

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES**



**Testimony of
Neil A. Stanley, Director
Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services**

**Performance Oversight Hearing
Committee on Human Services**

March 4, 2013

Introduction

Good morning Chairman Graham and members of the Committee on Human Services. For the record, I am Neil A. Stanley, Director of the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services. I am joined today by:

- Stephen Luteran, Deputy Director
- Regina Youngblood, Chief Operating Officer, and
- Sheila Clark, Program Manager of DC YouthLink.

I thank you and the Human Services Committee members for the opportunity to testify on behalf of DYRS.

I would like to begin by saying that it is an honor and a privilege to serve as Director of DYRS. Every day I see the dedication, passion, and commitment that our staff brings to work. I personally want to thank our staff for all they do on behalf of youth and families in the District.

In my time as Director, I have had the great pleasure of receiving guidance and counsel from Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, BB Otero, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, Paul Quander, and of course, Mayor Gray. Their leadership has been invaluable and I would like to thank them for their support.

I would also like to acknowledge all of our partners. I would especially like to thank Chief Lanier and MPD, Chief Judge Satterfield, Judge Bush, and the Family Court judges, our counterparts at Court Social Services, including Director Terri Odom, the *Jerry M.* Special Arbiter Grace Lopes, our partners at the Office of the Attorney General and the Public Defender Service, and all the folks who are part of DC YouthLink, including Reverend Donald Isaac and Dr. Fred Phillips. The District is fortunate to have such an expansive network of dedicated individuals working in the juvenile justice system.

I would like to thank the members of the Human Services Committee for all that you do on behalf of the residents of the District. Councilmember Bonds and Councilmember McDuffie, I look forward to working closely together with each of you to shape a juvenile justice system that is focused on rehabilitating young people and protecting the community—objectives that go hand in hand.

Councilmember Wells, your efforts in reforming the juvenile justice system as the prior Committee Chair are greatly valued at DYRS. You're a true reformer, helping lead DYRS out of the inefficient system previously in place. Thank you for the critical role you have played in shaping many of the successes and accomplishments we are reporting on today.

Councilmember Barry, your continued council to DYRS is greatly appreciated. We are honored to have such a distinguished public servant work with us.

Finally, Councilmember Graham, we have sincerely appreciated you and your staff's thorough and thoughtful oversight, which has included:

- Regular communication in person, by phone, and through email; and
- Tours of DYRS facilities, including an incredibly well-received holiday visit.

We appreciate your commitment to the issues facing young people and families, and look forward to continuing to work with you.

During my testimony, I will refer by name to several youth. I will be using pseudonyms when I do to maintain youth confidentiality. The ages for the youth I cite are real.

The DYRS Approach

For the population of youth that DYRS serves, research shows that the best long-term strategy for rehabilitation is to provide young people with services, supports, and opportunities designed to build on their strengths and help them become successful adults. This approach is called Positive Youth Justice (PYJ). DYRS believes this approach is achieved by aligning everything we do with our three strategic goals:

- I. Youth Prepared to Succeed:**
- II. Safe Facilities, Safe Communities: and**
- III. Efficient and Effective Management:**

Over the past year, these three strategic goals influenced every initiative DYRS instituted, and reshaped the initiatives currently in place. These efforts, which build upon DYRS' ongoing work with partners across the District, reflect the agency's continued commitment toward strengthening its investment in youth, their families, and the community.

- I. Youth Prepared to Succeed**

DYRS' most important long-term public safety strategy is to provide comprehensive rehabilitative services that help young people turn away from offending and get on the right track. Each youth committed to the agency receives individualized case planning and management that draws on their unique strengths and needs. Families are engaged in every step of the treatment process.

Juvenile justice systems across the country are relying less on secure confinement and more on community-based placements and services. Placing court-involved youth in the community with structured and multi-dimensional services and supports is a recognized method of decreasing recidivism. At the same time it increases youth engagement in education and work. In 2009, DYRS and the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation (CYITC) partnered to launch DC YouthLink, a network of community-based organizations that deliver services directly in young people's neighborhoods. To more easily access the service providers that already exist in the community, DYRS partners with two community-based organizations, East of the River Clergy-Policy Community Partnership (ERCPCP) and the Progressive Life Center (PLC). These two Lead Agencies then head a network of local service providers, known as the Service Coalition, to deliver services to youth within the local community.

DC YouthLink also works in concert with the DYRS Office of Education and Workforce Development on education and workforce development services and programming. DYRS develops and implements effective programs to support the agency's goal that committed youth be productively engaged. To achieve this goal, DYRS strives to provide committed youth with the appropriate services, supports, and opportunities within the community that promote education, work readiness, and employment.

DYRS, together with DC YouthLink, connects youth to services that address the six core Positive Youth Justice developmental domains of work, education, health, relationships, community, and creativity.

Work

DYRS understands that preparing a youth for the workforce provides self-worth, confidence, and is a fundamental component of rehabilitation. One of our youth, Antoine who is 18, recently said, "...when I told my father that I had to work Black Friday and he replied, 'welcome to the real world.' I felt proud of myself... I also have been able to save some money before I leave for college in January 2013." This is just one example of the value of getting our youth ready for adult life after their commitment to DYRS ends. The following initiatives and results from the past year include:

- *Linked 324 Youth to Job Readiness Training in the Community:* Through the combined efforts of DC YouthLink and DYRS, 324 youth were connected to job readiness training in the community during FY2012. This represents a 62% increase from FY2011, when 200 youth received such services.
- *Helped DYRS Youth Earn 117 Vocational Certifications:* Through a partnership among DC YouthLink, DYRS, and community business partners, during FY2012 DYRS youth received industry-standard vocational certifications in high demand areas including Microsoft Office, the culinary arts, high-tech copper cabling, sales, and home health services.
- *Served 31 Youth in Earn, Learn, and Grow (ELG):* With the Committee on Human Services' support, DYRS partnered with community providers to serve 31 youth in the Earn, Learn, Grow (ELG) Program. These youth received paid work experience training in landscaping, auto mechanic, or green technologies four days a week, and the fifth day was spent on developing soft skills needed for employment.
- *Connected over 158 Youth to Internships and Unsubsidized Job Opportunities:* The combined efforts of DYRS and DC YouthLink helped 183 youth obtain valuable work experience through internships and unsubsidized employments in locations across the community, including restaurants, government offices, nonprofits, and technology companies. One of our youth, 18 year-old Brandon, is working at a downtown restaurant as a food runner and is training to become a chef.

