



# Committed to Excellence

The Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) Newsletter.

March 1, 2019



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

POSITIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

JERRY M. COMPLETION

## Event Calendar

**MAR 4** **ANCHORED IN STRENGTH** - 2101 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. AVE SE - WASHINGTON, DC - 6:30 PM

**MAR 5** **DAY OF EMPATHY**  
4058 MINNESOTA AVE NE, WASHINGTON - 3:00 PM

**MAR 8** **LED BY LOVE ANNIVERSARY**

**MAR 11** **ANCHORED IN STRENGTH**  
450 H STREET NW - WASHINGTON, DC - 12:30 PM

**MAR 18** **ANCHORED IN STRENGTH**  
2101 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. AVE SE  
WASHINGTON, DC - 6:30 PM

**MAR 25** **ANCHORED IN STRENGTH**  
450 H STREET NW - WASHINGTON, DC  
12:30 PM



## POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

### The Covenant of Peace

Many thanks to everyone who came together to make the DYRS New Beginnings Youth Development Center's seventh Covenant of Peace a success for all. Held during the January 25th weekend, it also served as the first experience that the new Title 16 population recently transferred to the facility from the DC Jail had with the anti-violence initiative. Over the last four months, the level of commitment and focus among staff, vendors and leadership has been without parallel. The result? The entire weekend was incident-free and tremendously impactful for the youth, families and staff. As stated during the Sunday morning awards ceremony: "Nothing can stop an idea whose time has come."

The young people enjoyed a fun-filled weekend and had the opportunity to hear from some impactful presenters, including Bennie Lee, founder of the National Alliance for the Empowerment of the Formerly Incarcerated; Jamila T. Davis, co-founder of Women Over Incarcerated; Credible Messengers Sean Branch and Musa Mahdi; and Elder Jennifer Gibbs also known as Mother Love. The event culminated with a powerful message by DYRS Director Clinton Lacey and a special Family Engagement Luncheon in the gymnasium.

"The North Star, is considered the brightest star in the constellation Little Dipper. The North Star provided guidance for the Three Wise Men and gave hope for Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad as a path to freedom. The North Star for Juvenile Justice is the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services for we are properly positioned nationally to lead the country in Juvenile Justice Reform through innovation and creativity," said Mack McGhee, Superintendent for New Beginnings Youth Development Center.

### New Beginnings, New Moves



The New Beginning Chess Club for committed youth was founded by Mr. Rodney L. Henderson, Sr, Youth Development Representative, and co-founded by Supervisory Youth Development Representative, Mr. Lashaun Jones in November 2018 and currently consist of 12 active youth members. The Chess Club was established after staff noticed youth displaying great interest in the game. The game of chess allows the youth to utilize and develop their cognitive, analytical and strategical abilities, motivating staff members to create a club so that interested youth could compete against each other.

"As the founder of the Chess Club, I was amazed that most of the team players were able to maintain their consistency with attendance and the capability of playing each game, which generally lasted up to 20- 30 minutes, with such focus," said Mr. Henderson, who is excited about how the club has evolved.

The Chess Club had a final championship tournament and would like to shout out Nathaniel and Troy, two of their victorious members who won 1st and 2nd place. Each member of the New Beginnings Chess Club were presented with trophies. Chess club participants received a medal with their name engraved on it. New Beginning Chess Club members are looking forward to new challenges and more competitors in 2019.

## Health and Wellness

### February was Heart Health Month

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Every year, 1 in 4 deaths are caused by heart disease. Heart health problems include coronary heart disease, an abnormal heart rhythm (arrhythmia), heart valve disease, as well as cardiomyopathy and aorta problems, such as aortic aneurysm, and aortic valve problems. After having a stroke, heart attack or cardiac arrest, people are less likely to be employed than their healthy peers, new research shows. Even if they are working, they may earn significantly less than people who haven't had a stroke or heart event, the investigators found. Although the majority of people who have one of these serious health scares do end up back at work, about 20 percent of those who had a stroke was not back at work three years later.

Make a difference in your community and help spread the word about strategies for preventing heart disease and encourage people to live heart healthy lives.

#### Links and Resources

- <https://tinyurl.com/yxbox6kk>
- <https://www.prevention.com/heart-health/>

### RAISING THE BAR



Achievement Center Youth Engagement Specialist Timothy Durant Jr. reads to the children of DYRS youth during weekly girls programming.



