



Committed to Excellence

The Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) Biweekly Newsletter.

May 19, 2017



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

POSITIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

JERRY M. COMPLETION

Event Calendar

MAY 22 "ANCHORED IN STRENGTH" PARENT SUPPORT GROUP, 2101 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR AVE SE WASHINGTON, DC 20020, 6:30-8:30 P.M.

MAY 29 MEMORIAL DAY

RAMADAN BEGINS SOON!
LOOK OUT FOR INFORMATION ABOUT
RAMADAN EVENTS IN FUTURE ISSUES OF
Committed to Excellence!

In Living Color

By Tamekia McMahon, Youth Development Representative



Speaking animatedly as hip-hop music plays in the background, girls at Youth Services Center (YSC) combine color, paint, and creativity to give voice to their lived experiences. The results are stunningly impressive pieces of artwork that speak of strength, joy, hurt, fear, and even still hope.

Leading a weekly painting session, Youth Development Representative Marco Wimberly weaves his way around the room. He offers advice when solicited and delivers nods of encouragement at other times.

However, it is the girls who transformed the sessions into safe spaces where they utilize art to articulate the marginalization and invisibility of their existence. Whether it is a sketch, a statue, or mask, they challenge the stories told about them in which the storyteller never consults them. The finished representations are testaments to the varied ways art can help girls add value to their voices; to their person-hood, and by extension began to probe the question of what it means to be young, Black, and female in the District.

In room 1600 at YSC, "when girls paint, they paint their voices"; and it is clear that they see themselves as more than examples of social casualties, more than the factors that circumscribe their realities, and more than the resiliency to overcome.

The girls see themselves as worthy of all the protections of citizenship that includes the right to express herself freely, the right to participate in society fully, the right to be free from judgement, shame, and ridicule because of her past, and the right to be free from emotional and physical violence.



POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Committed to Serving

On Monday, May 8, staff and youth at the Youth Services Center (YSC) celebrated the soft opening of the facility's new courtyard, a project five years in the making. Affectionately nicknamed the "maze" because of the intricate path of brick walls that used to occupy the space, the newly renovated area features a basketball hoop, turf grass "stage," two picnic tables with built-in checkerboards, a ping pong table, and most importantly, plenty of open space for young people to breathe. The courtyard provides a more appropriate outdoor programming space to address the needs of all residents," explained YSC Superintendent Jannifer Nevilles. A smaller section of the courtyard is set to open later this year. Chaplain Charles Davis opened the brief ceremony, stating "We ask that they continue to see the beauty that God has created...and that when they leave this place, they return with a right frame of mind because they continued to see all that God created." The courtyard is just one of the ways DYRS is heightening amenities for its youth. The agency also remodeled YSC's gym with more vibrant, colorful acoustic panels, a divider curtain, new stage and sound system, basketball hoops, and a resurfaced floor. Wherever the road takes them, it's in the agency's interest to ensure they that receive the best care and to meet them where they are. Kudos to YSC for your commitment to serving all youth!



Family Fun at the Facilities

On Saturday, May 13, Maya Angelou Academy at New Beginnings Youth Development Center hosted its annual Family Fun Day, where families in attendance (a record 50%) enjoyed a live band, picture booth, moon bounces, jump roping, face painting, hula hooping, grilled food, and the school's monthly awards ceremony. All who attended also received literature on healthy lifestyles, financial literacy, and their scholars' progress. Families relishing in being able to spend time together? Now that's what love looks like - in juvenile justice, and everywhere!

What Love Looks Like



DYRS youth Patrick, his son Zy-phir, and Patrick's Care Coordinator (CC), Michelle Pflaumer Blake, LGSW, Social Worker

On April 10, 2017 Patrick welcomed into this world, his son, Zy-phir. Zy-phir and his mother are both happy and healthy. Patrick and his girlfriend Aquilah are very excited about the addition of their son in their lives. They are attentive and loving parents, working hard to create a stable life for him. During the youth visit to MLK on May 15, his CC held the baby while he slept – true CARE at work.

Open Mic with a Cause



The young ladies of the Youth Council had an enriching evening volunteering their time at, "The Gathering Open Mic with a Cause." They assisted as ushers and welcomed those who came in with warm smiles and kind words. AF even blessed the audience by singing, "At Your Best." As expressed by JT, "this was one of the best youth council events so far this year." The Youth Council thanks all who organized this and offers a special thanks to Alice Jazz & Cultural Society and Kiane Ink for giving this opportunity to give back to the community!



The below Youth Council volunteer activities are open to all youth with community service hours offered.

- Volunteer - We Are Family, Saturday, 5/20/17, 9:30am-1pm (pick-up begins at 7:30am)
- Volunteers will pack and deliver groceries to low-income seniors
- Volunteer- Farm Day at Star Gazing Farm Animal Sanctuary, Sunday, 5/21/17, 11:30am-3pm (pick-up begins at 8am)
- Help with farm and animal maintenance
- Dinner and Bowling - College Park, MD, Friday, 5/26/17, 6pm-10pm
- Meet at the AC-450 at 4:30pm
- Open to those who have completed at least one (1) volunteer activity



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Jurisdictions Across the Nation Visit DYRS

From Monday, May 15 through Wednesday, May 17, constituents from the San Diego (California) Probation Department and the Harris County (Texas) Juvenile Probation Department visited and toured DYRS facilities in an effort to learn about DYRS' positive youth development implementation and community-based programming and efforts. The San Diego cohort - consisting of division chiefs, directors, attorneys and executives and other important stakeholders in youths' lives from the Children's Initiative, the San Diego Superior Court, the San Diego County Supervising Probation Officers Association - visited both YSC and New Beginnings. The Harris County group stopped by New Beginnings, starting with a visit to the new automotive shop (an example of a certification program that translates to jobs into the community) and finishing by meeting youth inside the facility.



POSITIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT

State of the (FOP) Union

On Tuesday, May 9, the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) union celebrated "FOP Day" – where staff at both YSC and at New Beginnings participated in events to celebrate the roles of YDRs as part of Correctional Officer Week. This is the union's second annual celebration – a lively affair that featured photo booths, DJs (one being YSC's very own YDR Donald Fountain), games, raffles, drinks, and plenty of food. "The Fraternal Order of Police thanks YSC and New Beginnings management for accommodating and managing around schedules, and the Office of the Director for allowing the opportunity to host such a wonderful event," said FOP President Andre Phillips." All in all, the day showcased that the agency makes it a collaborative effort to provide the best workplace environment for all employees."



Meet the 2017 Summer Interns!

- Naiya, Marymount University, 2020
- Landon, Wiley College, 2017
- Christian, Delaware State University, 2020
- Kiana, the "best MBCU" Howard University, graduated Spring 2017 in Criminal Justice
- Kai, Hood College (2018)
- Nathaniel, Laflin University (2018)
- Natasha, Lincoln University (2020)
- Keith, University of Maryland Eastern Shore (2016)
- Edmond, Mitchell College, Senior
- Alle, Emory University, 2019

Please introduce yourself to these friendly, fresh faces if you see them around the agency and tell them about what you do!

★ ★ ★ DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES ★ ★ ★

Email Brenda Padavil, Communications Director at brenda.padavil@dc.gov with questions or submissions for future issues.

