



Committed to Excellence

The Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) Newsletter.

April 11, 2019



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

POSITIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

JERRY M. COMPLETION

Event Calendar

APR 15 ANCHORED IN STRENGTH
2101 MLK AVENUE SE, WASHINGTON, DC
6:30 PM

APR 19 CAREER FAIR
KENILWORTH COURTS COMMUNITY CENTER
4500 QUARLES ST NE, WDC
10:00 AM

APR 22 ANCHORED IN STRENGTH
450 H STREET NW - WASHINGTON, DC
12:30 PM

APR 29 ANCHORED IN STRENGTH
2101 MLK AVENUE SE, WASHINGTON, DC
6:30 PM



POSITIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Screenwriter Antwone Fisher and Professor Rick Miller Talk Hope with DYRS Youth and Staff

The poem "Who Will Cry for the Little Boy?" is perhaps best remembered during a culminating moment in the film "Antwone Fisher" when actor Derek Luke as Fisher recited it opposite Denzel Washington. The film explores Fisher's harrowing journey of being born to a 17-year-old mother in prison, suffering abuse in foster care, and grappling with all the trauma he worked hard to address while in the Navy.

What the author and screenwriter also shared during "The Soul, Science & Culture of Hope with Antwone Fisher and Rick Miller" – a presentation delivered to staff and youth on April 4th – was that Fisher hadn't read a book until he was 23-years-old because he was too afraid to do it due to his dyslexia.

Despite this and many other obstacles, Fisher's life story was discovered when he worked at Sony as a security guard and reconnected with the family of his father, who had been killed before Fisher was born. Inspired, they provided him with an office on the 21st Century lot, where he penned 41 drafts of the screenplay before being given the green light to move forward.

During the discussion, Fisher talked about transitioning from hopelessness to hopefulness alongside Rick Miller, a professor and co-founder of the Center for the Advanced Study and Practice of HOPE at Arizona State University. Miller also founded Kids at Hope, a child and youth development program that was founded on the belief that all kids are capable of success, and that we should regard youth, no matter their origin, as being 'at hope' instead of 'at risk.'

Miller conducted a series of workshops, trainings and discussions with DYRS staff focusing on hope at various DYRS locations following the initial event at New Beginnings Youth Development Center, including a two-day Train the Trainer Certification Academy at the MLK Achievement Center. The data-driven study of hope references discoveries through MRIs that can watch hope and hopelessness take place in the brain in real time as various areas of the brain light up when engaged.

"Some of our major research conclusions include that it's not the risk of trauma that prevents kids from succeeding, it's the absence of hope. Programs alone can't make a difference, caring adults do" Miller said to a group of DYRS managers during a discussion at the DYRS Youth Services Center on April 5th. "You can't be hopeful in a vacuum, you need other people to be hopeful with you."

Adrian Richardson Receives Chief of Police Special Award



On Tuesday, March 19th, DYRS was well represented at the Annual Awards Ceremony for the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) held at The Arc. Our own Mr. Adrian Richardson, head of our Youth and Public Safety Unit (GPS/Abscondence), was presented with the Chief of Police Special Award by MPD Chief Peter Newsham and Public Safety and Justice Deputy Mayor Kevin Donahue.

Adrian was presented this prestigious award, in the presence of Mayor Muriel Bowser, for ensuring that DYRS serves as a valuable partner in the city's effort towards public safety. He was acknowledged for his responsiveness, consistency, and around the clock availability as the DYRS Liaison with MPD.

Please join us in sending Adrian a big congratulations and thank you for representing the agency so well!

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Jerry M. Exit - 33 Years Later and One Step Closer!

In 1986, the *Jerry M.* class action lawsuit was filed in the Superior Court for the District of Columbia on behalf of "children who are or will be confined in juvenile detention facilities operated by the District of Columbia." The plaintiffs contended that the totality of the conditions in the District's juvenile detention facilities violated statutory and constitutional requirements.

In order to resolve the issues outlined in the lawsuit, the parties entered into a consent decree, which set accountability standards for services provided at District juvenile detention facilities. The consent decree also called for the appointment of a Special Arbiter, who is responsible for oversight of the Agency's compliance with the requirements of the consent decree.

In 2008, the court approved a Work Plan that established a number of comprehensive, concrete goals and indicators that, once fulfilled, would allow the District to exit the *Jerry M.* litigation. On Wednesday, April 10, 2019, Judge Herbert Dixon issued a new court order in *Jerry M. v. District of Columbia*.

At the recommendation of the Special Arbiter, and with the agreement of the Plaintiffs and the District of Columbia, the Staffing and Supervision Requirement has been successfully vacated!

A special thank you and congratulations to our Secure Facilities, Human Resources, and Performance Improvement Teams for tirelessly working to exceed expectations and bring DYRS and the District of Columbia one step closer to exiting the 33-year-old lawsuit!



DYRS has moved from the Health and Human Services (HHS) cluster to the Public Safety and Justice (PSJ) cluster. PSJ, led by Deputy Mayor Kevin Donahue, provides direction, guidance, support and coordination to the District's public safety

agencies, including the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), Fire and Emergency Management Services (FEMS), the Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS), and the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement.

Shirley Burnett



Please join us in thanking Ms. Shirley Burnett for her 14 years of service to the DC Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS). Shirley is well-known for her abilities to connect with our youth and families and she will be sorely missed. A humorous and loving spirit, Shirley is well-known throughout the agency. We appreciate her unwavering commitment to DYRS and to our youth and families.

