



DYRS

Committed to Excellence

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

July 27, 2017



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

POSITIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

JERRY M. COMPLETION

Event Calendar

- AUG 2** MPD "BEAT THE STREETS" EVENT
100 L ST. NE (NOMA) PILOT
- AUG 2-7** YOUTH COUNCIL ALABAMA TRIP (NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT AND CIVIL RIGHT TOUR), ONLY APPROVED PARTICIPANTS TO ATTEND
- AUG 9** MPD "BEAT THE STREETS" EVENT
115 ATLANTIC ST. SW (BELLEVUE LIBRARY)
- 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
- AUG 29** HEALTH AND WELLNESS EXPO
NEW BEGINNINGS, 8400 RIVER RD., LAUREL, MD GYMNASIUM, 1-4 P.M. *OPEN TO ALL STAFF

Summertime Sip n' Paint

Youth at the 450 Achievement Center enjoying a "Sip n' Paint" event on July 21, where they sipped juice and explored their artistic talent.



In the Arena

Young people at New Beginnings Youth Development Center enjoyed a visit from little Maleah Amour from the Youth Escape Arena., Inc. on July 21. Ms. Amour is a Youth Advocate and National Royalty Positive Choice Maker at the non-profit organization, which: redirects youth "off track in the arena of life," "reconnects those who have disconnected themselves from school, work, group homes, and traditional living environments in their communities; and reconnects them with strategic plans that address their social emotional living, exposing the path to escape to an arena of alternative options, to an arena of positive outcomes." Ms. Amour read aloud to the scholars, who appreciated her tenacity and followed up with great questions.



POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The Commitment of the Covenant

Male and female youth at the Youth Services Center participated in a DYRS Covenant of Peace weekend from July 14-16, discussing the root causes of violence in the District and coming up with solutions for change. The days consisted of focus groups, and activities as Credible Messengers and facilitators interacted with young people in attendance and spent the entire weekend in the gym with them. Young men resonated with the stories of those who lived similar life experiences. Special guest Kemba Smith, known for her prison sentence and subsequent pardoning by U.S. President Bill Clinton, shared her story of going from a college student, to drug dealer's girlfriend, to a domestic violence victim, to a federal prisoner. Kemba spoke about how making poor choices blinded by love and devotion can have long-term consequences with the girls, identifying with them and encouraging them to make positive choices and make YSC their last stop in the juvenile justice system. The weekend culminated in a ceremony with the youths' families invited, where all the young people signed a covenant to abstain from committing acts of violence, because they realized that their lives mattered. And that is the premise of the Covenant of Peace, it's first pillar - "My Life Matters" - which translates to understanding the value of one's own life and thereby realizing the value in another's. When asked why their lives mattered at the onset of the weekend, the youth responded:

I'm a young Black woman • I'm important • I'm Black • I'm a member of society • I come from the streets • My life matters • I'm a king • I'm educated • My mother loves me • It's not only about me • I can be more than a criminal • My parents need me • I have a reason to live • I'm ambitious; God put me here for a reason • I'm a strong woman with potential • My story can help others • Everybody's life matters • Put on earth for a reason; lot to live for • I have younger siblings that look up to me • I can change things in society • I'm young and Black • I'm cute • I have things to accomplish • I'm smart

The Princess Within

On Friday, July 21, the Princess Within program facilitated a one-day Empowerment Workshop - "Girl Talk: Overcoming Obstacles & Achieving Dreams" - at New Beginnings. All of the young women girls in the Journey unit participated in the four-hour workshop, which seeks to empower girls by teaching them the value of their self-worth and providing them with the essential tools needed to make healthy decisions. The Princess Within program offers community-based services for girls in the juvenile justice system with the hopes of reducing recidivism and strengthening their involvement and productivity within their community. Invested in delivering positive outcomes, the workshop seemed to impact the female residents and DYRS looks forward to joining with the Princess Within program on other dynamic ventures that share this aligned vision.



The Joy of Motion

On Monday, July 24, the Joy of Motion organization visited New Beginnings to design and facilitate week-long programs for youth implementing the Keshet Dance Company's "M3" program model (Movement + Mentorship = Metamorphosis), an evidence-based, three-phase program that fuses dance and academics and proved to dramatically reduced recidivism rates in New Mexico.