- *Helped 35 Youth at New Beginnings Complete Vocational Programs:* In FY2012, 35 youth at New Beginnings completed vocational programs in automotive, barbering, and culinary arts. The barbering program, which doubled in enrollment during FY2012, teaches youth entry-level skills and is coupled with a continued accumulation of credit hours through an apprenticeship upon the youth's return to the community. The culinary arts program provides instruction on food preparation and safety, and students have the opportunity to earn a ServSafe Certification upon completion.
- *Partnered with the Department of Disability Services:* In July 2012, DYRS began a partnership with the Department of Disability Services' Rehabilitation Services Administration to retain a Vocational Specialist two days per week.
- *Expanded the Workforce Development Unit:* In 2009, DYRS received a \$6.1 million grant from the Department of Labor (DOL) to expand the educational, workforce training, and employment opportunities for youth returning to the community. In FY2012, the DOL grant funds helped DYRS double the number of staff to assist youth with job coaching, career planning, and job readiness skills.

Education

DYRS, through our partnership with DC YouthLink, has worked hard to improve the educational opportunities offered to young people. Please note that the average youth enters his or her commitment to DYRS with few, if any, high school credits and tests at the fourth- to fifth- grade level in English and math. Most have experienced multiple failures in school. In any particular fiscal year, the great majority of DYRS youth are either beyond high-school age, too young to have finished high school, or not sufficiently advanced academically to attain their high school credential. Despite those odds, I am pleased to report some of the results in education over the past year include:

- *Linked 190 Youth to Educational Support Services in the Community:* In FY2012, DYRS and DC YouthLink connected 190 youth to community-based educational support services such as academic tutoring. These youth received a total of 4,063 hours of tutoring or, on average, 38 hours each in the following subjects: Biology; Algebra; Health Science; American History; World History; Writing; Algebra I; Geometry; Reading Comprehension; SAT Preparation; GED preparation; Computer Literacy; Grammar; General Math; Pre-Algebra; English; Consumer Math; Psychology; and Earth Science.
- *Helped 12 Youth Enroll in Post-Secondary Education Programs:* During FY2012, 12 current and former DYRS youth were enrolled in post-secondary education programs, including colleges and universities, community colleges, and technical schools. A sample of these institutions includes West Virginia University, UDC, Delaware State, Potomac College, Central State University-Ohio, and Morgan State.
- *Helped 46 Youth Achieve Their High School Diploma or GED:* In FY2012, 46 DYRS youth received their high school diploma or GED either in the community or while at the Maya Angelou Academy at New Beginnings (MAA). Dwayne, who is 18, said, “DYRS first helped me graduate high school...Not too long after that [a DYRS staff member] helped me pursue my career in the culinary arts by continuously setting up interviews for me and checking up on me every now and then. I’m very fortunate that I was a part of this program that turned my life around.”
- *GED Preparation:* In partnership with the University of the District of Columbia, DYRS established a GED Program to address the unique educational needs of DYRS youth. The GED Program was specifically designed to address the additional academic challenges that DYRS youth face, providing more structure and assistance than most typical GED preparatory programs.
- *Strengthened Partnerships with Post-Secondary Education Providers:* The agency continued to strengthen its partnerships with colleges and universities during FY2012. These relationships facilitate better post-secondary education access for DYRS youth and

give the agency and its partners the opportunity to engage in robust discussions on best practices and effective strategies for serving court-involved youth. As part of this effort, the agency has partnered with schools such as Virginia State University and the University of the District of Columbia.

- *Enhanced Curricula at Maya Angelou Academy:* The school launched two new electives for the school year 2012-13: “Transitions,” a workforce training and independent living skills course that is currently underway, and “Technology,” a course that will launch in the next trimester with a course objective of obtaining Microsoft Office (MOS) certification. MAA also partnered with the University of Maryland to begin offering more intensive reading interventions for select students.
- *Initiated a Partnership between Maya Angelou Academy and The American University Washington College of Law:* In FY2012, MAA initiated a partnership with the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights at the American University Washington College of Law Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law. Their Speak Truth to Power initiative, which pairs two law students with MAA’s social studies team, provides intensive human rights education training and helps youth gain a deeper understanding of social justice issues.
- *Expanded the Agency’s Educational Development Unit:* During FY2012, DYRS worked to strengthen the educational services and programs provided. The agency partnered with the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to place a detailed staff person in DYRS, and additional staff were brought on board to assist youth with college and financial aid applications.
- *Held an Education Summit to Develop Strategies for Improving Educational Outcomes:* In June 2012, DYRS held an Education Summit to map out a strategy for improving educational outcomes and to ensure that the agency’s strategy is aligned with the District-wide goals of Raise DC and DC Public Schools (DCPS). The Summit also focused on

helping DYRS continue to create strong partnerships with District agencies and community partners to leverage existing knowledge and resources.

- *Driver's Education:* Recognizing that transportation can present a significant barrier to youth employment, DYRS offered a driver's education course to prepare youth to pass the District of Columbia's driver's license examination and road test. This program is also designed to broaden employment options for a range of entry-level opportunities that require a valid driver's license.
- *Summer Enrollment Push:* DYRS' Office of Education and Workforce Development met with every case manager to identify youth with enrollment problems and other school-related concerns in order to ensure that every committed youth of compulsory education age was enrolled and ready to go to school on the first day of the school year.
- *Increased Interagency Coordination around Education Transitions:* DYRS is implementing a number of efforts specifically targeting youth transitioning back to the community from secure placements, including New Beginnings. Through joint planning with DCPS and including DCPS representatives in DYRS Youth Family Team Meetings, the majority of DYRS youth return to the community with a pre-identified school of enrollment. This reduces or eliminates the number of school days DYRS youth miss due to transitions between DYRS residential placements. It is particularly important for students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) because early planning allows DCPS to make appropriate location assignments to ensure that each youth's IEP is being met. OSSE, DYRS and DCPS entered into an MOA in November to document this.