A native Washingtonian, a loyal member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, a masters level, and innate Social Worker, and a strong advocate for youth and families, Shirley has dedicated her life and her career to service. Ms. Burnett joined DYRS in March 2005 and has served in various roles throughout her tenure. She has worked in the community, secure programs, and most recently at the Hope House. Even though Ms. Burnett is retiring, she will always be part of the DYRS family. We look forward to seeing her at DYRS Events. Congratulations Shirley Burnett and Thank You. This is not a goodbye, it is just a new chapter in your life. Enjoy your Retirement!

A Warm Welcome to...

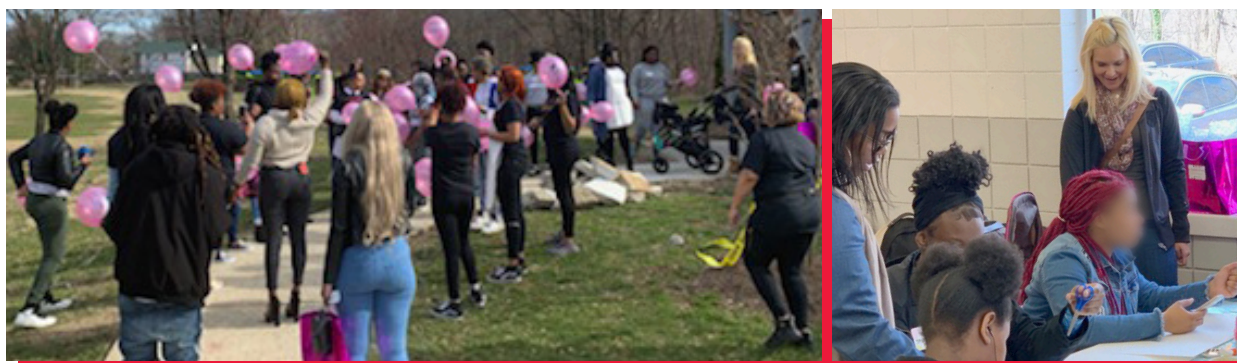


...our new DYRS employees! From Left to right:

John Brown, cook, YSC
Alexia Yates, cook, NB
Lawrence Holland, Oil Investigator

Please introduce yourself if you see them around the agency!

“ We at DYRS offer our heartfelt condolences to Eric Weaver, Sr. and his family following the loss of his son Eric Weaver, Jr. Both father and son have contributed greatly as community partners and friends to the agency by sharing their experiences. As we respect the grieving of the Weaver family, we also offer our support to the community and youth grappling with this loss to gun violence. We know well the impact that violence and trauma can have and work hard to teach the youth and families we serve to lead with love. We will continue to share the story and legacy of Eric Weaver Jr. – son, father, returning citizen and advocate – as someone who turned his life around and used it as a source of inspiration to inspire our youth, staff and the community at large. **”**



POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The Winners Within Girls Conference

Post-committed DYRS youth Dashana B. led the affirmation before a balloon release at “The Winners Within Girls Conference” that acknowledged what was holding participants back from success.

“I am not my sister’s keeper, I am my sister,” Dashana said during the inspirational event, which was held at the Brooke Road Recreation Center in Capitol Heights, Maryland on March 24th.

The DYRS Achievement Center team took 11 young ladies to the event designed to inspire and empower girls ages 12-20, which was hosted by local non-profit Off My Block (OBM). The organization provides activities and programs for youth with the goal of helping them achieve a sense of confidence, connection, and control over their lives beyond their perception. The conference consisted of three breakout sessions, keynote speakers, art therapy, balloon release, confidence building, life coaching, and giveaways.



Health Fair Mind Body and Soul

Youth painted during art therapy sessions and enjoyed several health and wellness activities like healthy cooking demonstrations, dance therapy, boxing, and more as DJ Buddah provided music during the Achievement Center’s first-ever Mind, Body & Soul health and wellness event.

Many thanks to the DC Board of Elections (DCBOE), the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), and the rest of our community partners for participating in the success of the April 4th event, which was held at the DYRS Achievement Center at the 450 H Street NW location.

ANCHORED IN STRENGTH

Refreshed and Renewed
Rejuvenated by Support
Restored in Spirit
Revived in Positivity
Rebuilding Relationships
Remembering Yourself

DYRS Has a Peaceful Place for Parents and Caregivers
to get their “Rs”.

Because You and Your Family are Ours,
and For Us, it’s Personal.

4/01 @MLK 6:30 - 8:00 PM
4/15 @MLK 6:30 - 8:00 PM
4/29 @MLK 6:30 - 8:00 PM

2101 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, DC 20020

4/8 @450 12:30 - 2:00 PM
4/22 @450 12:30 - 2:00 PM

450 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

The DYRS Anchored in Strength (AIS) Support Group provides an emotionally safe space for parents, guardians, and caregivers to share their thoughts, feelings, challenges, and triumphs about their youth’s involvement with the justice system.

The innate strength and resilience of each family is reignited as they learn how to access and navigate available agency resources. Endurance and perseverance prevail through ongoing empowering and transformative opportunities that raise consciousness and increase civic responsibility. Self-care as it relates to physical health, social-emotional health, financial literacy, time management, and spiritual enlightenment, are intentional points of unceasing focus. Nourishing food for the body and unconditional love for the soul is always present.

The support group convenes every Monday at one of the agency’s Achievement Centers. Please note that Princess Taylor, the AIS Group Facilitator, responds to crisis intervention and requests for individual and family coaching. For information on upcoming AIS support group meetings, visit www.dyrs.dc.gov.