## Washington Post Celebrates DYRS Youth



On February 23, The Washington Post highlighted Shamelen, a DYRS youth who overcame tremendous obstacles in the article "At 12, she started running away. At 17, she started standing up for some of D.C.'s most vulnerable kids." Washington

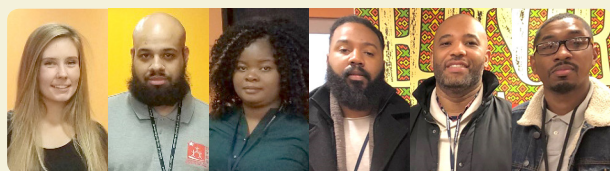
Post Columnist Theresa Vargas outlines the difficulties faced by the youth and what ultimately led to her unbelievable transformation. This impactful story follows her journey from living in 24 foster homes to recently advocating for juvenile justice reform in front of the Council of the District of Columbia. DYRS is always proud when the youth we serve work with us to positively transforms their lives. To read the full article please visit <https://tinyurl.com/y24zak9z>

## A Warm Welcome to...



Akeya Dickson, who joins DYRS as the Public Information Officer of the Communications team. Akeya previously held leadership positions on communications teams throughout the District government, including with the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), the Executive Office of the Mayor and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO). The Howard University graduate also led communications efforts at the United Planning Organization (UPO), worked as an editor at the Center for American Progress, and covered local news and features as a reporter and blogger for The Washington Post.

and...



from left to right: Melanie Demarest, Program Analyst, Office of Performance Improvement; Orlando Jackson, Maintenance, YSC; Chidima Eze, Nurse Practitioner; Jovan Johnson, YDR; Kenneth Person, JJIC, NB; Andre Ford, Training Specialist

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE Book Club

Join fellow DYRS Staff monthly in reading and discussing books relevant to the wonderful work we do.

Signing-up is voluntary and can be done by sending an email to [restorative.justice@dc.gov](mailto:restorative.justice@dc.gov) indicating your name and work location.

### BOOK OF THE MONTH

**Writing My Wrongs:**  
Life, Death, and Redemption in an American Prison By Shaka Senghor

BOOK CLUB SIGN-UP:  
between February 27<sup>th</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup>

We have a limited number of copies. Books are distributed on a first come first serve basis.



BOOK DISTRIBUTION:  
March 11-15, 2019

BOOK CLUB SESSION:  
April 9, 2019 - 1:30 - 2 pm  
at 450. MLK, YSC, and NBYDC

For more information, please email [restorative.justice@dc.gov](mailto:restorative.justice@dc.gov).



Please join the DYRS Education and Workforce Development Staff in congratulating DYRS youth on gaining employment during fiscal year 2018. The Education and Workforce Development team looks forward to continuing to support our youth in their journey through education in workforce development.



## POSITIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT

### The Main Thing

DYRS administration provided customized t-shirts to the New Beginnings Management Team. Deputy Mark Hamlett said that this is an opportunity to display a unified image for the Leadership Team. Inspired by one of Deputy Hamlett's favorite quotes, "keep the main thing, the main thing," the words "The Main Thing" are emblazoned across the front while the words, "On Purpose" adorn the back. The back is inspired by the concept of intentionality, one of Superintendent Mack McGhee's favorites. It speaks to the power of minds to be about, to represent, or to stand for, things, properties and states of affairs.

Supervisory Youth Development Representative (SYDR) Douglas White explained the connection he feels to the shirts, "the idea to 'keep the main thing, the main thing' is a demand to operate as a high-performing team that is fully aligned with our shared mission, vision and core values – all in the name of love. Moreover, a commitment to higher level thinking which enables leaders, at every level, to understand the impact of our decisions on our organization, youth and the District of Columbia. Let us stand for the main thing and continue to move the agency forward, on purpose."

## American Correctional Association Winter Conference



The American Correctional Association (ACA) recently wrapped up its 2019 Winter Conference at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. The ACA is a private, nonprofit, non-governmental trade association and accrediting body for the corrections industry, the oldest and largest such association in the world.

Held January 11-15, the conference included thousands of corrections professionals from across the country and hundreds of workshops, meetings and events.

DYRS Deputy Superintendent Mark Hamlett and Deputy Superintendent Janay Williams presented on how to operationalize restorative justice practices within a detention setting and how to use data to improve a facility. Deputy Superintendent Hamlett and DYRS Deputy Superintendent Darrell Foster presented on the path to eliminating room confinement within a juvenile correctional facility.

★ ★ ★ DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES ★ ★ ★

For questions or submissions for future issues, please contact [dyrs.media@dc.gov](mailto:dyrs.media@dc.gov)

