



# Committed to Excellence

The Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) Newsletter.

August 15, 2019



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

POSITIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

JERRY M. COMPLETION

## Event Calendar

- AUG 19** MINDFUL "HRT" TALK MONDAYS - R.O.A.K!  
450 H STREET NW - 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
- AUG 19** ANCHORED IN STRENGTH - 450 H STREET NW -  
WASHINGTON, DC - 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM
- AUG 20** BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT  
450 H ST NW - 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- AUG 21** WELLNESS "HRT" WEDNESDAYS - LINE DANCING  
2101 MLK JR AVE SE - 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
- AUG 26** ANCHORED IN STRENGTH - 2101 MLK JR AVE SE -  
WASHINGTON, DC - 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
- AUG 28** WELLNESS "HRT" WEDNESDAYS - LINE DANCING  
450 H ST NW - 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
- AUG 21** LED BY LOVE - WPFW 89.3 FM  
6 PM - 7 PM
- AUG 26** FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

## The Achievement Center Closes Out Summer Activities with Family Unity Days



The DYRS Achievement Centers implemented new educational and enrichment activities such as a career exploration program and Restorative Justice-based activities for youth this summer. The Achievement Center staff worked closely with Care Coordinators, Credible Messengers, and others to create education enrichment opportunities for committed youth, and they punctuated the end of each week with a fun outing. For example, on July 26th, DYRS youth visited Kings Dominion – a first visit to the amusement park for some of the youth and on Friday, August 2nd, a group of youth visited the Autobahn Indoor Speedway. The Achievement Center will wrap up summer activities with Family Unity Days on August 15<sup>th</sup> and August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

# THE GRASS IS GREENER



“You and your crew provided me with outstanding customer service, and I would LOVE to be able to express my feelings of that service to your supervisor or whomever is in charge of this program and needs to know about it,” wrote Ward 4 resident Jocelynn Johnson in an email about the DYRS Grass is Greener program. “When something goes well in DC, we need to talk about it and shout about it from the house tops... In my opinion, this is one of those experiences that they need to know---actually WORKS!”

Ms. Johnson applauded the quality service she received from the youth who provided landscaping services as part of the program, which allows committed youth to give back to their community by donating lawn mowing services to elders in need. She also commended the youth and DYRS staff for how “friendly,

respectful, and professional” the youth have been while mowing her lawn. She said that she was so appreciative that she wanted to contact her Councilmember, Brandon Todd, to say so. “I am just very pleased that DC has this great program and want to inform everyone on their great work,” she wrote.

Maintenance Lead Mr. Carl Matthews founded the Grass is Greener Program, wanting to create a spirit of forgiveness for the community and to help youth heal. “I can relate to the youth because I once was a burden to the community and always wanted a chance to show I could be something other than a delinquent,” Mr. Matthews said. “This program is a win for all involved and I am honored to be involved. We are teaching a marketable skill and something to add on to our youths resume.”

The longstanding program for community members 65 years and older cannot currently accept new lawns because it has reached capacity.



## Record-Breaking Community Service

On Monday, July 7th, five residents from the New Beginnings Youth Development Center (NBYDC) broke a community service record at the Capital Area Food Bank by preparing and packing 800 meals for those experiencing homelessness throughout the District and surrounding areas.

Working alongside NBYDC Recreation Specialists, Treatment Managers, and Youth Development Representatives, each youth was eager, willing, and excited to give back to the community. Please join us in congratulating our youth for working hard in service to the community and for taking the time to learn about and display generosity, compassion, and teamwork.



The annual DYRS Back to School Night will take place on August 20th, from 4 pm to 6 pm, at the Achievement Center in Gallery Place. Backpacks and school supplies will be distributed to committed youth registered for the upcoming school year, and agency partners will be available to provide information regarding school and school-related services. For more information for DYRS committed youth and their families about the event, please email Janay Williams at [Janay.williams2@dc.gov](mailto:Janay.williams2@dc.gov)



## Drama-Based Training



On Tuesday, June 18th, participants in the Dramatic Solutions VAMP program at New Beginnings Youth Development Center (NBYDC) performed their original musical production, *Lessons from a Dead Man*. The play is the story of Malik, a young man who is released from prison and is faced with choosing between returning to his former destructive ways or taking a chance on love and reconciliation. The story is narrated by Malik's deceased friend who watches over him to help him see what is important in life. Dramatic Solutions, Inc. is a small, minority-owned consulting firm with more than 20 years of experience as a leader in drama-based training. *Lessons from a Dead Man* was created through a collaborative effort with DYRS youth. DYRS Players – Dazmine, Demonte, Amaru, and Derrick – shared emotions, concerns, and life events to develop the central character and story. Youth also composed poems and songs to support the themes in the play. After weeks of revision and rehearsal, the DYRS Players took to the stage for the performance.