Health

As we have discussed, the principles of substance abuse treatment for the DYRS population include the following:

- a. Assessment and treatment of youth should be multimodal and address individual, family, educational and environmental factors;

- b. Treatment should be individualized wherever possible according to the specific needs of the youth;
- c. Families and community play a key role in the rehabilitation of youth and in the prevention of recidivism and should be incorporated wherever possible in the youth's substance abuse and mental health treatment;
- d. There should be a system of ongoing quality assurance monitoring and assessment of treatment progress; and,
- e. Wherever possible, treatment should be founded on evidence-based practices.

In 2012, DYRS implemented an approach to identify and assess the substance abuse-related needs of youth. There are several tools that we use such as the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI) and the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN-I). The GAIN-I is used to identify the severity and frequency of substance use. To date, 56 youth at the New Beginnings Youth Development Center have received GAIN-I assessments. Nineteen have been assessed to have no issues with substance abuse. 22 have been assessed at Level 1. 15 have been assessed at Level 2. None have been assessed at Level 3. By percentage, that is 35% with no issues, 39% at Level 1, and 26% at Level 2.

In addition to identifying the severity and frequency of substance abuse, the GAIN-I assesses mental health, physical health, legal issues, risk behaviors and disease prevention, vocational skills as well as environment and living situations. Using the assessment results, the agency develops a comprehensive service plan in collaboration with the DC Addiction, Prevention and Recovery Administration (APRA) as well as DC YouthLink service providers. As the service plan is implemented, the goal is that youth and family transition to long-term community supports, ideally at a lower level of intensity, as needed.

Twelve DYRS staff members are certified to administer GAIN-I assessments. We intend to train all case managers in basic substance abuse treatment screening so they can make appropriate referrals to treatment.

We recognize that an effective and comprehensive substance abuse strategy is a critical component in working with our committed youth. Our goal was to find an effective treatment approach that was evidenced-based and proven to be successful with adjudicated youth. The model that we selected is the Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT). We based this decision on MRT's effectiveness with the juvenile offender population in similar settings, easy implementation, and demonstrated impact in lowering recidivism. MRT is an evidence-based cognitive behavioral program that has been implemented in 40 states nationally for substance abuse treatment.

In December 2012 we implemented MRT facility-wide in New Beginnings and integrated it into the DC Model program. Youth now are required to successfully participate in the MRT program in order to progress through the model level system. The facility staff collects data every week on attendance and participation. The MRT trainers from will make a site visit to New Beginnings for quality assurance.

The model is designed to foster moral development through combining education, group and individual counseling, and structured exercises. Youth generally respond best to programs that are structured, routine, and consistent. Our youth participate in two staff-led group sessions per week, which are supplemented by individual counseling sessions. DYRS is working to establish MRT treatment models throughout the community for youth who are exiting New Beginnings as well as any other DYRS youth who is experiencing a substance use challenge in the community. Toward this end, five DC YouthLink service coalition members attended MRT training along with DYRS staff this past week.

The philosophy of MRT parallels peer support groups like AA and NA in that it strives to promote and maintain sobriety, abstinence, and relapse prevention among its participants. MRT is also similar to AA and NA in helping participants to think before they act. These are programs that believe that substance abuse treatment cannot be done in isolation.

As you know, PIW is on line now as a provider of inpatient substance abuse treatment for youth. In addition, DYRS issued an RFP to solicit additional providers in this area. The original

solicitation required modification and was reopened for potential providers to apply. DYRS is in the process of reviewing the applications submitted and is working closely with OCP to select a vendor for these services.

Relationships

A young person's long-term chances for success are greatly improved when his or her family is healthy, supportive, and engaged in the youth's treatment process. In FY2012, DYRS took a number of steps to strengthen its family outreach and improve its services and supports designed to empower youth and their families. The agency's approach is guided by best practices for creating a more family-centered juvenile justice paradigm, which are incorporated into programming models implemented in, among other places, Pennsylvania, DuPage County, Illinois, and King County, Washington.

DYRS brought in a nationally-known expert in involving families in juvenile justice systems to speak to all of the agency's managers. DYRS was also able to arrange for the director of Court Social Services and a senior manager from DC's Child and Family Services Agency to attend this working session. The speaker is a co-founder of Justice for Families, and her remarks drew on her personal experiences as a parent with a court-involved child in Louisiana and her subsequent experiences working with families whose children are also court-involved. Her presentation was targeted to juvenile justice professionals and enabled agency staff to hear a parent's perspective.

To coordinate its family empowerment strategies, DYRS takes a focused approach toward increasing family involvement and creating family-based policies and programs. Through these efforts, DYRS provides a number of family engagement and empowerment services that include:

- *Case Planning/Services:* In addition to ongoing Youth Family Team Meetings (YFTMs) and family interactions with case managers and service providers, DYRS has begun holding family orientations and meet-and-greets for families with youth committed to the agency.

- *Facilities:* Families are encouraged to remain connected with their child during his or her stay in a DYRS facility. New Beginnings offers weekend shuttle service to and from the facility, youth are permitted to make daily free phone calls to family, and the facilities hold special onsite family events such as holiday dinners and Awards Programs.
- *Outreach:* In FY2012, DYRS repurposed space in its downtown headquarters to serve as a Family Resource Center for youth and their families. The Family Resource Center provides a safe, comfortable place to hold YFTMs, participate in family visits, and obtain resources about other supports and services for families. In the summer of 2012, DYRS hosted a community block party for youth and their families. This was a fun event that provided food, entertainment, and family activities.
- *Parent Support Groups:* Parents meet at a DYRS facility on a bi-monthly basis to offer support to one another. DYRS and the parents truly appreciate this opportunity to meet and discuss their loved ones with people who understand exactly what they are going through.
- *Linked 521 Youth to Relationship-Building Services:* In FY2012, DC YouthLink connected 521 DYRS youth to community-based services, such as mentoring programs and youth parent education courses, designed to help young people build healthy relationships with their families and other caring adults. These sentiments, expressed by one of our youth, 19-year-old Michael, are representative of a positive adult's impact. Michael said, "When I first began participating in the individual counseling program, I really did not want to be involved because of lack of maturity. I was not ready to move on from the old things I used to do in my life, but as I started to [participate] more and really pay attention to what was being said and that taught me I had gained maturity to become a better man. They all were very nice to me, which showed me that not everyone is a bad person like I used to think growing up."
- *Fatherhood at New Beginnings:* This provides enrichment workshops that equip the scholars with tools necessary for daily living. The course offers a wide array of lessons that teach the scholars daily living skills such as how to stay healthy and the importance

and use of soft skills (i.e. preparation for a job interviews, people skills at home and in the community, etc.).

