



Committed to Excellence

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

July 13, 2017



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

POSITIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

JERRY M. COMPLETION

Event Calendar

- JUL 14-16** COVENANT OF PEACE, YOUTH SERVICES CENTER, 1000 MT. OLIVET RD. NE
- JUL 18** VOCATIONAL GRADUATION - BARBERING NEW BEGINNINGS, 8400 RIVER RD., LAUREL, MD, CULINARY AREA, 5-7 P.M.
- JUL 19** MPD'S "BEAT THE STREETS" EVENT 1599 MARYLAND AVE ST. NE (STRABURST)
- JUL 26** MPD'S "BEAT THE STREETS" EVENT 4100 9TH ST. NW (PETWORTH)
- AUG 10** OAG "RIGHT DIRECTION AWARDS," 441 4TH STREET, NW, OLD COUNCIL CHAMBER, 6:30-8:30 P.M.
- AUG 11-13** COVENANT OF PEACE WEEKEND FOR FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS, MEADOWKIRK 38012 DELTA FARM LANE, MIDDLEBURG, VA

Appreciation Station



To show appreciation to the young people volunteering their time to help others, the DYRS Youth Council staff took its members to an Asian seafood buffet and then to Bowl America. This is one of the ways the council rewards its members as they serve the community.

On Another Level



The Level 5 boys at the Youth Services Center played basketball against volunteers of National Community Church (NCC) on July 8. Down early in the game, our youth displayed high levels of maturity and teamwork, which led to their double digit victory. After the game, youth and volunteers participated in a circle up, with the message centered around goal attainment and maintaining a "never quit" approach toward life. Also, the group highlighted how demonstrating respect and exercising good judgement when faced with challenges can lead to success. YSC would like to thank all parties involved for helping to execute this job well done!



As reported by the Washington Post

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

One lawn at a time: D.C. seniors get help from juvenile offenders headed home

Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) helped mow 81-year-old Evelyn Young's lawn Saturday to raise awareness about a new city program in which youths reentering society after time in the juvenile justice system provide lawn-care services for senior citizens.

"No, let me pull it — I got this," Bowser said, laughing with 18-year-old Jordan as she started the lawn mower in Young's backyard in Brookland.

Jordan is one of two youths from the New Beginnings Youth Development Center taking part in the program — dubbed "The Grass is Greener" — that launched in May and serves 16 District residents on Saturdays. The youths work with mentors from New Beginnings and Carl Matthews, the supervisor of facility operations for New Beginnings, who came up with the idea for The Grass is Greener.

Matthews said he hopes it will help participating youth, who are in the final stage of their stays at New Beginnings, give back to society and ease their reentry into their communities. The program will also help provide young people with "skills they need to go out into the world and get employment," Bowser said.

We're also focused on how we can help seniors and call attention to our back-to-basics priorities," said Bowser, who sported safety glasses and a bright green DYRS Lawn Care Services T-shirt. "Obviously, we have a lot of senior homeowners in our city, and they need help with basic home-care services like lawn care."

Young used to enjoy taking care of the garden in her backyard, but she is no longer able to lift mulch — "I'm too old for that" — and hiring a lawn-care service was "prohibitively expensive for someone on a fixed income," said her daughter, Cheryl Gillette, 61. The biweekly service has been "phenomenally helpful," Gillette added.

For Thurman, who arrived at New Beginnings in September, working on lawns reminds him of cutting his grandmother's grass growing up. "It helps you feel good," said Thurman, who plans to enter the 12th grade this fall.

"The program is part of DYRS' larger philosophy of restorative justice," said DYRS Director Clinton Lacey. "We believe that our young people can be restored to the community, and what better way to do that than to connect with elders," Lacey said. He said he would like to expand the program for both the number of youths who participate and the number of community members who are served. The program, he added, could have some "entrepreneurial potential" for participants after they leave New Beginnings.

And DYRS can help with more than trimming hedges — as was evidenced by a lockout scare Saturday at the house after Bowser had departed. At some point in the excitement over the mayor's arrival, Young's house was accidentally locked with its occupants all outside. A locksmith was called, but one of the program mentors had a quicker idea. Jared Waters, 28, grabbed a ladder and climbed onto the second story roof. "Be careful," one staff member below shouted. "There's a dog in there, man," another added. At one window, he met with success, went in and opened the door on the first floor. "DYRS to the rescue," a staffer cheered.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Independence Day

On Tuesday, July 4, residents at Youth Services Center participated in its annual Independence Day carnival. The event consisted of great BBQ food prepared by the facility's Culinary department, a variety of carnival games, a Velcro wall, and even a mechanical bull. Youth and staff enjoyed themselves as they engaged in games and truly positive social interactions. Although our youth spent the holiday independent of their families, they enjoyed a great day with staff who made it a point to demonstrate "what love looks like" at DYRS on Independence Day and always.

Youth Council DC

The Youth Council is taking a trip down south to Alabama for its National Community Service Project in August! They'll visit historical African American sites, join in a local community service project, and enjoy a fun-filled day at Alabama Splash Adventure Water Park/Amusement Park.

To qualify, youth must participate in at least one community service activity before July 24. If unable to make one of the volunteer activities listed below and in need a different date, please call or email rukiewilson@dc.gov, (202) 368-4628.