Joy of Motion used its Introductory model for the New Beginnings youth, with each week culminating in an event or performance. Young people in the Introductory level participate in an interactive arts integration program, which teaches (for example) geometrical concepts through body shapes and conflict-resolution through dance partnering. While the M3 curriculum consists of six units, New Beginnings determined that the contemporary jazz, self-esteem/mood, hip hop, and poetry units are most relevant for DYRS youth, as the technique of pairing a style of dance to academic and or social skill advances several areas of positive youth development.

Joy of Motion acknowledges and values New Beginnings' focus on rehabilitation and restoration, and its goal is to add another layer of exploration into dance/creativity to rehabilitate and restore the lives of committed youth.



A Cut Above the Rest



On Tuesday, July 18, New Beginnings scholars completed Phase One in their Barbering Vocational Program. They received their completion certificates from Mr. Marco Price-Bey, owner of Fresh Start Barbering Academy, who started the program for inner city youth to promote and foster character development and professional image. The ceremony concluded with former New Beginnings Scholars from the Street Smarts Barbering program greeting the young men and championing them on, sharing how they're completing community service hours by servicing pop-up shops in DC Homeless Shelters under Mr. Price-Bey's guidance. Both current and formerly committed youth felt inspired, looking forward to the future and looking back at how far they'd come.



Trial and Error

Starting Wednesday, July 19, youth at the Youth Services Center (YSC) participated in a three-day "Know Your Rights" program led by law clerks Christen Phillips and Sarah Gohary from the Juvenile Services Program at the Public Defender Service (PDS), with support from Senior Youth Development Representative (SYDR) William Young, SYDR Japheth Claude, and YDR Woodrow Sheffield. The program's goals are to instruct youth on their Fourth Amendment rights as well as to help them develop skills in self-advocacy. The young men of Unit A-200 learned the laws surrounding search and seizure and then practiced applying those laws during a mock juvenile case.

On the final day of the program, the youth participated in a mock evidentiary hearing, where they each took on roles of defense attorneys, prosecutors, and witnesses, and argued in front of a judge. The kids did an incredible job! Many YSC staff members came out to support these young men, including Superintendent Jannifer Nevilles. The opportunity gave the young men the chance to advocate on behalf of a client, and empowered them to think about how the law operates in their own community. PDS will be conducting the Know Your Rights program with other youth at YSC throughout the next few weeks.



POSITIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staying Constant

On Tuesday, July 17, Grow Up Grow Out (GUGO) conducted a training on the "The Three Laws of Innovation" for all of the Youth Development Representatives (YDRs) at New Beginnings. The three laws are:

1. Build a community
2. Don't be afraid to bring in outside inspiration
3. Words without actions have no meaning

As DYRS continues to expand upon GUGO's community-based mentoring approach, New Beginnings employees are working on heightening the support they provide to residents by truly acting as role models, because they - the YDRs - are one of few constants during a youth's commitment. The group discussed how they are obligated to be truthful about their struggles as adults, to ask the youth about what kind of adults they want to be, to praise them for their gifts, to support them when they screw up, and to encourage them to become the people they want to be. DYRS appreciates all staff for the uplifting work they choose to enlist in every day, and thanks GUGO for providing inspiration and encouragement to the agency's committed youth and staff members.

A WORD ON THE STREET

The Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment Act

Do you know about the "Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment Act of 2016 (CYJAA)? If not, or if you're curious, read on for a general overview and basic understanding of the provision, which went into effect in the District of Columbia on April 4, 2017. While the legislation is multi-faceted, the questions and answers below focus on the provision requiring DYRS to take custody of Title 16 youth.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Q.** What does the legislation require?
A. The CYJAA requires that, by October 1, 2018, the DC Department of Corrections (DOC) must transfer custody of Title 16 youth to DYRS.
- Q.** Who are Title 16 youth?
A. Title 16 youth are juveniles (under the age of 18) who, due to the nature of their alleged offenses, are charged as adults by the U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) for the District of Columbia.
- Q.** Where will the custody transfer take place?
A. DYRS will take custody of Title 16 youth on the Juvenile Unit at the Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF), where DOC currently houses Title 16 youth. CTF is located at DC Jail.
- Q.** Will Title 16 youth reside at YSC or New Beginnings?
A. Initially, Title 16 youth will remain at CTF and DYRS will operate the CTF Juvenile Unit. At some point, however, Title 16 youth may be relocated to a DYRS secure facility; but, not until there has been one (1) full year during which there has been adequate space to accommodate the Title 16 population.
- Q.** What's next?
A. DYRS continues to work with DOC and the Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM) to put a plan in place for implementing this provision of the CYJAA. Over the next several months, DYRS will also focus on developing a robust program, specifically tailored to the needs of Title 16 youth.