



***Flint Court
Administrator Reveals
a Short-Cut To
Reducing Caseloads &
Improving Outcomes
for Children &
Families...***

**How Genesee County, Michigan
Strengthened its Information Infrastructure
with Collaborative Case Management.**

Case Study

Business Impact

By sharing their data with agencies outside of their department and organization, Genesee has improved case worker productivity, and has incorporated a stronger communication plan, which has fostered faster decision making.

Issue

Genesee wanted a more efficient way to track kids across agencies and systems and to effectively “log” and have available in real-time case notes and information. This in turn would allow for an improvement in caseload management and give the courts access to critical information when they needed it.

Executive Summary

Through a partnership with GVT, Genesee has improved their caseload and management workflow and has successfully begun to incorporate technology that shares important data with outside entities, allowing for collaborative case management. The success of this project has allowed Genesee to realize their goal of knowing where a child or teen is in the system, at any given moment, thus improving their overall support structure and outcomes measurement.

The following is a summary interview with Remus Holbrook recently retired and former Director of Caseworker Services Family Division, 7th Judicial Circuit in Genesee County, Flint, Michigan.

It Started With an Idea...

RH:

I became aware of GVT several years ago when they came to Michigan to develop a system for the old Juvenile Justice. The system at the time was for tracking juveniles across various systems that were involved in the school, residential placements, and police departments. I took it up on myself to build my own system in Flint.

Internally we had some discussions about tracking kids across systems in Genesee County - from the police department when petitions are filed and by the school. We felt that it was necessary to keep each organization, police departments and the schools apprised of what was happening with these kids.

Our clients and families that we support move several times a year and it's hard for anyone to keep up with what system they're involved in and what organization they're involved with. So as a result, I asked GVT to come to Flint to help me design a web-based system that would help us track kids no matter where they were.

From our system, we wanted the ability to track kids through the school system and through residential placement settings, as well.

We looked for things like how long they've been in this placement and how they're doing in this placement. Our goal was to be able to actually monitor the kids from placements, from school to school and from police department to police department.

Different Jurisdictions Did Not Communicate...

Believe it or not when the kids are arrested in one jurisdiction, police departments do not communicate... so consequently kids can get picked up by several police departments and they would never know that this kid has been arrested in another jurisdiction.

In many instances, the police departments don't really know what happens to the kid or to the petition after they're arrested. If we could get them all on board with our cross county system, at least we can file a petition that could deliver automatic feedback on what happened to that kid or the case that was unaccounted for.

If a family moves into another jurisdiction, police departments would have a way of conveniently tracking their kids. A solid, web-based communication system would provide them with ongoing information so they could continue to track these kids.

"The Need to Track ALL OF OUR KIDS" - Multiple Databases Did Not Communicate or Share Data...

So I asked GVT to return FLINT, to help me design a system where we can actually begin to track not only our juveniles, but our neglected and abuse kids that we care for, track and monitor, as well. We have approximately two thousand kids that are in and out of home placement and we have no way of tracking those kids.

Our system was a linear system and it was designed to allow us to enter information about petitions and cases. But the computer does not help us design programs around families... which are our immediate needs. I needed to keep a handle on ALL of the information - so we can really start looking at how we're doing. That's why I needed this new system... I needed a data system that would give me that type of information.

Interviewer:

How has the first phase of the system helped? You're talking about adding more functionality and bringing on more cross departments, but tell me how the original system has helped and in what way?

RH:

Our case workers were just like every court in the State, they're frontline people who actually keep track of kids as they come through the court system. They were tracking their kids and they were keeping this information on notebooks and logbooks. The new system just makes it more efficient.

Now, with our new system... when a caseworker goes out to a school and makes a contact, they can instantly enter the contact information from the school or from the police station (or from which ever location they may choose) – right into the system. They can use and connect with their laptop or hand-

held device and directly enter that information about the kid. They don't have to carry pens and log notes and nothing gets lost. If a case worker has to return to their office to start doing stuff... enter in all their cases for the day, paper work, things change and they lose precious time. That's how a caseworker gets inundated and how caseloads back up.

Again, the new system makes everything a lot more efficient. If our kids move around... the case worker can now go into the system and instantly pull up that information. It's that fast, it's quick, it's efficient.

"Two Clicks" and a Supervisor Knows What's Going On...

And the way our system is set up... while caseworkers are tracking these kids and putting all this information into the system... their supervisor can sit in their office and monitor the caseworkers work. They can determine if this case worker is actually seeing kids or working with kids or whatever they need to do to help that family.

The supervisor can sit in an office and not have to chase a caseworker down and ask them questions. The information is always readily available to the supervisor. It's a fantastic work tool for supervisors that want to stay apprised of cases and who want to make sure that their case workers are doing what they're supposed to do.

The process is very fast & very efficient and they never have to confront a case worker. They just pull up a case load (they have access to every kid that's in that case load) and within a very short period of time - can determine whether or not the case workers' actually performing the job assignment.

Interviewer:

So bottom line, by using GVT you've been able to apply technology to help the case workers, their supervisors and everyone else that has the task of helping children in your system... be more productive and more efficient?

When You ABSOLUTELY Need to Know...

RH:

Absolutely. Here's a typical scenario... imagine I get a call about a specific high visibility case - say I've got a kid that's involved in a drive by shooting and several people have been shot. I can pull up that case and get the information to the judge immediately. I don't have to get out of my chair, walk across the street, go into the file room, pull open a file, look through the file make sure the information is in the file and then walk up to the judge and say, here's what happened last night. That information is readily available for the court to read and it's all on the computer screen.

A Continuous Process of Effective Tracking...

AND... it's going to be a lot more efficient than that. We're in the process of making more of a design change so that I can put this information on a judge's laptop... right on the judge's desk at some point in the future.

Interviewer:

For another county or person in your position that could benefit from leveraging GVT's technology to be more efficient and productive with the children in the system, would you recommend GVT as a partner to help accomplish this?

"... GVT's System is Going to be the Answer for Most Court Administrators Out There..."

RH:

Absolutely, when I first came across GVT I thought, "This is an organization that's got all the answers to every questions I ever had". Initially, getting everyone on board with our own data system was tough... but now everyone is seeing the value of our system. I highly recommend GVT to anybody... AND I do so as part of my association of family court administrators; I was a trustee there... recently resigned - because I'm retiring now.

I highly recommend that GVT is it - and a lot of other agencies have really started to take a look at what we are presenting and the information that we are gathering.

This is going to be the answer for most of the court administrators out there, as far as monitoring and tracking cases across systems. There is no doubt in my mind, it works for us and it will do wonders for them too.

The Office of the Court Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day management and long-term planning of the 7th Judicial Circuit Court. These responsibilities include: personnel administration, budgeting and fiscal management, case flow, records management and technology development. You can visit them on the web at:

[HTTP://WWW.CO.GENESEE.MI.US/CIRCUITCOURT/WEBSITE2/ADMIN.HTM](http://www.co.geneseee.mi.us/circuitcourt/website2/admin.htm)

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