that part of his motivation for starting the running program was that he knew from experience that running helped with his recovery from alcoholism. The following extended quote fully illustrates his thoughts on this:

E: So initially what was your motivation, why did you start the running program?  
D: Well I ran myself and I always enjoyed it because I’m in recovery myself, I was an alcoholic and I ran while I was drinking but I found that… I got injured and I hadn’t run for a number of years and found that running gave me uh, burned off a lot of nervous energy, and a lot of tension that comes basically early on in recovery. You know I found that running just kind of helps, it helps relax me, and of course it’s good exercise too, but you know, mainly I do it mainly because it really does help relax me and sometimes I’m kinda edgy or something like that or, you know, just some typical things that come with being in recovery, some of those feelings that come. And sometimes I just go out and it just kind of helps, I can clear my mind, you know cause I concentrate on the running, and if I run kind of hard then it just kind of like runs it out, it’s kind of like I said just basically relax is I guess is the best way to say it. Helps me clear my mind and relax.  
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Any help that is available for individuals with drug or alcohol problems is very important, as addiction is such a difficult thing to overcome. Duane, who is a recovering alcoholic who has been clean for several years, describes the nature of addiction in this way:
Uh, again like I say, you know, if you understand addiction you know that when they get out and they’re faced with that again that that is a real tough adversary. Here’s what I always liken it to: you can sit in a chair, drink a little or smoke a little dope, and think you’re having the biggest time in the world and never leave that chair. And that’s what we’re talking about here, is something that has that type of power and control over a person. So when they leave here you know, they might have the greatest intentions in the world, I’m gonna follow the rules, I’m gonna quit doing this, I’m gonna quit doing that, but that is such a powerful adversary. And I don’t care how old you are, whether you’re four or forty, that is a powerful adversary that can do that to a person.

- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

This description very effectively communicates how challenging addiction can be to overcome, and as Duane makes clear, those of us who have never experienced it will never fully understand how difficult staying clean can be. With this in mind, I present the following quote from my interview with Duane:

Uh, a couple of other runners I know of when they hadn’t finished up their high school and stuff, a lot of them eventually do fall back into trouble and everything but again, you know, most of them come here not only if they commit a crime but they also have a problem with alcohol and drugs and… For whoever do this paper for, if they’ve had a trouble with alcohol and drugs and went into recovery like I have, they understand that it’s really tough, and it’s a tough thing to overcome, and that there’s probably gonna be a lot of relapses, which is goin’ back out and using and stuff. You know, even for, even when you’re trying to stay clean. So again, you know, it’s had some success and it’s kept a lot of kids a little straighter a little longer.

- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

This quote from Duane points to the fact that not all participants in the running program desist from committing crimes or participating in illegal activities when they are released. However, it also makes note that many of them try to stay clean, and with the skills they learned from the running program and RCCF, they are sometimes able to for a longer period of time than would otherwise have been possible.

Despite the fact that some youths are again overcome by addiction after their release from RCCF, some continue to run and are able to desist from criminal activities. Some residents plan to stay involved in athletic activities, whether running on their own, or participating in competitive sports programs through their schools, using their time in
this way instead of participating in drug use. The following observation illustrates the
constraints drug and alcohol use put on the time of those who use them:

Jim, [a fellow runner], will get to leave this Monday, and we talked about how he will probably
play football, basketball, and maybe baseball this year, where before he was too busy doing drugs.
(Journal Entry, Tues. 08/16/05)

Many of those that I interviewed informed me that the running program and
running in general can also sometimes be a substitute for drug and alcohol addictions,
because running often develops into an addiction itself, albeit a healthy and legal one.
The following selections from my interviews point out as much:

[E]xercise in general and running I think in particular can be addictive, and it’s certainly a more
positive addiction than some of the other… Because once they start doing it they start enjoying it,
they start seeing a sense of accomplishment and then they really enjoy it.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

[P]hysical fitness for people is a very important thing and kids sometimes when you get hooked
on, you wanna get hooked on a runner’s high rather than a drug or alcohol high.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

Duane also recognizes the fact that running often provides good feelings among those
who do it, and these are feelings that can be obtained without the use of drugs or alcohol:

I think a lot of them, while they’re here, realize how much better they feel when they start running
health wise. I think that’s the other big thing from it, and again like I said earlier, they get a
feeling of accomplishment, a feeling of that self-worth that a lot of them haven’t had for a long
time. And they’ve found that they can have that feeling without it being chemically induced. And
so, again, it’s kind of like a little combination of all of that and I think that does a lot of good.
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Duane also mentions how running tends to increase self-worth and feelings of
accomplishment, and how important these feelings are. We will go into much more
detail on these psychological benefits in following sections.

As earlier paragraphs point out, running can often serve as a substitute for drug
and alcohol use because it can also be addictive, and because it also awards a good
feeling. In addition to this, many of those I interviewed suggested that running can be a
substitute for drug and alcohol use because, physically, the two are not compatible. The following selections communicate evidence of this:

Kids do become more fit and much more concerned about their health and the long term effects of maybe some of the substances that they have been using in the past. Kids talk about, you know, before they started running, on the outs when they were smokers and they couldn’t run here to the end of the property, and now that they’re running in 5Ks and they’re not winded I think that gives them a real view of what their lung capacity is based on the use of nicotine products.

- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

It’s a way too, I think, I think with kids, I think it teaches you, a lot of kids that go in there they have drug or alcohol problems, you know you can’t run if you have a drug or alcohol problem. I think that the… whether it’s running or whatever, you’re just less likely to go back to drug or alcohol problems. A lot of, I just think you’re less likely to get hooked back on that.

- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

These quotes point out that running is not compatible with drug and alcohol use in a physical sense. The following quote also notes the way that the two are not well-matched, but also goes further in describing how if residents who are released continue to be involved in running or similar activities, the community or society as a whole benefits as well:

Healthy body, healthy mind, I know that they’re – You can’t be [running and participating in other athletic activities], and be doing drugs and alcohol and you can’t do it, so… And it takes up certain hours of the day… […] We’re showing them something that they can carry on in life, and as runners tell you, it’s a sport for life, and it’s not, they’re not going to be challenged by financial resources, or equipment, or proper buildings to do this in. It has just a lot of beauty in it’s simplicity, and then of course, well we hope the ultimate benefit is we return a kid to the community that knows some things to do to better spend his time, and will do that, and will stop using that time to engage in deviant behaviors.

- Robert, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

The above paragraphs provide evidence that the running program at RCCF increases the involvement of participants in athletic or other extracurricular activities after their release. Furthermore, examples and quotes are given which explain why this increased involvement can keep youths out of trouble, and how this involvement can often serve as a substitute for the use of alcohol and drugs. I will now move into a
discussion of how the running program at RCCF increases the social bond of belief, the final social bond.

