

**Jim Doyle**  
Governor

**Rick Raemisch**  
Secretary



**State of Wisconsin**  
**Department of Corrections**

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**Charles A. Tubbs**  
Administrator

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**ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMO TO COUNTIES**

**MEMO # 07-14**

**DATE:** December 14, 2007

**TO:** County Departments of Human/Social Services Directors

**FROM:** Charles A. Tubbs, Administrator

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Charles A. Tubbs".

**SUBJECT: SPRITE PROGRAM 2008**

I am pleased to provide you with the 2008 calendar of SPRITE sessions and share our vision for the program in the coming year. Please share this information with delinquency workers who might want to use SPRITE as a referral option for county youth.

SPRITE is a 24-day intervention program utilizing adventure education to engage juvenile delinquents in life-changing activities. The program uses real-life experiences to teach trust, communication, responsible decision making and social skills. The SPRITE Program is an excellent resource for counties looking for short-term, yet high impact programming. *SPRITE is designed for boys ages 14-17 who have law violations and need intervention in their lives, but may or may not meet the criteria for a placement in Juvenile Correctional Institutions.* Courts are not required to impose a correctional placement as the consequence for failing to complete the program. However, a solid aftercare plan and clear rewards or consequences for youth performance are important motivators and impact the selection of youth for the program.

SPRITE has an exceptional team made up of new director, Jo Mercurio, two Youth Counselors and six Experiential Recreation Specialists. Staff credentials include college degrees in psychology and recreation leadership, training from world renowned organizations such as Outward Bound and the National Outdoor Leadership School, excellent safety records in rock climbing and Challenge Course facilitation and direct service to both male and female youth in out of home settings.

In 2008, programming will again include canoeing expeditions as well as backpacking as a means of challenging youths' teamwork skills and perseverance. Youth will review or be introduced to several cognitive intervention tools that assist with decision making. An emphasis on re-integration to the community will continue with a focus on connecting to school and employment. SPRITE will also explore the opportunity of involving youth and their family members in a day of experiential education activities to strengthen or renew family relations. SPRITE's half-time teacher position is soon to be filled. In addition to the physical education and health curriculum for which students will earn 0.25 credits, students are engaged in language arts assignments through essay and journal writing and book reports as well as exploration of social studies and geography topics. SPRITE will confer credit under the auspices of Ethan Allen School.

Our experience has shown that youth can and will change when therapeutically challenged in an environment that is both demanding and supportive. Actively engaging students in meaningful experiences improves their confidence

and resiliency. SPRITE staff builds relationships with students and teaches them healthy responses to their personal issues with school, family and gangs. Risk factors for delinquent behavior and common manifestations are addressed including:

- anti-social behavior/ aggression / fighting
- rebelliousness / running away / AODA
- low academic aspirations / lack of confidence / lack of trustworthiness and trust in others
- favorable attitudes toward deviant behavior / relationship choices / poor social skills.

Counties are provided a strong and proven program that is equipped to address these risk factors. Throughout SPRITE, the home county social worker has full control of the decision making process regarding his or her client. We strive to help young men work their way back to their families while avoiding expensive long-term placements.

Attached is the SPRITE Schedule for 2008. You can find more information about the program, referral procedures and forms on our website at: [www.wi-doc.com/sprite2008.htm](http://www.wi-doc.com/sprite2008.htm).

The SPRITE Program director and staff look forward to working with you during the coming year to engage youth in an experience of SUPPORT-PERSEVERANCE-RESPECT-INITIATIVE-TEAMWORK and EDUCATION. Contact the SPRITE Director, Jo Mercurio, at 608.288.3356 with questions.

<b>2008 SPRITE SCHEDULE</b>			
<b>Referral packets due:</b>	<b>MONTH</b>	<b>START DATE</b>	<b>END DATE*</b>
Dec. 21, 2007	JANUARY	2	25
Jan. 22	FEBRUARY	6	29
Feb. 20	MARCH	5	28
Mar. 19	APRIL	2	25
Apr. 23	MAY	7	30
May 21	JUNE	4	27
June 18	JULY	2	25
July 23	AUGUST	6	29
Aug. 20	SEPTEMBER	3	26
Sept. 17	OCTOBER	1	24
Oct. 22	NOVEMBER	3 <sup>a</sup>	26
Nov. 19	DECEMBER	1	23

\*End date is graduation date. <sup>a</sup> Nov. and Dec. sessions begin on a Monday to accommodate holidays, while all other sessions begin on Wednesday.

- cc: Rick Raemisch, Secretary, Department of Corrections  
 Amy Smith, Deputy Secretary, DOC  
 Silvia Jackson, Assistant Administrator, DOC/DJC  
 Reggie Bicha, Administrator, DCFS/DHFS  
 Jill Chase, Bureau of Regulation and Licensing, DCFS/DHFS  
 Diane Waller, Director, Area Administration, DES/DHFS  
 DES Area Administrators  
 DES Human Service Area Coordinators for Children and Families  
 Division of Juvenile Corrections Management staff  
 County Youth Aids contacts  
 Greg Van Rybroek, Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center  
 Court-attached juvenile court intake offices