

# J une 30, 2016

# **EVENT CALENDAR**



## **Positive Staff Development**

**Welcome** to Ryan Miller, who serves as Assistant General Counsel and now Privacy Officer for DYRS. Mrs. Miller is stationed at 450 H. Street. Please say hello to her if you meet her around the agency!

**Farewell** to Ms. Hattie Lipscomb as she retires from the agency after 10 years of service as a dental assistant to our youth at both New Beginnings and the Youth Services Center. Please join DYRS Health Services Administration in wishing her all the best!





# **Positive Youth Development**

## **Graduation Season**

C ongratulations to Maya Angelou Academy's 2016 graduates, who walked across the stage on June 8. Six youth graduated from New Beginnings this year, with three receiving college acceptance letters. The agency is proud of your hard work and efforts, and looks forward to seeing you thrive and succeed!

# A Visit from the Bird Man Gives Youth Wings





Staff at the Youth Services Center enjoy a "Rock Star" appreciation event in their honor on June 21 for their tremendous work and effort in the last few months.



Congratulations to Youth Development Representative Marquieta Luckey, who recently published her first book, *Did Me and Paid For It.* Ms. Luckey shares her story of overcoming adversity as a college student and

achieving success as a single mother, and the importance of maintaining a positive attitude and perseverance through all of life's experiences. Youth and staff enjoy a visit from the "Bird Man" Rodney Stotts at New Beginnings on June 22.

R odney Stotts, also known as "Bird Man," visited scholars at New Beginnings' Maya Angelou Academy during their science class on June 22. Stotts works for "Wings Over America," a program that serves two functions: to rehabilitate endangered youth, and to help return birds into the wild. The organization's overarching goal is recruit adjudicated or severely at-risk young adults into careers in science, environmental restoration and stewardship. Mr. Stotts shared his own story of how he turned his life around while involved in the juvenile justice system decades ago, and explained how working with birds gave him a new perspective that helped him change his ways. Our young people took heed to his message, and look forward to his return to New Beginnings on July 19.



On June 29, DYRS staff members and a few youth, along with other DC government agencies, participated in "Fast with DC Muslims," a one-day fast during Ramadan meant to evaluate the ideas and bias that divide us, and refocus our attention on each other and our commonalities. The DC Office of Human Rights (OHR), KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights, and other partner organizations sponsored the fast, while Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center sponsored an Iftar - or breaking of the fast - dinner that same evening. Because fasting is an experience that crosses religious, cultural, and political traditions, it's often used as a tool to express support or opposition for various issues. DC OHR used fasting as an opportunity to show its support against discrimination.



#### A Friendly Reminder...

that all employment verifications should be sent to: DCHR Customer Care, 441 4th Street, NW, 3rd Floor, Suite 330South, Washington, DC 20001, Phone #: (202) 442.9700



After the success of the initial "A Parent's Perspective" town halls for the parents of committed youth earlier this year, the Youth and Family Programs Division will host "A Male's Perspective" on July 26 - a town hall geared toward the specific needs and opinions of male caregivers (fathers, stepfathers, coaches, mentors, uncles, and any male who plays an active role in our youths' lives). Look out for more information coming soon, and contact Rashida George at rashida.george@dc.gov with any questions.



The summer is here and DYRS is in full swing with "Summer in the Capital" programming and activities that are keeping youth productive, progressive, and positive. From fashion shows and a girls' sleepover, to zip lining and rope climbing challenges, "Summer in the Capital" activities focus on team building, problem solving, working together and building trust. Each activity infuses an element of the Positive Youth Justice (PYJ) framework, ensuring that young people are interacting with others to promote positive change in their lives. (PYJ applies positive youth development theories and uses a strengths-based approach to serving youth).

Special thanks to the hard work, ideas and dedication of the DYRS staff members who are working tirelessly with our young people this summer and every day.



Youth and staff participate in University of Maryland's Ropes Challenge on June 20.

#### **Girlz Wrapp**



The Achievement Center at 450 H. Street held its first sleepover for DYRS' young women on Friday. June 24 to boost morale and create a feeling of sisterhood among our female population. The evening consisted of karaoke, dancing, beautifying, watching movies and participating in silly videos, and ended with an introspective activity called "Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships." The game's objective? To help participants identify healthy vs. unhealthy behaviors in dating relationships and to identify "warning signs" at the onset. Deputy Director of Youth and Family Programs Garine Dalce stopped by to speak with the young ladies about the importance of knowing their worth, and the sleepover concluded the following morning with a hearty breakfast prepared by staff.



#### Helloooooo DYRS Family,

Guess Who? That's right, it's me again, excited to inform you of two new initiatives that are sure to challenge your resolve and heighten your body awareness during the coming weeks and months. First, Lisa "I'm on It" Smiley is hosting a BIGGEST LOSER competition that officially began on June 28. In the spirit of wellness, interoffice competition, and bringing in lunch for a change, this particular challenge holds participants accountable each week as they're weighed in against at least a dozen competitors who promise to eat more efficiently, exercise more effectively, think more proactively, and ultimately shred unwanted pounds to remind themselves of high school and college days past when those svelte frames came naturally and a slice of key lime pie didn't result in days of guilt and shame. Have no doubt it's going to be an intense, heated competition well worth their sweat & tears. The 17-week contest ends on October 17, and you'll barely recognized some people by that time, but will surely appreciate their work. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL PARTICIPANTS FOR OFFICIALLY STEPPING UP YOUR GAME!!! REMEMBER, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DON'T LOSE WEIGHT TO GET HEALTHY! YOU GET HEALTHY, AND THEN YOUR BODY NATURALLY SHEDS THE WEIGHT IT DOESN'T NEED! YEP! Second, let's help ourselves, support DCHR, and represent DYRS in teams of three to nine people by enrolling in the 2016 Employee Summer Fitness Challenge no later than July 1 (THAT'S TOMORROW)! Although not mandatory, it will be loads of fun, a great morale booster, and means encouraging your cohorts to rise to their fitness goals without necessarily having to work out as a group. After registering and inputting a few basic health stats (Weight, Body Mass Index, etc.), your team simply tracks and logs their daily activities to acquire points based upon the nature and longevity of the exercise/activity. In the end, the top three finishers will qualify for prizes, with the real prize being the satisfaction of a job well done and a team ready to compete in any number of events to come. BY ORDER OF (OK ... MAYBE JUST STRONGLY SUGGESTED) by Director Clinton Lacey and Senior Deputy Director Linda Harllee Harper, please sign up today and don't wait...THINK LONG, THINK WRONG! Just go to your recently received DCHR email, click on the registration link, and go for it after you've corralled your ALL-STAR team. Don't look too far either. Your teammates are sitting only inches and feet away from you!

### Employee Summer Fitness Challenge

Tomorrow, July 1, is the last day to register. So register at http://dcgov.fitnessjournal.com! The Challenge runs through August 19 and is an agency-wide eight-week online wellness program and competition designed to engage employees, promote physical fitness and encourage healthy behaviors.

*Editor's Note:* Special thanks to DYRS Communications intern Naiya Dalce for her contributions to this edition of "Committed to Excellence."



"COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE" is the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) Newsletter. It is published biweekly on Thursdays. Email Brenda Padavil at **brenda.padavil@dc.gov** with questions or submissions for future issues. WE ARE