Belief

As was discussed in the literature presented in the theoretical approach, the strengthening of belief in the rules of society can be evidenced by a change in attitude, personality, and psychological well-being, as well as by moral development and enhanced reasoning skills. My research as a participant observer among residents in the running program provided many examples of such changes. These differences were recognized both by participants of the program and by adults associated with the program during interviews. In the following paragraphs I will give examples that demonstrate that the concept of the social bond of belief is a useful and powerful way of understanding the effects of the running program at RCCF.

Belief through Changing Attitudes, Moral Development, and Better Reasoning Skills

Improved attitudes of participants of the running program were noticed by adults connected to the program, as well as by participants themselves. As one resident told me,

You know, when I first came I didn’t [have a good attitude]. Started getting into running, you know, my attitude started changing, I liked it, and I started getting good at it too, around Duane.
- Ralph, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

One judge provided evidence of how running seemed to improve the attitudes of residents who were released and continued to run through their schools, either in track or cross country programs:

Two [former residents] actually ran a little bit of cross country and track and their attitudes improved, and that’s the first thing they always wanted to tell me when I’d go visit them over here, I’d see them for their team meetings, is how well they’re doing.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)
Many of my subjects, when discussing participants’ attitudes, also suggested that the running program improved their understanding of the purpose of rules and laws. As one former participant of the running program, who was released from RCCF several months ago, stated:

I guess my attitude changed and I was able to realize what I should be doing and what I shouldn’t be doing.
- Barry, former resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

This same former resident went on to explain a possible reason for this shift:

Well before I didn’t think that there should be any laws anyway, and I was like rebellious against any authority at all and now that I’ve changed, and I realize what other, like the laws and stuff that I have to follow, everybody else has got to follow too.
- Barry, former resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Subjects also suggested that the running program not only helps participants understand the purpose of rules and laws, but it does so while demonstrating that there are legal ways of having fun:

I think that any competition, any form of athletics, is a mirror of life. There are certain rules that you have to follow and if you don’t follow them, then you can get penalized. And that sets, I think it’s a metaphor, “we’re having a good time and still complying with the rules.” […] I think they have more of an ability to understand that rules have a purpose. And I think it does teach self-discipline. I mean to go out and run every day takes self-discipline. And it takes that same self-discipline to abide by kind of the big rules in life and to not allow yourself to become addicted to drugs and alcohol, to be self-disciplined enough to go to school and to work so that you can accomplish more of your goals. See I think it teaches self-discipline, and you know, that’s the best skill you can teach somebody.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

As the above quote suggests, the self-discipline needed for a sport such as running is important in to many other aspects of life. Self-discipline represents a change in values and, in some cases, moral reasoning, which are evidence of an increasing belief in the legitimacy of the rules of society. The following quote emphasizes how self-discipline formed through the running program has importance in other areas of life:

I think that even a participant in anything with running, you’ve got rules, whether they’re written or not, you gotta do for your own body in terms of events, or eating the right thing, and I think that
it teaches you to honor the structure of your own being, then to further honor the rules in structured society, whether it be rules, probation officer, your court, I think it just makes you, running makes you an extremely organized person.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

However, as Duane pointed out during our interview, sometimes changes in attitude and belief are not enough to keep participants out of trouble when they are released, especially if they have drug and alcohol problems:

Like I said, it’s the criteria that I set for em to be able to run with me. So they understand the value that I put into [following the rules], and they start to put the same value in it, so yeah they’ve learned it because they do it while they’re here. But again it’s like I say, whether they can follow that over once they’re in daily contact with such an adversary is a different story. But while they’re here, yeah like I say, like one question earlier, yeah they tend to do better at following the rules and everything while they’re here and understanding better.
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Duane points here to the struggles that accompany addiction and the difficulty of resisting old habits upon being released into society. This suggests that there may be some limitations of the running program as informed by social bond theory through the life course because addiction makes it extremely hard to desist from criminal activities involving the use of drugs and/or alcohol, no matter what one’s intentions may be.

It is important to note, however, that although some struggles are sure to be difficult, residents that I spoke with seemed confident that they would be able to follow rules and laws when released. As one participant reasoned,

If I can do it in here, I don’t see, you know, why shouldn’t I do it on the outs? When I was on the outs, I didn’t go to school much. In here you gotta go every day…
- Ralph, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

One participant was adamant that he would follow the rules after release, pointing to one reason why he hadn’t in the past:

Whenever I was out the first time, I didn’t realize I had to do all of those things, and heck, I didn’t even know what half the rules were, and now I see and, see how I broke them even when I didn’t realize I was, and how I cannot do it again.
- Marley, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)
Moral development through the running program was evidenced when many of my interviewees suggested that the program helps residents develop better values:

I also think it helps them bond with, or attach to positive values, in that they’re part of a team, they’re part of making goals and accomplishing those goals. And I think it makes them feel part of a group of people who do this on a regular basis. And that it’s something that they can continue to do once they leave. It’s not prohibitively expensive to participate in 5Ks.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

It teaches you to follow your own code, whether it be spiritual, your athletic body, it just keeps you, you’re more in touch with your mind I think when you run. I can’t speak for the boys but, well I guess I can because as a matter of fact I can think of off the top of my head, I don’t know the exact number, but very few have gotten back in trouble again, if they have it’s been minor stuff. I can speak for myself but I just function and think a lot more clearly.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

While conducting my interviews, I also found evidence of enhanced reasoning skills and impulse control as a result of the running program. A former participant of the program, who was a resident of RCCF when I interned there in 2005, described how his thinking patterns and reasoning skills developed through the running program:

Like I said, the more, from where I had to think things through while I was in here so I could get out and run, and do other things, and I got in the pattern where I did that and I started doing it without having to put a bunch of effort into it, it started coming natural.
- Barry, former resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Alice, during our interview, noted much the same process of the development of impulse control:

I do think they consider [the consequences of their actions] more. Because they consider their ability to go off grounds and participate in these races before they act. Uh, and in that sense I think it improves their ability to stop and think, which is a huge issue in impulse control with our kids. And all they need is just ten seconds to consider and I think the opportunity to participate in runs is just another reinforcement. That ten second period of time to stop and think about what might happen.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Belief through Psychological Well-Being: Stress Reduction, Self-Esteem, Pride

Before moving into a discussion of psychological well-being and how it can be improved through the running program, in turn increasing the belief of participants to the
legitimacy of the rules, I will present a quote from one of the judges which illustrates the impact running can have in this regard:

I think when you’re running, particularly if you’re good enough to compete, that will go on Saturday and just get out of bed and say I’m gonna run ten miles today, you know, not many people do that but I think the things that go through your mind when you’re running, and I don’t mean to sound – I’m not the most religious person in the world – I think they cleanse your soul, they clean your mind, if you are depressed it can change throughout the rest of the day. I think it can make you see things so clearly if you’re having issues, it can sometimes give you the answer, and makes you think about what’s really important to your life. And it’s family, religion, your education, it teaches you what your priorities and goals are, when you’re outside, in nature, and you’re running, when you’re depressed, you’re thinking you know, you’re having a nice day, you know this may be as close to God as you get. You just don’t know. […] I’ve ran my whole life and when you get that feeling it’s just something you’ll never forget.

- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

The following paragraphs will explore in depth the types of psychological benefits that the running program provides, and how this is important for increasing social bonds.

Through interviews and participant observation I found that many participants experienced psychological benefits such as stress reduction, increased self-esteem, and pride through the accomplishment of goals. Duane remarked about the role running plays in dealing with stress one day on our way to a race when we were discussing the growing numbers of people that run on a regular basis:

“And another group that’s really growing a lot is older age groups. There’s more people in the older age groups than your age a lot of the time,” he tells me.

“Yeah, I think part of that’s because people are starting to recognize the health benefits of it,” I reply.

“And also, it’s really good for relieving stress, you get out there, and can kind of clear your head.”

I agree and make a note to myself to follow up with Duane and the boys about this later.

(Fieldnotes, 01/07/07, RACE)

Residents who participated in the running program also made note of this effect that running tends to have. One day on our way home from the bikepath a participant said as much, as the following excerpt from my fieldnotes shows:

“I really like running,” Marley suddenly says out of the blue. “Don’t you? It calms you down, it clears your head.”
“Yeah,” I agree. “It’s great if you’re stressed out.”
(Fieldnotes, Fri. 03/02/07)

Other faculty at RCCF also noticed the stress reduction that the running program seemed to provide for participants. For example, note what was said in the following selection:

I think it’s a good opportunity for them to get out of the facility, off grounds as they refer to it, and then again, it’s a good opportunity for them to just release some energy, it’s a good stress buster or whatever, it gives them an opportunity to relieve themselves of some of the stress, what they feel like locked up all the time.
- Jerry, Recreation Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Alice also noticed the psychological effects that the running program has on residents who participate, noting stress reduction, but other psychological benefits as well. The following excerpt is from our interview.

A: First of all I think its great stress reduction. And I think it helps build self-esteem, both in terms of body image, which you know teenagers are overly concerned with, but more importantly in terms of self-esteem they set measurable goals, I want to improve my time by 3 seconds, 4 seconds, whatever, and when they accomplish that I think consequently it improves their self-esteem because it’s an accomplishment. Ability to set goals and reach them, and I think it does a great job of that.
E: Have you noticed any difference in the attitudes or behavior of some of the kids after they have participated in the program for a while?
A: I think they’re much less, just in terms of their behavior here, they are much less edgy. And prone to be irritable and respond in a negative or angry, inappropriately angry fashion. But of course, you know, you see differences in body image.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Ralph, a current participant of the running program, echoed these assertions, noting stress reduction and increased confidence:

You get a lot of stuff off your mind, when you run, uh… I guess it’s just taking confidence in yourself when you run that far.
- Ralph, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Adults connected to the running program, as well as participants of the program, noted an increase in self-esteem as a result of participation in the program. Duane commented on the importance of this effect in our interview, going on to point out that the program is worth everything if even one resident is helped:
And I think that that, you know, is one of the bigger things that I can give them from the program, is that feeling of trust and self-esteem, self-respect, whatever words like that you wanna put in there. That gives em, cause a lot of these kids that go to these runs will get a ribbon or something and they’ll hear everybody clap for em when they go up to get their ribbon, and some of these kids have never experienced anything like that. And some of em, like I say, maybe when they leave here will never have that experience again. But at least at that time that they’re doing it while they’re here, they know what that can feel like. They know what that good feeling from having done something positive well can bring you, and they experienced it while they’re here. Like I say, they may never experience it again but they did it while they were here, and they know what it feels like. And sometimes that can be a big motivator for people, is to know what that feeling is really like because before they only got it from the drugs or from drinking or from doing crimes. And now they’ve found that you can get that good feeling from something else. You know, one of the boys that’s here right now running, you know, really enjoys it. And it kind of surprised me because I didn’t think that he would, but he really enjoys it. And again, he’s expressed that, that he really felt kind of proud and really felt good when he got to go up, got his name called and got to go up and get a ribbon and stuff, and he really liked that. So again, like I say, you know when they tell you that themselves, when you don’t go and ask em and they just tell you that, you know then that that’s a true and natural response. Each time you hear that, you know, sometimes I kind of think that maybe they’re just doing it for other things, but again when you hear that that makes it worth it then. You know, if one person gets something out of it that makes the whole program worth it.

- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

A former resident noted how the running program increased his feelings of self-worth, and also mentions body image, which was mentioned in an earlier quote from Alice:

So like, it made me feel better about myself too cause I lost a lot of weight, and I was able to run farther than I was ever able to run before.

- Barry, former resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Duane makes another mention of how the running program increases self-worth later in our interview, and focuses on the importance of this process to the program:

As I said, whether you wanna say most important or positive aspect, I think is the fact that as I said before, a lot of these kids at the runs, especially some of em that do well, experience something positive in their life that they may never experience again, such as going up and getting a little medal or a little ribbon and having their name called and having that feeling of self-worth that comes with it. For the ones that maybe that don’t do that, just the feeling that they accomplished something that they didn’t think they could accomplish, again that feeling of self-worth. And I think that that is one of the valuable things, or the more valuable things that they take from this program. I wouldn’t want to put a label on what I think is most valuable.

- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

This sense of accomplishment that Duane brings up in the above quote is something that I found repeatedly came up during my interviews with both participants in the running program and the adults who followed the program. The following selections from my
interviews highlight how the running program helps participants develop this sense of accomplishment and how this affects their psychological well-being.

Those that are into it like it more than anything else. And they say so in their exit interviews, that they really enjoyed it and feel a sense of accomplishment. And very few of them have every accomplished a goal so you know, running a 5K, improving their time, two, three, four, five seconds, whatever, is a great accomplishment.

-Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

[The running program] taught me how, uh, how to build up confidence. It taught me that if I want to do something I can do it. I never thought I could run three miles.

- Ralph, current participant, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

[It] makes you feel so good whenever you run across the line, people are clapping for ya, and if you win an award, the guy calls your name on the big old microphone and them big 76” speakers, and everybody’s all “wowing” you, congratulating you, it makes you feel really good about yourself because you know that you’ve accomplished something, and you know that you’ve succeeded at something.

- Marley, current participant, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

I think [the road races], that’s one of the things that’s good, they get to go out, get out in the community, get into other communities where people will see them normal, reward them for doing good things, get the free t-shirt, the free t-shirts a big thing. I know I go with my wife to a couple of those that I’ve ran, she goes “what do you do that for?” and I say “well I want the t-shirt and the fifty cent medal that you get at the end,” and she says “well I’ll buy you that so you don’t have a heart attack,” and I say that’s not what it’s about, it’s about you know, the sense of accomplishment and the pride that you get by setting a goal and meeting it.

- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

The above quotes bring attention to the feeling of accomplishment that many of the participants in the running program achieve through setting their goals and accomplishing them. They also allude to the pride that residents feel when experiencing success through the program. The following quotes from a current resident and former resident who both participated regularly in the program discuss this success and the role the running program plays in helping participants experience it:

[Before] I didn’t know I could achieve [my goals]. But then I was shown, uh, what’s that word, uh, I was shown, like, ooh, it’s right on the tip of my tongue – success. Yeah, that’s the word. Before I didn’t know what success was. And, since the running program I know that I can succeed at things that I really will do.

- Marley, current participant, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)
It seemed like [the races] made [other participants] more joyful, I guess. You was able to run and actually win stuff… I think it had an effect on people by, it like showed ‘em if they worked towards something hard enough that they can win, pretty much no matter what it is really.
- Barry, former participant, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

During my participant observation at RCCF I witnessed several instances in which the pride of the residents could not be disguised:

“I did good today, didn’t I Terry?” Marley remarks, and Terry agrees that he did. “That’s the best I’ve done yet,” he continues proudly.
(Fieldnotes, Thurs. 02/22/07)

The boys tell me proudly how well they did at the last race. Kyle finished 17th overall and Ralph finished 20th. Kyle ran a 22 something and Ralph ran a 23 something. Both very good times.
Marley tells me it was his 1st 5K and he ran a 26 – much faster than his pace for the 2-mile cross country run.
“Yeah, but that race was hard,” I reassure him.
(Fieldnotes, Wed. 04/04/07)

Duane noticed the way the residents took pride in their athletic performance, and pointed it out to me one day during our post-race meal:

As Ralph walks away, Duane says, “It’s great when they win something. Terry likes it, but Ralph, that one that just went that way,” he points over his shoulder, “he’s proud of it.” I smile.
(Fieldnotes, Sun. 02/04/07, RACE)

The next selection further explains the development of a sense of accomplishment, and how participants develop a sense of personal pride, as well as receive pride from many other venues. It also shows how very important this pride is in restoring a sense of hope and purpose in youth who have been incarcerated in a place like RCCF. This quote shows how all of these psychological benefits that have been discussed represent or can lead to an increase in the belief of participants to the legitimacy of the rules and laws they are expected to follow:

I just think it’s just the chance to prove to yourself, more than it is to prove to staff or to your parents, prove to yourself that you can make a goal, you can have a goal, work for it, and achieve it. Then you get your personal pride and you also get Duane’s pride, hopefully the center’s pride, your judge’s pride, maybe your parents’ pride. You get a sense of self-worth. Some of the kids that go there have obviously given up hope and to me, we can talk all we want, you know more in America about, pour money into this program, pour money to that program, and more hope for the kids. Kids lose hope. And I think the kids that get in trouble generally start losing hope, at least
in my humble opinion, some of them between 5th and 6th grade, and when they lose the hope it’s hard to ever get it back. So you gotta keep hope in kids.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

The other judge that I interviewed also spoke in detail about these aspects of the running program, and the following extended quote illustrates how these psychological features of accomplishment, success, and pride are all interrelated:

I don’t monitor their cases, but the ones from our county where I’ve had a direct and active involvement in progress, and to some degree the ones who are in the running program in other counties that I see during events, have demonstrated a real genuine pride in what they’ve accomplished. And it doesn’t matter whether they came in first or last, and it doesn’t matter whether it’s an event that featured age group distinctions, or what, they all understand the concept of a PR (personal best) and that’s a big deal because it is, I mean it’s a very fair way for each of us to measure our success and we just do better than we’ve done before, and is it part of a curve of progress. When they come up to you and they show you the ribbon or the medal, and tell you what their time was and tell you it’s a PR and so on, for some of these kids it’s one of the few things in their life they’ve had the chance to legitimately brag about that they get it and they understand that someone came to them and offered them an opportunity, but it involved work and they’ve gone out and they’ve worked, and as a result of work you see improvement and as a result of seeing improvement come through work, they, you know the self-esteem thing starts to come into play. And it’s just a terrific, it’s a simple but honest snapshot of what we’re trying to teach them about everything.
- Robert, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

The above extended quotes suggest that the running program can, in fact, increase participants’ belief in the legitimacy of the rules and laws of society by increasing their psychological well-being.

Belief through Psychological Well-Being: Depression, Anger, and ADD/ADHD

I also found during my research that the running program at RCCF helped participants with other elements of psychological well-being, such as with depression, anger issues, and disorders like ADD and ADHD. The following will summarize my findings regarding these issues and provide examples that suggest improvements in these areas represent or can lead to an increased belief in the legitimacy of the rules and laws of society.
Duane points out that because of the nature of the population that RCCF serves (adolescent boys who have committed felonies), depression and emotional issues are often a problem for residents, and the running program can help:

Well, most of the guys we get in here are around 15, 16 right in there and that’s, you know when some of the energy levels are the highest and the testosterone level is the highest and bouncing all around, and again I think that this is a good release for those types of things. They get out there, they can run that, like I said before, they can run that type of energy off. Plus they can get their mind focused on some other things and everything, so it’s a good release emotionally as well. You know, they can, sometimes they get a little depressed about not getting a visit or about maybe not getting a letter or a call when they think they should, but they get out there and they get a chance to forget this, forget about that, get involved in something else so they take their mind you know, kind of away from those type of things.
- Duane, Substance Abuse Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Alice also notes how the running program can aid residents in dealing with their emotional issues:

Uh, in fact, with just a few exceptions, I would say kids involved in the running program do not get in as much trouble. And I don’t want to mention a name on tape, but a kid whose mood is miserable, he’s the most miserable kid I’ve ever met, there’s nothing positive in his life or in his world, and the only times I’ve ever seen him smile and be happy is when he’s running. And his dad, I think, is the only parent we’ve ever had that ran in a race.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

The above interview not only highlights how the running program has the potential to help residents with emotional issues, it also provides further evidence of an increased strength in the parent-child bond, as was discussed in earlier sections.

