

'Group home' alternative for troubled young

By AL WILSON

DANSVILLE — The group home is "one of our best alternatives" for troubled young people between 12 and 17, says William Colaizzi, Livingston County probation director.

Colaizzi spoke last week at a meeting of area residents sponsored by Kinship Group Homes Inc. of Perkinsville.

"For youngsters who cannot live in a home setting and who must have more than the supervision of a probation officer, the next best answer is the group home," Colaizzi said. "Properly operated, it is a valuable

resource to the community, the probation and to the courts."

Kinship Group Homes, a non-profit organization supports Kennedy House for Boys in Perkinsville and is working to open a second home for girls near Avoca in the town of Tyrone in Schuyler County.

Joseph F. Weider, Kinship executive director, said the target date for opening the new home is June 1.

Similar to Kennedy House, which houses six boys, the group home will house six girls with a "mom and dad" couple to oversee the residents and establish a home for the young women.

Colaizzi outlined the need for services to the young people between the ages of 12 and 21.

He said in the past year 175 persons were assigned to his department. Of that number 100 were under 21 years of age with 60 of those between the ages of 16 and 18.

Colaizzi said, "at least 50 percent of our case load, if not more, is under the age of 21. We're trying to find services that will fill alternatives to jail for that age group . . . the group home is one of our best alternatives when a person cannot reside at home because of problems."

Kinship's Kennedy House was start-

ed about 10 years ago after the Rev. Timothy Weider, brother to Joseph Weider, was named pastor at Sacred Heart Church in Perkinsville.

In addition to his pastoral duties, Father Weider started taking in boys who had left home or were troubled. They shared the 14-room rectory with the priest.

About 50 boys have been assisted by Kennedy House. Joseph Weider said the program is considered about 70 percent effective, that less than three out of 10 boys "had difficulty after leaving" the home.

The average stay for a boy at Kennedy House is 10 to 12 months.