Relationships with Positive Caring Adults:

DYRS strongly believes in the efficacy of relationships with positive, caring adults to help youth achieve good outcomes. We believe it is a valuable tool that contributes to our public safety outcomes and the rehabilitation of our youth. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, SAHMSA, and the U.S. Department of Education cited and fund mentoring programs as an effective strategy for promoting positive outcomes among various youth populations. Additionally, OJJDP awarded \$68 million, or 25% of its total awards in FY2012, to mentoring or mentoring-related programs for court involved youth.

A mentor is a...

- *Educational Advocate:* 93% of young people talked with him or her about school.
- *Family Skills Coach:* 91% of young people talked with him or her about their family life.
- *Substance Abuse Counselor:* 43% of young people talked with him or her about substance abuse issues.
- *Public Safety Advocate:* 77% of young people talked with him or her about gangs or relationships with their peers.

Other Relationship-Oriented Initiatives Include:

- *Established DC-focused Best Practices for Mentoring:* DYRS began work with the Institute for Educational Leadership to establish guidelines for mentoring that draws heavily from established best practices, but also takes into account the unique experiences of District youth. The rubric for mentoring best practices came into effect in FY2013, and every service provider has been trained. Additional and ongoing training will be offered in 2013.

- *Launched DC RAMP:* The Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP) is an evidence-based, nationwide program that provides high-tech, career-focused mentoring services to youth. In FY2012, DYRS, in partnership with the Institute for Educational Leadership, launched DC RAMP with assistance from a three-year grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). DC RAMP is specifically designed to assist young people as they transition from New Beginnings back to their communities.

Community

DYRS youth need to feel welcome in their community and to feel like they have a stake in the community's success. To this end, DYRS:

- *Combined Community Service with Workforce Development:* The *Earn, Learn, and Grow* initiative partnered with the DC Office on Aging to create a program through which youth learned landscaping skills while caring for the lawns of some of the District's senior residents. 31 youth were enrolled in the program.
- *Formed a Student Government at New Beginnings:* In FY2012, MAA partnered with DYRS to create the first-ever Student Government program at New Beginnings. In addition to helping build leadership skills, the program gives youth ownership over the happenings at the school and provides a hands-on lesson in civic engagement. I have gotten to know the current student government president, 17 year-old Rashaun. Before coming to New Beginnings, Rashaun's greatest challenge was following rules and respecting authority. As SGA president, he provides a voice for the scholars and has spearheaded the initiative to begin a newsletter at MAA. He is working towards earning his high school diploma and has been on the honor roll four times.
- *Instituted Student Achievement Awards at New Beginnings:* To help recognize and encourage positive behavior within the New Beginnings community, in FY2012 the facility launched a Performance Recognition plan that includes an award for the Star Youth of the Month and the Safety Unit of the Month.

Creativity

We pride ourselves on cultivating our youth's creativity in a variety of ways:

- *Linked 29 Youth to Community-based Arts Programs:* In FY2012, DC YouthLink connected 29 DYRS youth to programs in theater, photography, and the arts. This nearly doubled the amount of youth who were linked to such services in FY2011.
- *Launched a Monthly Newsletter at New Beginnings:* Youth at New Beginnings, under the leadership of MAA staff, created a new monthly newsletter. The newsletter is produced by youth and showcases student-produced content such as articles on politics and sports, poetry, artwork, and academic puzzles.
- *Strengthened the Music Program at New Beginnings:* The past year saw an increase in the band program's organization and presence. Band members meet regularly to create songs and beats and practice with one another, and the band frequently performs at events such as the Awards Program.
- *Math + Music:* Consists of two of the five elements derived from the Music+Math=Money (M+M=M) curriculum. This program focuses on music audio production and sound engineering used in all aspects of the media industry. The scholars are mentored in creative expression, instruction in songwriting, beat making, performance techniques and recording technology provide students the music production tools they need to give voice and talent to their experience.
- *Hip Hop Dance:* At New Beginnings, Hip-Hop dance is offered by the Cultural Shock Dance Company. The instructors provide a program fostering teamwork, respect, and positive self-expression. During this course, scholars are given the background and history of hip hop and taught how to express themselves through dance.
- *Chess:* The scholars are taught how to play chess. It has been a highly successful tool to enhance problem solving skills, independent thought, and critical thinking.

- *Combined Arts Education with Community Service:* In partnership with the Trust and Words, Beats, and Life, thirteen of our youth received arts-based education combined with work opportunities and community service. This included visual arts and music production.

General Strategies for Helping Youth Succeed

- *Increased the Number of Services that Youth Receive through DC YouthLink:* Each youth enrolled in DC YouthLink received approximately four services in FY2012. Comparatively, at the start of DC YouthLink in 2009, there was only one service for every four youth. Examples of services include tutoring and workforce development.
- *Participated in the District's Safe Summer Initiative:* As part of the District's One City Summer Initiative, the agency developed activities and services to keep youth busy during the summer months. Youth could enroll in creative programs, such as photography, or specialized work readiness services. In addition, youth could also participate in canoeing trips, amusement park visits, and attend baseball games. Throughout the course of the summers, twenty-six youth participated in special activities and 66 youth participated in six special services geared toward workforce development.
- *Launched a Saturday Enrichment Program at New Beginnings:* In FY2012, MAA launched a new program designed to expose youth to a variety of enrichment opportunities in education, workforce development, relationship-building, and overall well-being. Courses offered during the Saturday enrichment program include Math plus Music, Street Law, Fatherhood, Chess, Yoga, and Tai Chi. All of the courses feature male instructors, who help serve as positive role models for the young men.