Jerry goes the furthest in explaining how the running program can help with depression, going back to issues discussed in previous paragraphs, such as self-esteem, success, and accomplishment. He also mentions the opportunity to expend energy, which will be discussed soon:

Well, yeah, I think yeah it’s a good opportunity to expend a lot of energy and these guys are, like I said, are have either been locked up or incarcerated for a period of their lives so it gives them a time to expend some energy. And that would definitely help them. And again, with any of them that would that would meet with any kind of success would help them, I’d have to think it would help them just their perception of themselves, you know, help their self-esteem. And the fact that they reached a goal or completed a race, anything like that would have to help them, help their self-esteem and help them emotionally because a lot of the kids are… Some of them are rather
depressed when they come in here and they meet with any kind of success, even if it’s running just a mile or a half a mile than they, that helps them, that helps them throughout the day. And the encouragement the staff gives them, you know, that helps, plays a part in just improving their self-esteem.
- Jerry, Recreation Coordinator, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Throughout my time conducting research at the center, I also came across evidence that the running program helps residents with anger issues. As the following quotes suggest, running has a calming effect because it relieves stress and anger:

I think a lot of people who are angry or who have anger issues I think running has a calming effect on people. And I think we’ve seen that happen with some of the boys that have issues in terms of anger stuff. One young man who I do know experienced, I coached him myself and things, had real anger issues and fight at the drop of a hat, you don’t see that out of him anymore, and I think it’s just helped him do what he needed to do, do that and just calm him down mostly.
- Brian, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

I think [the running program] helped my behavior, ‘cause it lets me get a lot of stress and anger out. […] Like, whenever I’m really angry or something I just push myself just that much more harder than I would, and I just, it’s like lets out anger. […] I’m just wore out whenever I come back, so I’m just like, “yeah, okay, whatever.” I just leave everything alone.
- Marley, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Like, I was doing, when I got out I attended school, so after school I had all that energy bottled up again, and like, I just felt real anxious, so the more I ran, I mean I was just able to, especially when I got mad, so if I ran, if I got mad I could run, and then I could think things over and then I could go back and be calm, instead of flipping out on people, so you know it did have an effect on me.
- Barry, former resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

Marley described to me the reasons he felt running had this effect and why residents were better able to deal with their anger after participation in the running program:

M: [W]hen a kid gets done running, they could be tired, and then you know, somebody else might say something to them, and they just let it roll off their back.
E: Why do you think that it has those kinds of effects on you?
M: ‘Cause I know whenever I’m real hyped up and energetic, and someone says something to me, and I’m ready to, it’s like I’m ready to pounce and start arguing. But I know after I get done running or something I’m just like “Yeah, okay, whatever.” I just wanna, like, chill.
- Marley, current resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

As is discussed here, running often helps residents with anger issues because of the energy that it expends. Similarly, using this extra energy for running helps those who
have attention disorders such as ADD or ADHD, which are often exacerbated by higher than normal energy levels. As one judge explained,

[You’ve got the energy burning aspect of it, and ADHD is about inability to control your energy at times that require a calm and [indecipherable] setting. This is a great outlet.
- Robert, Probate Juvenile Judge (Interview Excerpt)

Alice mentions this effect, also discussing the effect of running on previously discussed factors, such as mental health and depression:

Well I think that it certainly helps with ADHD because it reduces that level of activity. Cause once you run three miles you know you’re probably not in the next ten minutes gonna be pacing a room. Uh, and I’m not that conversant with the literature in regard to its effects. I do know that if people are in good physical health and physical condition, that their mental condition tends to improve, that exercise programs are encouraged in the mental health community in terms of treatment for depression or anxiety in general. Or even for people who suffer from mild depression, they recommend daily exercise. Because of the, you know, endorphins that are produced in the brain, and the ability to sleep better, and have regular exercise and those kinds of issues that often affect depressed or anxious people.
- Alice, Executive Director, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

In response to these benefits, as well as in response to literature concerning ADD and ADHD, RCCF even went as far as to change their schedule so that residents had an opportunity to expend some energy through recreation during the middle of their school day, so that they may be better able to concentrate on their work. This change had just occurred when I began my research and participant observation at the center, and Duane and I discussed the decision in detail one day on our way home from a jog. The following lengthy selection from my fieldnotes represents part of this conversation:

“Well, the rationalization behind it was good. They thought maybe if the boys had a chance for rec or to let out some of that energy, it would help them a little with school. A lot of different schools have been doing this, and they’ve found that it really helps, especially with kids that have ADD or ADHD. I read an article about it in USA Today and told Sally about it. Then she told me she was thinking of changing the schedule around and asked me what I thought. Really, I think, you might as well try it, then it’ll either work or it won’t work, and if it doesn’t you can change it back. It met with a lot of resistance though.”
“How come?”
“People are resistant to change.”
“Do you think its working?”
“Well, I don’t know if it’s working as well as they thought it would. But we’re only on a 6-month trial period, so if it doesn’t seem to be working they can change it. See, they were having all these reports and evaluations being done, and with those studies, and USA Today, that said this was working in other places, we thought we’d try it. See in USA Today they even found that kids were getting their medications reduced and everything, it was really helping.”
(Fieldnotes, Sat. 12/09/06)

This excerpt makes clear the fact that not only do faculty at RCCF notice recognizable benefits from the running program and physical activity in regards to ADD and ADHD, but they are also willing to try new strategies that are informed by research in order to help those residents who have these disorders. Furthermore, even if the schedule change didn’t appear to have the desired effects, participants in the running program who have these disorders still experienced recognizable benefits in terms of their energy levels.

The following selection is from my interview with Barry, a former resident who participated in the running program when I was an intern in 2005. This conversation illustrates the effects that he felt the running program had on him in term of his ADHD:

B: I think [the running program] made me relax a little bit more, because I’d take all the energy I had built up in me and I was just was running it out, so I wasn’t so irritated, or anxious about being in here. So it made me in a better mood, I’d call it.
E: Why do you think that the running program had these kinds of effects?
B: Cause, I got to like go outside and actually get away from… I could forget about what was going on in here and just like, concentrated on running and like, seeing the outside. And I think that’s why… And plus, I used a lot of energy, so I think that’s what had a lot of effect on me.
E: And do you think that it helped with [your ADHD] at all?
B: Yeah. That’s where I was talking about being anxious, and it’s more or less hyper, is what I was saying, like, I’m the kind of person that’s gotta constantly be doing something, so when I was running, I used all of my energy so I was able to relax more when I had to come back here and sit. - Barry, former resident, RCCF (Interview Excerpt)

The preceding paragraphs point to the ways in which the running program improves attitudes, moral development, and reasoning skills, as well as psychological well-being in such areas as stress reduction, self-esteem, accomplishment, depression, anger issues, and attention disorders such as ADD and ADHD. These effects of the running program
represent an increase in the belief in the validity of the rules of society, as they show a shift in attitude, values, and morals of those who participate.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The above findings hold significance for community correctional institutions, especially juvenile facilities. I have presented evidence suggesting that the running program at RCCF increases the social bonds of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief of participants of the program. It is important to stress once more that as this evaluation utilizes exploratory research, my findings suggest rather than prove relationships, and are intended to provide a richer analysis of what processes are at work within the running program.