- 7/15** - Volunteer - Capital Area Food Bank- PG Community Market Mobile Food Pantry - 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (pick-up starts at 7 am) • Volunteers will help set up the market and serve community members • Open to everyone/ community service hrs offered
- 7/19** - Free Minds Write Night - 7 - 8:30 p.m. (Meet at 450 AC at 6 p.m.) • Volunteers will provide feedback on the writing of Free Minds Book Club members still incarcerated) • Only approved youth/ community service hrs offered
- 7/22** - Volunteer- We Are Family, 9:30 - 1 p.m., (pick-up starts at 7:30 a.m.) • Volunteers will pack and deliver groceries to low-income seniors • Open to everyone/ community service hrs offered
- 7/23** - Bird Watching/Farm Trip, 1-3 p.m. (Pick-up starts at 11 a.m.) • Participants will enjoy bird watching and help with trail maintenance • Open to everyone/ community service hrs offered
- 7/24** - Mandatory Alabama Trip Orientation, viewing of the movie "Selma," and dinner, 7-9 p.m. • Only trip participants • Community service hrs offered

Summertime Snapshot



DYRS staff and youth at the National Harbor, where they toured the Gaylord hotel and the Capital Wheel, and later enjoyed conversation on the capital wheel's history over a nice meal.

Roles and Models



Earlier this year, staff at New Beginnings Youth Development Center reached out to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD), one of a few states participating in Georgetown University's Youth In Custody program. Led by NBYDC Deputy Superintendent of Treatment Janay Williams, they initiated a tour and visit of TJJD's juvenile facilities and group homes. Ms. Williams, Treatment Manager Felicia Brown, and Supervisory Youth Development Representative (SYDR) Ernest Waiters traveled to Texas and convened with TJJD youth and staff on ways to enhance treatment modalities for their respective populations. They witnessed what it took to attain a Youth In Custody program certification, which included everything from culture change with staff and youth; revamping treatment services, vocational programs and reentry approaches; and changing how they infuse trauma-informed care into their programs. Our DYRS staff left with the knowledge that in Texas, they do everything "BIG," and that they are well on their way with promoting positive outcomes for youth through researched-based interventions that encourage family engagement, and individualized care and development. DYRS applauds its peers in the field for their efforts!



Embracing the Journey

On Thursday, June 29, the Journey Dance Ensemble at New Beginnings presented "Embracing the Journey," a dance recital choreographed and taught by Figure 8 Dance Fitness. In the presence of all of their male peers, family members, teachers, social workers and visitors, the young ladies of Journey put on a show that would've outsold had there been tickets! The staff of New Beginnings showed the loudest but love resounded throughout the auditorium..

The six powerful dances including F.R.E.E.D.O.M., a thought provoking piece dedicated to those who suffered death at the hands of police. The instructor, Saudia, along with one of DYRS' very own young ladies choreographed "Better Days" appropriate because it reflected the amazingly positive transformation that took place in the young lady while in Journey. Though she had never danced a day in her life, she utilized her traumatic past and spirited and expressive soul to bring out her natural talent. Saudia embraced this young lady's trauma and strengths, and together, they created a powerful, therapeutic dance that – in the words of one male youth – "gave me goosebumps".

All enjoyed dinner and fellowship after the program, the excitement contagious as the Journey dancers joined their mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers and siblings. Everyone felt pleased, but nothing reflected this more than the self-pride and confidence that the Journey young ladies exhibited.



Home Grown

On June 6, John Johnson - National Football League (NFL) 2017 draft pick of the St. Los Angeles Rams - visited the Youth Services Center (YSC) to speak to residents about pursuing their dreams, as well as the importance of going to school and college. Accompanied by his mother and the nephew of Youth Development Representative (YDR) Patrick Boney, Mr. Johnson also spoke about his local upbringing. He grew up in nearby Hyattsville, Maryland; attended and graduated from Northwestern High School on a full academic scholarship to play college football at Boston College; and graduated from the school in four years not only with a degree in Communications, but as a third-round pick of the Los Angeles Rams. Mr. Johnson also serves as a volunteer at YSC.



Words from DYRS Administrative Officer Rahim Jenkins

More words of appreciation would never adequately express my appreciation for the support and assistance that I received while developing, planning, and implementing the COVENANT OF PEACE, I recently received what is believed by many to be the most prestigious award given to a DC Government Employee - The Cafritz Award! I would not have been able to be this year's recipient if it were not for the absolute support of both Director Lacey and Deputy Director Harlee Harper.

There also exists a very long list of people that surely are to be thanked. That list is filled with YDRS that ensured each Covenant met every goal expected. SYDR leadership was profound and their easy transition from day-to-day operation to meeting the demands of the Covenant's weekend sleep in was always stellar. The Medical Team could not have been more accommodating.

The superintendents of both facilities guaranteed cooperation and for them, failure was never an option. My immediate planning team surely made it happen, I merely asked, that they not just invest in this vision but own it, and own it is exactly what they did...While I realize I am at great risk for attempting to name names, in this instance I must and I offer my sincerest apologies if my head omits anyone...

Daa'iyah Pasha • Dana McDaniel • Brenda Padavil • Janay Williams • Caroline Wilborn • Woodrow Sheffield • Larry Pringle • Attilio Valli • Emmett Irby

So one last HUGE THANK YOU...

WILLIE FULLILOVE • DANA MCDANIEL • DEE PASHA • BRENDA PADAVIL