II. SAFE FACILITIES, SAFE COMMUNITIES:

The heart of the agency's mission is to rehabilitate young people and to protect the public. While youth committed to the agency are in the community DYRS strives to ensure that:

- Youth are appropriately supervised;

- Youth are held accountable for their behavior;
- Youth are engaged in productive activities; and
- Youth are getting the services they need

Over the last year, DYRS has implemented, improved, and expanded many initiatives targeted at protecting public safety, resulting in the following outcomes:

- *Reduced Recidivism:* The FY2010 recidivism rate was 38%, down from the previous year's 42% rate and the lowest rate since FY2006.
- *Reduced Re-arrest Rates:* The agency's overall re-arrest rate fell by 37% between calendar years 2011 and 2012. This downward trend was equally true across all major offense types, including violent offenses (-32%) and robberies/attempted robberies (-43%). As a result of these declines, in 2012 DYRS youth represented a significantly smaller portion of overall arrests in the District than in 2011.
- *Reduced Abscondence Rates:* In FY2012, the agency reduced the number of youth on abscondence to match the lowest point in DYRS history. Abscondence rates have steadily dropped since FY2003, and in FY2012 the agency's abscondence rate fell to 5%. On average, 16 fewer youth are on abscondence each day in FY2012 than in FY2011, and the median length of abscondence has dropped from 11 to eight days.
- *Drop in Involvement in Deadly Violence:* In 2012, one DYRS youth was charged with homicide, falling from an average of 11 youth charged each year since 2007. No DYRS youth were victims of homicide during the calendar year, after averaging eight youth victims per year over the last five years.

Increased Community Supervision

DYRS is working hard to ensure that youth in the community are supervised appropriately:

Partnership for Success Unit: The Partnership for Success unit is a branch of case management that focuses on youth with a history of violent crime and high-risk behavior. The unit is an inter-agency partnership among DYRS, MPD, CSS, the courts, DCPS, and

the DC Department of Employment Services. The unit provides intensive case management and community supervision through two weekly face-to-face visits with a case manager, one weekly face-to-face visit with an assigned MPD officer, and three weekly phone calls from their case manager. As a group, the youth meet monthly to work on life skills and other skill development. These topics include Financial Literacy, Self Determination, Self-Management, Postsecondary Options, and Citizenship.

The youth are also engaged in community service. For example, to aid in collateral and infrastructural repairs following Hurricane Sandy, DYRS led a volunteer group of *Partnership for Success* youth to New Jersey to clear debris, distribute supplies and help residents.

Through this partnership, DYRS and CSS are able to collaborate on strategies for effective prevention and intervention techniques to ensure the safety of the youth and the public. The effort is designed to prevent high-risk youth from further court involvement and help these youth succeed.

- *Trained Case Managers to Effectively Utilize GPS Tracking Data:* The agency's Abscondence Unit trained all DYRS case managers on how to analyze GPS tracking data, allowing case managers to work proactively with their assigned youth to identify trends and activity that might indicate whether a youth is in crisis and likely to abscond.
- *Developed Proactive Abscondence Prevention Strategies:* In FY2012, the agency's Abscondence Unit launched a number of creative initiatives designed to prevent abscondence by engaging with youth in the community. During the summer, unit members began visiting community-based placements to mentor youth in crisis and act as third-party intermediaries to defuse problem situations. They coordinated several relationship-building events with youth, including attending a Nationals baseball game and organizing a basketball tournament. The Abscondence Unit also has weekly visits to both Alternative Solutions for Youth (ASY) and Boys Town Awaiting Placement facilities to discuss any potential issues the youth may be dealing with.

Increased Accountability of Youth

DYRS strives to guide youth behavior in positive ways. DYRS believes in holding youth accountable for their actions and responding swiftly and certainly when they do not comply with their conditions of release. Measures addressing youth accountability include:

- *Implemented a Graduated Responses Protocol:* In FY2012, DYRS instituted a research-based protocol for responding to violations of community release conditions. The Graduated Responses protocol utilizes a predefined set of graduated sanctions for noncompliance, the severity of which is based on the severity of the youth's violation and his or her Structured Diagnostic Measurement (SDM) risk assessment score. The rewards side of the protocol provides incentives for compliance, positive behavior, and goal achievement. The protocol allows case managers to hold youth accountable in real-time and with a wider array of tools than before. The protocol also incorporates Positive Youth Justice (PYJ) principles to better help youth progress toward short- and long-term goals.

DYRS developed the Graduated Responses system in consultation with the Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP), a public interest law and policy organization based in Washington, D.C. CCLP conducted national research on the most effective methods for guiding the behavior of court-involved youth and found that using graduated sanctions and incentives together best promotes compliance with rules and progress toward individual goals.

- *Expanded the Electronic Monitoring Program:* DYRS has dramatically increased the number of youth who are supervised through GPS technology, from zero youth in FY2009 to 27 youth in FY2010 to 568 youth in FY2011 to 664 youth in FY2012. On any given day in FY2012, upwards of 150-180 youth were monitored using a GPS device. DYRS partnered with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) to receive recommendations on how to enhance its usage of GPS technology.

Improved Placement Decisions and Risk-Assessment Tools

Another key component of protecting communities is ensuring that DYRS placement decisions are thoughtful and adequately consider risk to public safety. To this end, DYRS has:

- *Validated and Strengthened the Structured Diagnostic Measurement (SDM) Risk-Assessment Tool:* In FY2012, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), in collaboration with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, conducted a comprehensive review to measure the effectiveness of the SDM tool in accurately assessing risk and guiding the agency's placement decisions. The study validated the SDM tool, finding that it successfully classified youth according to their likelihood to recidivate. In July 2012, the agency adopted NCCD's recommended revisions to the tool, which allow for more accurate risk assessment.
- *Community Placement Agreements:* DYRS requires every youth to sign a Community Placement Agreement (CPA) prior to being placed in the community. The CPA sets forth the various requirements the young person must meet in order to remain in the community, such as school attendance, drug testing, meeting regularly with DYRS case managers and staff, electronic monitoring, counseling, and participating in other services. Violations of these requirements may result in the youth's removal from the community.
- *Community Status Review Hearings:* DYRS has a team of staff dedicated to reviewing and addressing the behavior of youth in the community. The DYRS Community Status Review Hearing panel regularly reviews whether youth in the community are adhering to the conditions of their release. If the Community Status Review Hearing panel finds that a young person has violated their CPA, the young person may face a number of consequences, including removal from the community and placement in a more secured setting.