## CHARM CITY IS THE FINAL FILM IN THE DYRS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FILM FESTIVAL

Please join us this evening for the third and final screening of the DYRS Restorative Justice Film festival, which features a series of movies and documentaries that focus on the impact, power, and values of the Restorative Justice practice and philosophy. "This series was created to provide a creative platform to share the stories of those who have been impacted by harm and how the Restorative Justice philosophy and practice has brought transformation through healing," said Restorative Justice Coordinator Rashida George. "The goal of this event was to encourage conversations around harm and healing in our DC communities with the hope that [community] members embrace the philosophy." *Charm City* is the final installment in the series held at the Public Welfare Foundation, 1200 U Street NW, from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Visit the following link to RSVP for the free event: [http://bit.ly/DYRS\\_RJFF\\_CharmCity](http://bit.ly/DYRS_RJFF_CharmCity). Previous screenings included *Risking Light* and *Circle Up*.



## Real Talk Lecture Series

On Tuesday, July 16th, the Youth Services Center (YSC) held its second Real Talk Lecture event in the new series themed "Confronting your Daddy's Devils: The Role that Leadership and Resiliency Play in Breaking Generational Cycles."

Deputy Superintendent Darrell Foster, Youth Development Representative David Allen, Shift Commander Demetrius Davis, and Mr. Jahvon Gordon of Elite Global LLC - an author, motivational speaker, and mentor (also known as Coach G) - shared with youth powerful stories of trials and tribulations. This dynamic team of speakers was extremely transparent and positive as they set out to uplift, encourage, and remind everyone that success is attainable despite challenges that arise.

YSC youth delivered a presentation about time management and job readiness. The residents stood with pride in their collared shirts and ties as they educated the audience on interview skills and the importance of being prompt and prepared. The youth did an outstanding job and received high praise for their hard work and commitment.

## No Kids in Prison



No Kids in Prison, a national campaign from Youth First to end youth incarceration, celebrated International Youth Day on August 12th with a short film called "A Youth Vision for Youth Justice." The film analyzes what investing in community over incarceration could look like. The campaign identified that, at any given moment, the US incarcerates nearly 50,000 children in abusive racially disparate youth prisons.

Illustrators Jenna Robb and Jason Killinger brought this vision to life with youth advocates participating in the voiceovers for the short film sharing their perspectives on carceral alternatives, creating equal opportunities for youth, and community reinvestment. For more information on the campaign, visit <https://www.nokidsinprison.org/>.



## Tours at the New Beginnings Youth Development Center

The New Beginning Youth Development Center (NBYDC) hosted tours for two different groups in July.

OAG INTERNS – On July 18th, Supervisory Youth Development Representative (SYDR) Ernest Waiters led interns from the Juvenile Section of the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) on a tour of the facility. While exploring the facility's Maya Angelou Academy, Youth Development Representative (YDR) Latasia Keys gave the visitors an overview of the role of a YDR and Recreation Specialist Mr. Charles Jackson gave an overview of recreational services at the facility.

HUDSON COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM – Director Ron Edwards and Director of Programs Hivian Teran of the Hudson County Juvenile Justice System in New Jersey came to the New Beginnings Youth Development Center (NBYDC) to tour the facility on July 29th. Supervisory Youth Development Representative (SYDR) Douglas White, Deputy Director of Treatment Kenneth Person, Treatment Manager Alexis Walker, and Superintendent Mark Hamlett led the tour of the secure side. The visitors were amazed with the gym, the school, and the overall layout of the facility. They were also impressed by the Credible Messenger mentoring initiative, which Director Clinton Lacey shared insight about.



## The Youth Services Center Launches Mindful Meditation

For the month of July, the Youth Services Center (YSC) introduced mindful meditation sessions for all youth at the facility. Youth Development Representative (YDR) Woodrow Sheffield spearheaded the idea and created different programs and activities for the youth to engage in to benefit their mental health. YSC youth (pictured) participating in a meditation exercise.

## DYRS Introduces Health and Restoration Staff and Services

Also in July, DYRS launched the Health and Restoration Team (HRT), a new initiative under Health Services that provides supportive mental health interventions for youth in the community as well as education, training, and support to staff. Helmed by Community Health Services Program Manager Dr. Adrian Faulkner, HRT hosts a series of ongoing lunchtime wellness events for staff. For more information about the HRT team and about the events, email Dr. Faulkner at [adrian.faulkner@dc.gov](mailto:adrian.faulkner@dc.gov).

★ ★ ★ DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES ★ ★ ★

For questions or submissions for future issues, please contact [dyrs.media@dc.gov](mailto:dyrs.media@dc.gov)