As was illustrated by numerous examples from several different qualitative research techniques, attachment of residents to Duane and to their parents was thought to be achieved in many ways. Residents became attached to Duane because of his generosity and effort with the program, his part as a positive male role model, and his trust in the participants, among other reasons. Residents became more attached to their parents through the running program because of the time they were able to spend together through the program engaged in positive activities. Furthermore, the pride that parents felt for their sons and expressed increased the parent-child bond.

Residents became more committed to society and thus are more likely to stay out of trouble as a result of the running program as well. This was evidenced by the fact that residents who participated in the running program began to perform better academically, became more involved in sports or other athletic activities after their release, and developed a more goal-oriented, organized, and self-disciplined lifestyle. All of these
changes gave them something more to lose in the event that they got into trouble, thus leading to an increased commitment of participants to avoiding illegal behaviors.

As a result of the running program, those I interviewed stated that many residents became involved in similar activities after their release from RCCF. Many joined athletic teams through their schools, whether track or cross country or another sport, such as football or basketball. Others continued to run on their own or participate in athletic leagues or activities not sponsored by their schools. This increased involvement occupied their time more, leaving less time for illegal behavior, and also provided a healthy substitution for drug and alcohol use, as the two are physically incompatible.

Finally, the running program appeared to increase the belief of participants in the validity and legitimacy of the rules and laws of society. This was evidenced by perceived changes in attitudes, morals, values, and reasoning skills, as well as by improvements to participants’ psychological well being. Psychological improvements were indicated through stress reduction, better self-esteem and self-worth, and feelings of success at having accomplished a goal. Furthermore, the running program helped residents who suffered from depression, anger issues, and attention disorders such as ADD and ADHD.

Because the running program at RCCF was found to increase social bonds, it has the potential to bring about desistance from crime in some youths that participate. As the theoretical approach of this paper discussed, social bond theory through the life course suggests that the development or strengthening of social bonds can lead to future desistance from crime. The running program at RCCF offers the opportunity for participants to transition away from lives of criminal activity. It provides an opportunity
to increase social capital as well, which can be used as a resource after being released from the facility.

**Conditions under which Social Bonds Emerge through the Running Program**

It is important to focus at some point on the conditions under which social bonds emerge through the running program at RCCF. First of all, the running program at RCCF is a voluntary program, which makes it much different than the mandatory exercise regiments that are often found at juvenile boot camps. Because the program is voluntary, and because it is a privilege that must be earned, it is possible for social bonds to develop.

Secondly, the running program at RCCF has an advantage in its leader. Duane is committed to this program and devotes much of his time to it. Because of the efforts he makes and the extensive amount of time he spends with his runners, participants develop a sense of attachment to him. As was discussed in the findings section, in order for programs like this one to work, there has to be someone who is willing to commit in the same way Duane has done. Through bad weather and cold temperatures he keeps open the opportunity to run. There are also several leadership qualities that Duane possesses that are important for the development of social bonds: Duane serves as a role model, is considerate towards participants, and is respected because of the amount of freedom that he grants residents through the program, among other things.

A third aspect of the running program that is important is the fact that RCCF is located in a rural area. There are secluded spaces to run and races with fewer numbers of participants so that Duane can allow freedom and still keep an eye on residents. This rural location is ideal because, as was discussed in the findings section, the freedom that
can be experienced through the running program plays a major role in the development of
the social bond of commitment.

Though the running program at RCCF was shown to increase the social bonds of
many participants, it must be noted that the program may not work for everyone.
Another result of its voluntary nature is that there may be residents who participate in an
irregular manner or choose not to participate at all. The program will be unable to affect
those who choose not to participate, and those who participate irregularly are not likely to
experience the same effects as those who do, at least to the same degree.

An important question to consider is whether or not the running program at RCCF
can be institutionalized, or adapted into other juvenile community correctional settings.
An institution planning on implementing such a program must first have at least one staff
or faculty member that is committed enough to the program to follow through with it.
Because improvements in running often require a regular running schedule, the program
must provide the opportunity for participants to run at least three or four times a week. It
may be difficult for many institutions to find someone like Duane, who is dedicated to the
running program and its participants. In fact, Duane will be difficult for RCCF to replace
should he ever retire. However, if there were funds available to implement such a
program, payment could be an incentive to potential program leaders.

Usefulness of Project and Future Directions

This study is very relevant to juvenile and correctional institutions, especially
those that wish to develop their programs through the support of theoretical approaches.
It also demonstrates how programs that are not theoretically conceived can be more
deeply understood by examining them through the use of sociological theories. This study shows that qualitative program evaluations can provide rich analyses of a program’s effects when the program has no predetermined or official mission statement. It also suggests that sociological and criminological theories can be useful to institutions with such programs because these theories can generate ideas about possible effects and what they mean.

It is evident after a thorough review of relevant literature that this research is very important because it serves as a first step to filling the wide void in the literature concerning exercise programs in correctional institutions. Although this research made use of only qualitative measures, variables and descriptive attributes could be considered quantitatively in future projects. For example, correlations between physical fitness level and length of participation in the program or age and success/progress in the program could be examined. Also, future research could examine the degree to which the length of participation in the program affects residents in terms of changes in their attitudes and behaviors, or the development of social bonds.

Future research should continue to close the aforementioned literature gap, perhaps focusing on exercise programs in general or exercise programs in higher-security or adult institutions. Other types of voluntary programs in correctional settings could also be examined with the aid of sociological and criminological perspectives. As will be discussed below, the effects of the running program at RCCF could be explained through the use of alternative theoretical approaches.
Differential Association Theory

One theoretical approach that would also have been practical in an evaluation of the running program is differential association. Differential association theory argues that criminal behavior is learned through the processes involved in any other learning: through interacting with others, especially those with whom one is close to. Learned criminal behavior includes techniques for committing crime and the direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes (Sutherland and Cressey 1960). As this theory holds, the direction of such motives is learned through definitions of laws that are either favorable or unfavorable; when the majority of these definitions are unfavorable, crimes are committed. Further, "associations with criminal behavior and also associations with anti-criminal behavior vary in ... frequency, duration, priority, and intensity" (Sutherland and Cressey 1960:132). Finally, criminal behavior is an expression of an individual's needs and values. However, those who don't commit crimes often hold the same needs and values as those who do (Sutherland and Cressey 1960).

It is evident from this brief description of differential association theory that this approach would be useful in understanding the effects of the running program at RCCF. Several aspects of differential association appear to be similar to social bonds; thus, several of the findings that were interpreted through the use of social bond theory could also have been analyzed using differential association. For example, individuals’ motives, rationalizations, and attitudes are affected by their definitions of laws as favorable or unfavorable, the latter leading them to commit crimes. This is remarkably
similar to the social bond of belief in which individuals are less likely to obey laws or rules that they find unreasonable or illegitimate.