Increased Monitoring and Accountability of Community-Based Residential Facilities

In the last year, DYRS has focused on improving the services and supervision provided by community-based residential facility (CBRF) providers in the District. DYRS believes that

increasing monitoring and accountability of the community-based residential facilities in which DYRS youth are placed will lead to increased public safety. The following results include:

- *Revised Billing Process:* DYRS implemented the new Menu for Service form to coincide with the Community Based Residential Facility's (CBRF) monthly invoice submission. The Menu of Service reflects the services that the CBRF's are contracted to provide. These services include: Substance Abuse Services (not Urinalysis), Educational Services, Vocational Services, Counseling Services (Individual and Group), Therapy by a Licensed Provider (Individual, Group and Family), Family Unifications Efforts and Recreational Activities. This has resulted in an increase of services to youth and strengthened compliance with active Human Care Agreements.
- *Added Program Capacity for Community-based Placements:* To improve its continuum of care, in FY2012 DYRS increased placement capacity in a number of community-based programs. New services include the addition of new bed spaces in independent living programs in Maryland and the District, the addition of a new therapeutic family home for females, and the licensing of two new therapeutic family homes for males.
- *Strengthened CBRF Contract and Licensing Compliance:* At the close of FY2012, all of the agency's CBRFs located in the District have Human Care Agreements and are in compliance with DCMR § 29, the District's licensing regulation.
- *Created a Task Force to Improve CBRF Performance:* The agency formed an internal team that is focused on strengthening the supervision and treatment services delivered by CBRF providers. This team, which is comprised of representatives from Committed Case Management, the Office of Licensing, Contracting, and Compliance, and the Office of Research and Evaluation, takes the lead in monitoring programs, identifying areas for improvement, and collaborating with CBRF providers to develop solutions.
- *Enhanced Training for CBRF Providers:* In FY2012, DYRS began holding monthly provider meetings to discuss compliance issues, communicate agency initiatives and policies, and develop strategies for improvement. The agency's Office of Licensing,

Contracting, and Compliance also instituted an orientation training program for new and out-of-compliance CBRFs, during which program managers and staff receive information about DYRS policies, procedures, and expectations. In total, there have been nine training sessions with 260 participants totaling 53 hours. This new process has improved the quality of service delivery, staff professionalism, customer service, and compliance.

- *Conducted Youth Abscondence Surveys and Focus Groups:* In FY2012, the agency began conducting youth abscondence surveys and focus groups to determine the reasons why youth abscond, their experiences with DYRS facilities and services, and steps that the agency could take to help prevent future incidents. Armed with this information, case managers, providers, and the DYRS Abscondence Unit can better identify abscondence triggers and take steps to intervene.

Enhanced Collaboration with Public Safety Partners

DYRS works closely with MPD and other public safety partners to protect the community. Some of the ways DYRS has enhanced collaboration with public safety partners include:

- *Regular Communication with MPD:* In addition to the collaboration with Partnership for Success, DYRS regularly communicates with MPD, including weekly briefings at MPD headquarters. Additionally, DYRS sends a weekly report to MPD identifying youth with a history of serious offenses. This information is shared with precinct officers, so that they know which youth are entering or leaving their areas.
- *Participation in the Public Safety and Justice Agency Cluster Meetings:* DYRS maintains regular communication with the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice and attends Public Safety and Justice agency cluster meetings.
- *Interagency Incident Management Team:* DYRS, in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, Metropolitan Police Department, Office of the Attorney General, Office of Risk Management, and the Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Agency, formed an Incident Management Team (IMT) to enable effective and efficient critical incident management. When a critical incident occurs, the IMT comes together to share critical information, review crisis responses, make recommendations on immediate next steps and coordinate communications procedures.

- *Juvenile Abscondence Review Committee (JARC):* The Juvenile Abscondence Review Committee is comprised of members from the following: DYRS, MPD, The Superior Court, The U.S. Attorney for DC, and a public member chosen by the Mayor. An incident triggers review from the JARC when DYRS requests a custody order for a youth and the youth allegedly commits, or is a victim of, a homicide, assault with the intent to kill, and/or assault with a deadly weapon (firearm). The JARC then examines what steps could have been taken to prevent the juvenile from absconding and recommends systemic improvements to identify and locate high risk youth that are in abscondence.

The JARC has met twice. The first meeting took place on October 16th, 2012 to review files from FY12. The most recent meeting was held in February 26th, 2013 to review FY13 Q1 files.

- *Participated in a Summer Call-In Program:* In an effort to prevent juvenile crime during the summer, in June 2012 DYRS and its agency partners hosted the second-annual Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Summer Call-In Initiative. Participants at this year's event included youth supervised by DYRS and Court Social Services (CSS), along with representatives from DYRS, CSS, MPD, the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Deputy Mayors for Health and Human Services and for Public Safety, and DC Family Court judges.
- *Launched Operation Safe Return:* Operation Safe Return, administered jointly by DYRS and CSS, was designed to provide a safe way for court-involved youth to surrender on outstanding custody orders. DYRS case managers, CSS probation officers, judges, and health care staff were onsite to reconnect with youth. The campaign was a success, with

several young people returning before, during, and after the program to get reconnected with their respective agencies.

Increased Resources for Gang/Crew Prevention and Intervention

DYRS, in partnership with its DC YouthLink partners, Progressive Life Center (PLC) and East of the River Clergy Police Community Partnership (ERCPCP), implemented an agency-wide effort on gang/crew intervention and prevention. The approach is based on the principles incorporated by past successful initiatives led by the Gang Intervention Partnership (GIP) and Citywide Coordinating Council for Youth Violence Prevention (CCCYVP), and is rooted in six core elements: skilled assessment, crew identification, safety planning, development of pro-social relationships, increasing conflict resolution and anger management skills, and increasing family engagement. The agency's effort consists of:

- *Training on Gang/Crew Prevention and Intervention:* DYRS and Progressive Life Center worked with the Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Strengthening Collaborative (CHSFSC) to train 185 DYRS and DC YouthLink staff on effective practices to work with gang/crew-involved youth. This training seminar was provided to staff at New Beginnings and the Youth Services Center, case managers, and DC YouthLink vendors. The training was focused on family group conferencing, solution-focused case management, identifying D.C. gang/crew signs and symbols, and assessment skills.

CHSFSC also facilitated a three-day intensive training for four community providers that are serving as Gang Intervention Specialists. This training focused on developing participants' skills in assessment, solution-focused case management, family group conferencing, as well as D.C. gang/crew culture and gang/crew signs and symbols. The training equipped the Gang Intervention Specialists with best practices from the field in keeping youth safe. These include partnering with school and community institutions, early interventions before incidents escalate, and supporting community intelligence efforts. 26 individuals including 22 staff from DC YouthLink providers participated in a three day intensive gang awareness training, as well as an introduction to solution-focused therapy as a model for engaging families.