In addition, differential association holds that motives and attitudes that affect criminal behavior are learned through interactions with those with whom one is close. This resembles in some ways the concept of attachment in social bond theory. If participants develop attachments to parents or other positive role models they will be less likely to engage in criminal behaviors because they consider how their actions will affect those relationships. However, according to differential association, if their attachments to those who commit criminal activities are stronger, they will learn to develop attitudes which may lead them to commit crimes as well.

Many terms used to explain differential association theory can be found in the findings chapter of this thesis. For example, improved attitudes and values were discussed as evidencing belief in the legitimacy of the rules of society; rationalizations were shown as evidence in commitment, or what Hirschi (1969) terms the “rational component” of social bond theory; and learning from those with whom one is close was discussed as attachment. This leads to the conclusion, then, that differential association theory would also be an insightful approach to exploring the effects of the running program at RCCF. If participants in the program become close to Duane and learn from him attitudes and values that discourage criminal activity, they should be less likely to commit crimes after their release. Future evaluations would benefit from using differential association theory to explore effects of the running program or similar
programs, and would represent another valuable lens through which the effects could be understood.

**Social Learning Theory**

Another approach that could be used in an evaluation of the running program’s effects is social learning theory. According to social learning theory, deviant behavior is learned according to the principles of operant conditioning, which involve positive and negative reinforcement and punishment. Such behavior can be learned in both social and nonsocial situations (Akers 1994). Social learning theory is similar to differential association, but differential reinforcement and imitation are added to extend its reach (Cullen and Agnew 2003). As Akers (1994:145) explains, "differential reinforcement refers to the balance of anticipated or actual rewards and punishments that follow or are consequences of behavior."

The concept of differential reinforcement is relevant to an understanding of the running program and why it affects behavior. The opportunity to run with Duane and leave the facility grounds can be viewed as a reward, as can the freedom the running program provides that participants value so much. Residents are aware that good behavior at RCCF allows them the opportunity to participate in the running program, so the consequences of good behavior are these rewards. In contrast, residents know that the punishment for negative or disruptive behaviors at RCCF is the taking away of off-grounds privileges such as the running program; the consequence of bad behaviors is this punishment.
The concept of imitation may also have been relevant in an evaluation of the running program if residents were found to imitate Duane or other individuals who modeled good behavior and adherence to rules and laws. Results of this study did seem to indicate that participants adopted similar attitudes and values to those that Duane held, perhaps evidencing imitation, but more research would be necessary to establish a link between such values and behavior. In any case, social learning theory would be another effective way to evaluate the running program at RCCF. Furthermore, future sociological and criminological research would benefit from an evaluation using yet another theoretical perspective.

**Social Disorganization Theory**

Another theoretical approach that may be useful in some way is social disorganization theory. Social disorganization theory focuses on crime in urban areas of the city. Shaw and McKay, two of the original disorganization theorists, studied migration and immigration patterns in Chicago which eventually led to the development of Concentric Zone Theory (Cullen and Agnew 2003; Shaw and McKay 1942). This theory explained the discovery that crime is concentrated in inner-cities, which are heavily populated and very industrialized, and becomes less chronic as one moves further out. As Shaw and McKay (1942:107) state, "the maps representing distribution of delinquents at successive periods indicate that, year after year, decade after decade, the same areas have been characterized by these concentrations." They found that crime rates are not affected by who lives in the city, so ethnicity is not an issue. Instead, crime in these areas is a result of socially disorganized neighborhoods, which share
characteristics such as poverty, heterogeneity, and family disruption (Shaw and McKay 1942). Thus, social disorganization theory provides a good basis for understanding the conditions in inner-cities, but may also be able to lend insight into what the effects of the running program at RCCF represent.

As the research involved in this thesis suggests, youths who participate in the running program at RCCF often develop more organized and goal-oriented lives as a result. Furthermore, youths who participate often become involved in athletic activities or other recreational or academic pursuits after their release. It is possible that this more organized lifestyle and increased involvement may lead former residents to spend more of their time away from the social disorganization of their home or neighborhood. For example, youths who join athletic teams or academic groups may begin to spend a great deal of their time involved in practices or training on school grounds, and have less of an opportunity to experience the effects of their location.

Similarly, since the running program at RCCF encourages parents to attend events and provides them an environment in which they can spend extra time interacting with their sons, it may be able to counteract family disruption or at least aid in the strengthening of family relationships. It may be a stretch to infer these kinds of effects of the running program on participants with the results that were found in this thesis, but that is why future research is needed. Future research could explore correctional programs similar to the running program using social disorganization theory as a guide.
**Strain Theories**

General strain theory may also be relevant to consider when evaluating programs such as the running program at RCCF. In order to better describe this theory, it will first be useful to explain other strain theories that contributed to the development of this more general and inclusive idea. Strain theory attempts to explain why some groups in society are more criminal than others (Cullen and Agnew 2003). Mertonian strain theory proposes that lower classes cope with structural strain using any of five different methods: conformity, or accepting both the goals and the norms for reaching them; innovation, or accepting the goals but using illegitimate means to reach them; ritualism, or accepting the norms of society but considering the goals out of reach; retreatism, or rejecting both the goals and the means; and rebellion, or abandoning society's goals and means in an attempt to establish a new social order (Cullen and Agnew 2003; Merton 1938).

Macro-strain theory, or institutional anomie theory, focuses on crime as a result of the American dream, which Rosenfeld and Messner (1995:199) define as "a commitment to the goal of material success, to be pursued by everyone in society, under conditions of open individual competition." This theory expands on Merton's anomie theory, claiming that normlessness is created by the American dream because people focus solely on achieving monetary success. This dream centers around basic cultural values, including achievement, individualism, universalism, and the fetishism of money (Rosenfeld and Messner 1995). In addition, the American dream becomes entangled with important social institutions, such as the family, economy, and political and educational systems,
weakening them and denying people standards for success besides monetary achievement. This leads to strain, and in turn, crime (Messner and Rosenfeld 1995). This theory, like Mertonian strain theory, is useful in explaining white-collar and common crimes, and to some extent may bring insight into an exploration of correctional programming. However, general strain theory is a more inclusive version and is better able to explain the effects of programs like the running program at RCCF.