- *Gang/Crew Intervention and Prevention Community-Based Services:* ERCPCP coordinated the community-based gang/crew prevention and intervention efforts. The Gang Intervention Specialists were responsible for providing intensive gang prevention/intervention services to over 70 youth. They conducted home visits, provided counseling, and direct crisis intervention services. In addition, they prepared an *Individual Plan* that connected the youth to ongoing *Positive Youth Development Services* in consultation with the youth's DYRS Case Manager.

- *Gang/Crew Intervention and Prevention Programming at DYRS Facilities:* Additionally, DYRS implemented gang intervention programming for youth at New Beginnings and YSC, using the Phoenix Curriculum which is an evidence-based gang prevention program. The Phoenix Curriculum's Risks & Decisions Series contains the following modules: Friends and Peer Pressure, High Risk People and Places, Family Risk Factors including Drugs and Alcohol Addiction, Personal Risk Factors including Anger and Anger Triggers, and Internal Risk Factors including Negative Mindsets and Criminal Value Systems, and Thinking and Problem Solving. 44 staff from DYRS' secure facilities and Gang Intervention Specialist agencies (Alliance of Concerned Men, Sasha Bruce, and Life Skills Unlimited) were trained on the Phoenix curriculum. Life Skills Unlimited implementing the Phoenix curriculum for DYRS youth residing at New Beginnings and Youth Service Center.

- *Outreach Worker Certification Training:* 16 individuals from Sasha Bruce, Life Skills Unlimited, and Alliance of Concerned Men participated in an Outreach Worker Certification training developed by Aquil Bashir from Los Angeles, California and completed approximately 40 hours of training on street level engagement and intervention strategies for gang-involved and highly violent youth.

- *Tagging Elimination Procedures at DYRS Facilities:* DYRS has implemented aggressive tagging identification and elimination protocols at DYRS facilities. Tagging is not

tolerated, and DYRS policies require staff to eliminate tagging immediately. The Department of Health has declared DYRS' secure facilities virtually free of tagging.

- *Intelligence Sharing with Law Enforcement:* DYRS continues to work in partnership with MPD on intelligence and information-sharing efforts. DYRS is in regular communication with MPD and works jointly with public safety partners on efforts such as the High Intensity and Abscondence Recovery Units.

Safe Facilities

DYRS has made great strides to ensure that agency facilities are safe for staff and youth. Accomplishments include:

- *Completed upgrades to Security Hardware at New Beginnings:* During FY2012, DYRS completed work on a number of construction projects at New Beginnings to enhance the facility's safety and structure. These security upgrades included installing new detention-grade doors and windows throughout the facility and 12 new monitors in the Control Center.
- *Improved the Radio Systems at the Youth Services Center (YSC) and New Beginnings:* In FY2012, DYRS outfitted its vehicles and the Control Room at New Beginnings with a brand new radio system that is on the cutting edge of technology. These radios, which are compatible with District government frequencies, allow for easier cross-facility communication between YSC and New Beginnings. The agency also updated the radio reception equipment at both facilities, purchased new individual radios for staff deployment, and installed new radio repeaters.
- *Strengthened Conflict Resolution Practices at YSC:* YSC established the Friendliest Unit Program and Award to recognize the housing unit with the most effective conflict resolution strategies and least number of assaults. Youth lead this effort to hold each other accountable for positive behaviors.

- *Improved Staff Coverage of Incident “Hot Spots” at New Beginning and YSC:* Both facilities took steps to improve security at locations identified as hot spots for unwanted behavior. The facilities also implemented a new comprehensive incident reporting form and process.
- *Facility Improvement Team Plans:* Both of the agency’s secure residential facilities have detailed Facility Improvement Plans that are driven by the data collected from internal compliance staff and through PbS biannual audits. The multidisciplinary teams conduct data evaluation and peer review to analyze and track trends and make recommendation in areas of safety, security and staff development.
- *Created a Youth Advisory Team at New Beginnings:* Youth members of the New Beginnings Student Government have begun assisting staff in promoting safety at the facility. These youth help counsel other young people who are having problems adjusting, serve as peer mediators to defuse disputes, and alert staff of potential conflicts before they arise.
- *Mechanical Restraint Elimination:* New Beginnings eliminated the use of physical restraints as a means of deescalating youth behavior. There is 100% elimination across the board for a period of over six months.
- *Incident Recovery Plan:* New Beginnings implemented a ‘youth-on-youth’ and ‘youth-on-staff’ recovery plan designed to ensure that both staff and residents feel safe and that the proper steps are taken after any incident.

III. Efficient and Effective Management

DYRS is dedicated to being a good steward of public funds by continually improving its effectiveness in operations, management, finances, and administration of services and programs. The agency is also committed to being transparent about its work and to ensuring that staff are taken care of and receive opportunities for development. In FY2012, DYRS launched a number of initiatives to promote effective agency management in the following areas:

Maintaining a Strong Staff

- *Strengthened Staff Accountability and Outcome Monitoring:* In FY2012, the agency established performance standards and service level agreements for all Administrative Services functions.
- *Adopted a Performance Recognition Program at New Beginnings:* To better acknowledge and encourage staff achievement, New Beginnings adopted a Performance Recognition program that includes an award for Employee of the Month, informal recognition for staff who contribute to facility safety and security, and staff appreciation events.
- *Developed a new Retention Plan and Strengthened Staff Coverage at New Beginnings:* New Beginnings developed and implemented a new retention plan that includes Superintendent meetings with new hires, a new schedule for Youth Development Representatives (YDRs), and monthly meetings between staff and HR representatives. New Beginnings also worked with the Maya Angelou Academy (MAA), the facility's onsite school, to develop a new school schedule designed to maximize staff coverage and to emphasize the DC Model concept.
- *Created a new Human Resources Strategy Position:* DYRS created a new position in its Human Resources department that is responsible for managing human resources requests and conducting strategic analysis of operations to improve efficiency.
- *Strengthened Program Review at New Beginnings:* In FY2012, DYRS created a new Program Consultant position to monitor programming at New Beginnings, including the DC Model program and Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT). This person is responsible for assessing the quality of the programs and making recommendations for improvement to the Executive leadership team.
- *Sponsored an Agency-Wide Professional Development and Capacity-Building Event:* In September 2012, DYRS sponsored a three-day Staff Fest program that involved

participation by staff across all agency functions. Programming included training in juvenile justice best practices, professional development centered on Positive Youth Justice (PYJ) techniques, skills-based simulations, and team-building exercises designed to facilitate collaboration and communication among agency staff.