General strain theory is a "new, broader version of strain theory" (Cullen and Agnew 2003:208). Agnew holds that the failure to achieve society's goals is only one source of strain, while several others also play a role in angering or frustrating some members of society. The prevention of achievement of positive goals, the removal of positively valued stimuli, or the presentation of negative stimuli are all plausible causes of negative emotions. According to this theory, anger is the most likely of these negative emotions to lead to crime (Agnew 1992). As the findings section of this thesis shows, the running program at RCCF can have a positive effect on participants' psychological well-being, helping those with emotional issues like depression and anger by teaching them how to overcome these feelings. General strain theory can provide a different understanding of these effects, and general strain theorists would reason that participants of the running program would not be as likely to commit crimes after release because the emotional strains of anger and depression no longer lead them to such behaviors. Additional research could focus on programs in correctional settings that have the potential to lead to such emotional developments.
Though I approached this project from a social bond theory through the life course perspective, it has been useful to explain other relevant approaches in order to illustrate possible future directions in criminological research. Specifically, future studies should examine correctional programming through the use of a variety of theoretical perspectives in order to provide a deeper collective understanding of possible effects. Other perspectives that may be taken advantage of in future research also include rational choice theory, routine activities theory, and theories of masculinity. I chose social bond theory through the life course to explore the running program at RCCF because I felt it was the most relevant theory in explaining possible effects. However, any of the previously discussed theoretical approaches, individually or in combination, could also have been used to present a rich analysis of program results.

The use of only one theoretical approach is perhaps a limitation of this study. With only one perspective in mind during stages of data collection and analysis, it is possible that some program effects passed by unnoticed. However, the use of multiple theories would considerably broaden the scope of this project and would in some ways subtract from the focus. The purpose of this thesis was to explore the results of the running program at RCCF from a social bond theory through the life course perspective, but it could have been extended to examine the relevance of other approaches in explaining program effects.

This research focused on evaluating the running program at The Rural Community Correctional Facility (RCCF) from a control theory approach, specifically social bond theory. Findings suggested that the running program appeared to increase the
social bonds of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief, making it an important program at RCCF because of the role that it plays in helping residents behave during their time there and in some cases making them more likely to desist from criminal activities after their release. This research examines the running program from a control theory, or social bond theory through the life course perspective, and demonstrates how theoretical approaches can aid in developing a deeper understanding of effects of juvenile community correctional programming.
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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR RCCF FACULTY/STAFF

General Information:
1. Age?
2. Sex?
3. What is your job title?
4. How long have you been at RCCF?
5. What is your relationship to the running program?

Interview Questions:

1. Why did you/How did you become involved in the running program at RCCF?
2. How might you measure the effects of the running program?
3. What kind of effect do you think the running program has on those who participate? Why do you think this is?
4. Have you noticed any difference in the attitudes or behavior of kids after they have participated in the program for an extended amount of time?
5. Why do you think residents participate in the running program?
6. Do you think residents like the running program? More or less so than other programs offered at RCCF? Why do you think this is so?
7. What kinds of residents participate in the running program? Does it appear to be a diverse group, or are many of the participants alike in some way (ie. Are they all physically fit, all athletic, etc.)?
8. Do you feel that the running program has increased the attachment of participants to adults, such as yourself, staff involved in the running program, other faculty at RCCF, or their parents or teachers? Why do you (or don’t you) think that this happened?
9. Do you feel that the running program has led to participants being more committed in any way to staying out of trouble? For example, do you think that they may feel they have more to lose now than before they were sent to RCCF?
10. Do you think that the running program has given participants more to lose if they get into trouble, or helped them realize in any way what is at stake if they do get into trouble? How do you think this may have happened?
11. Do you know if former residents who participated in the running program participated in similar activities after their release? For example, have any former residents who participated in the running program joined school or club athletics, continued running on their own, or engaged in other recreational pursuits? Have they developed other hobbies? If so, why do you think this happened? Do you think participation in the running program had anything to with such further involvement?

12. Do you know if former residents who participated in the running program participated in other competitive school-related activities after their release? How about non-competitive school-related activities? If they did, what do you think led to their participation in these activities? Do you think participation in the running program had anything to do with this involvement?

13. As a result of their participation in the running program, do you think that former participants are more likely to believe that the rules they must follow to stay out of trouble are reasonable? Do you think that they now believe that such rules serve a purpose, or that they should follow the rules, more than before their participation in the running program?

14. Do you believe residents benefit from this program? How and why? Do you think faculty and staff at RCCF benefit from this program in any way? What possible benefits does this program offer RCCF itself?

15. What do you think is the most important aspect of the running program at RCCF (the fact that it is voluntary, that it is open for all residents with off-grounds privileges, that residents get to go out into the community during races, the psychological benefits associated with winning races, etc.)? Why do you think this aspect is the most important?

16. How important do you think attending community road races is to this program? Why? Do you think the running program would have the same effect if residents were not able to compete in such events?

17. Do you think other juvenile residential centers or other correctional institutions would see the same effects in their residents if they adopted this program? Why do you (or don’t you) think that this program could be adopted in other, similar settings? If another facility were to adopt this program, what would you say is the most necessary part of the program to keep the same?
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR RCCF RESIDENTS

Demographic Information:
1. Age?
2. What grade are you currently in?
3. What is your family structure? (Do you live in a single parent home, a blended family, with relatives who aren’t your parents, etc.?)
4. How long have you been at RCCF?
5. What offense/s did you commit that led to your coming to RCCF?

Interview Questions:

1. Why did you/How did you become involved in the running program at RCCF?

2. How would you describe your experiences with the running program at RCCF? Would you say your experiences were good or bad? Why?

3. Do you think your participation in the running program had any effects on you (such as your attitude or behavior)? Describe these effects. Why do you think the running program had these effects?

4. Do you feel that the running program increased your attachment to adults, such as those you ran with, other faculty at RCCF, or your parents or teachers? Why do you (or don’t you) think that this happened?

5. When you think about committing a crime, violating probation, etc., do you consider what the faculty you ran with at RCCF, other faculty at RCCF, or your parents or teachers, would think of this action? If so, does considering their thoughts and feelings make you behave in a different way than you normally would? Why do you (or don’t you) think this is so?

6. As a result of the running program, are you more committed in any way to staying out of trouble? For example, do you have more to lose now than before you were sent to RCCF?

7. Has the running program given you more to lose if you get into trouble, or helped you realize in any way what is at stake if you get into trouble? How do you think this happened?

8. Did participation in the running program at RCCF cause you to become interested in similar activities when you were released? For example, did you become more interested in participating in school or club athletics, running on your own, or
other recreational pursuits? How about other hobbies? If so, why do you think this happened?

9. Did you continue to run after your release from RCCF? If so, do you think this has had any effect on your attitude or behavior? Why do you (or don’t you) think that this effect has occurred?

10. After your release from RCCF, did you become more interested, as a result of the running program, in competitive school-related activities? How about other school-related activities? If so, why do you think this happened?

11. As a result of your participation in the running program, are you more likely to believe that the rules you must follow in order to stay out of trouble are reasonable? Do you now believe that such rules serve a purpose, or that you should follow the rules, more than before your participation in the running program?

12. Did running at RCCF teach you anything? If so, what?

13. Did you like the running program at RCCF? Why (or why not)? Do you think it was a worthwhile program offered at RCCF? How would you rate it in comparison with other programs at RCCF? In comparison with other programs you may have participated in at other facilities?