- *Chartered a Special Events Committee at New Beginnings:* In FY2012, New Beginnings created a Special Events Committee comprised of staff from all areas of the facility. The committee coordinated various events for New Beginnings staff and youth, such as a staff barbecue.

Performance Monitoring

- *Improved on PbS Outcomes at New Beginnings and YSC:* Both of the agency's secure residential facilities saw improvements on PbS outcomes between April and October 2012. New Beginnings improved in 80% of PbS indicators during this period, and YSC improved in 58% of all indicators.
- *Strengthened the DC Model Program at New Beginnings:* In FY2012, DYRS took steps to better assist youth as they transition through the six levels of the Model Program at New Beginnings. The agency expanded its YouthStat process to include monthly meetings between unit managers and case managers to discuss each youth's progress and develop reintegration plans for young people who are about to reenter the community. DYRS also chartered a Level 6 enhancement team, whose role is to develop strategies for keeping youth who have reached Level 6 engaged with the program.

DYRS Transparency and Accountability

- *Issuing an RFP process and Independent Evaluators for DC YouthLink Service Providers:* Following your lead, Councilmember Graham, DYRS and DC YouthLink took steps to strengthen the system of oversight and ensure better service delivery and program accountability by developing a request for proposal (RFP) to identify and

formally partner with Service Coalition members, allowing outside independent reviewers to choose the providers that best fit DC YouthLink's needs. The new service acquisition process also included payments for the achievement of certain milestones by youth, such as earning a high school diploma or employment.

- *Received Expert Validation of Agency Programs and Initiatives:* In FY2012, the agency's Structured Decision Making (SDM) risk-assessment tool was assessed and validated by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Additionally, the security upgrades at New Beginnings were approved by the DC Department of General Services and validated to comply with American Standard for Testing and Materials standards.
- *Achieved Progress on the Jerry M. Work Plan:* In FY2012, the court-appointed Special Arbiter vacated an additional indicator of the *Jerry M. Work Plan*, deeming DYRS performance up to standard on educational services at New Beginnings.
- *Annual Report:* DYRS released its first ever annual report last year. We anticipate releasing the FY2012 Annual Report this month.
- *DC Fleet Share:* DYRS participates in DC Fleet Share. This provides DYRS users a state-of-the art scheduling and access system to make and manage reservations online. Additionally, the wireless technology permits users access to vehicles without the need to locate keys, contact other personnel for assistance, or inquire as to the current whereabouts of a particular vehicle. Moreover, DYRS users will have an expanded range of access to the Districts' entire Fleet Share Motor Pool.

DC YouthLink Oversight Initiatives

DC YouthLink staff, the Lead Agencies, the Service Coalition, and DYRS work together to develop processes to provide a robust system of oversight to all aspects of DC YouthLink, including day-to-day monitoring of activities, administrative procedures and quality. Through this system of oversight, which includes a number of different tools, the DCYL team has refined

data collection efforts, as well, providing a strong foundation for future monitoring, assessment, and evaluation.

DYRS, working closely with DC YouthLink and the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation (CYITC), is developing a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide every aspect of DC YouthLink service delivery and administration. The SOPs also include evidence-based and best practice guides for service delivery in a variety of areas, including tutoring, counseling, and substance use treatment. The SOPs will be fully implemented in FY2013.

The further refinement of the combination of tools uses in the DC YouthLink system of oversight will improve DC YouthLink's ability to quickly and effectively anticipate, identify, and respond to areas of concern, which supports positive outcomes for youth. The system of oversight includes the following tools:

- *DC YouthLink Weekly Enrollment Report*
- *Launched an Initiative to Maximize Resource Utilization*
- *YES Audit*
- *Site Visits*
- *Invoice Comparisons and Reports*

Going Forward

DYRS' goal is to be the top juvenile justice agency in the country. In order to achieve this goal, every division of the agency must continue to evolve. DYRS has already started numerous initiatives that will continue to better rehabilitate our youth and keep our community safe. I will highlight several of them here:

DC YouthLink Oversight

The agency remains committed to the success of DC YouthLink. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the agency has retained a consulting firm whose 15 plus years of experience has centered on helping youth serving organizations strengthen their organizational practices. This DC-based firm, Front of the Bus Productions, is conducting a comprehensive analysis of the DC

YouthLink model by speaking with local DC YouthLink partners and national stakeholders in juvenile justice and by reviewing best practices in youth development for court-involved youth. The firm will provide DYRS with key recommendations that build on DC YouthLink's strengths to ensure the best possible outcomes for youth. Through the agency's work with Front of the Bus, we anticipate the DC YouthLink initiative will become more strategic and stronger, specifically in the areas of service delivery, accountability, evaluation, and capacity building.

Community Based Residential Facilities

DYRS is committed to improving our Community Based Residential Facilities. With our partners, we undertook an attempt to build the community based "Centers of Excellence." Unfortunately, while suitable as CBRFs, they did not meet our standards to be designated a "Center of Excellence." On a more positive note, we are seeing steady improvements at Soronko House.

We understand that changing the Community Based Residential Facility culture in the District is a formidable task. Along with the aforementioned oversight requirements we have put in place, in January we took another step towards raising the standard of Community Based Residential Facilities in the District when we issued a new RFP with increased performance measures.

Awaiting Placement

We are employing every strategy possible to alleviate the overcrowding at YSC. One area we are addressing is increasing our options for youth in YSC who are awaiting placement. Toward this end, DYRS issued an Awaiting Placement RFP in December 2012. At the conclusion of the RFP process and in the upcoming year, DYRS anticipates there to be a local Awaiting Placement facility that is hardware secure. This will help us to maintain a more appropriate population size at YSC.

In Closing

These are just some of our plans and actions in FY13. As always, I would like to acknowledge and thank the agency's dedicated staff, the support of the executive branch and our sister agencies, and your committee's guidance. Thank you.

