



COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE



October 6, 2016

EVENT CALENDAR

- 10/11** DC One Fund Kickoff Event, Reeves Center, 2000 147th Street NW, 2 - 4 pm
- 10/19** CPR Training, YSC's Training Room, 9 am - 3 pm
- 10/21** Youth & Family Programs Retreat, North Michigan Park Recreation Center, 1333 Emerson Street NE, 11 am - 4 pm

Positive Youth Development



The DYRS Youth Council volunteering at the Department of Behavioral Health Purple Wave Festival on September 24, where they provided support for other youth and families dealing with recovery.

The Youth Council

The DYRS Youth Council is a group that focuses on engaging young people from the District of Columbia (DC) by teaching them leadership values through service. The Youth Council is a platform for youth to promote effective change locally and beyond, while having fun. It rewards young people who demonstrate positive behavior, exposes them to different opportunities, and its' members serve as representatives of young people throughout DC.

How to Get Involved:

- Social Workers or Case Managers should refer young people to the Youth Council who are compliant with their Community Placement Agreements (CPAs) and are open to giving back to DC
- Community Service activities are open to all DYRS youth in the community
- Become a Youth Council Advisors/DYRS staff member that assists with coordination and support of activities

3rd Annual Family Activity - Fishing in Chesapeake Bay from Solomons, MD - Sunday, 10/9

- Each Youth Council member can bring up to two family members
- Pick-up begins at 4 am
- Open to Youth Council members who are recent volunteers

Positive Youth Development

DYRS Keeps Girls Closer to Home

Agency Offers Local Placement for the First Time in a Decade



Prominent members of the District and federal government joined together on September 27 to celebrate the grand opening of "Journey," the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) new gender-responsive 10-bed unit at New Beginnings Youth Development Center (NBVDC) that meets the treatment needs of girls committed to the agency while keeping them closer to the District.

"I was committed to DYRS two years ago, and sent out of state twice. I hated it. I thought Journey was going to be the same old thing but as soon as I walked in, I felt at home," said youth D.B at the ribbon cutting ceremony. "Everybody hugged me. I didn't feel like I had to be defensive. I get to see my Mom most weeks. I feel loved."

The opening of "Journey" is momentous for the District in improving local placement options and services for young women committed to DYRS. Historically, the District of Columbia disproportionately sent girls to out-of-state residential facilities due to a lack of local placements.

"DYRS realized the importance of providing girls with programming that is tailored to their specific needs. Girls should be close to home, and close to their families. When someone is out of state, it makes transition and re-entry that much more difficult. Journey focuses on the psycho-social development and individualized needs of adolescent girls all within a restorative justice framework," said DYRS Director Clinton Lacey.

Wendy Pohlhaus, Executive Assistant for the U.S. Attorney for External Affairs, introduced herself not only as a member of the Department of Justice, but as a former resident of Ward 8. She spoke about her experiences and struggles as a girl growing up in DC and expressed her gratitude that girls finally have "a soft place to land." Ms. Pohlhaus recited Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise," with many of the guests – including the committed young women - chanting in unison.

Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Brenda Donald celebrated this historic occasion but cautioned the girls "not to get too comfortable" and to remember their end goal of successfully transitioning back into the community.

DYRS recognizes the importance of programming tailored for girls, whose overall experiences are different than boys. Director Lacey made finding DYRS' committed female population placement options closer to home one of his top priorities when he took office last year.

Throwback Thursday...



...to a day in August when a group of DYRS youth took a career exploration trip to New York. In a span of 12 hours, they visited Quad Studios, where they spoke with sound engineers and learned about the history of Hip Hop music; they experienced a live set on TBS television series "Detour" and asked questions to the production crew.; and they went to The Malcolm X & Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center, the site of Malcolm X's assassination.

Our young people also stopped in Harlem, where they had the opportunity to speak with community elders about their dreams and goals, and receiving words of wisdom and encouragement in return. They couldn't help but engage in a quick, friendly game of basketball with a NY team at Rucker Park (and won). Finally, they closed out the day with a tour of the World Trade Center and Statue of Liberty. All in a day's work!

Volunteer Events (Open to everyone/community service hours offered)

- Food & Friends - Tuesday, 10/12, 9 am - 12 pm**
- Volunteers prep meals for those w/ health challenges
 - Pick-up begins at 7 am
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society - Light the Night Walk - Saturday, 10/15, 12 pm - 4:30 pm
- Volunteers support various duties such as organizing walk site, setup, or inflating Light The Night balloons
 - Pick-up begins at 10 am
- Engage with Seniors at Seabury Home First Residence in NE - Tuesday, 10/19, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm
- Volunteers will engage Seniors in various activities
 - Meet at AC - 450 at 4 pm
- SOME (So Others Might Eat) - Friday, 10/28, 10:30 am - 1:15 pm**
- Volunteers will help serve Lunch to those in need
 - Pick-up starts at 8 am
- Bread for the City - Sunday, 10/30, 2 pm - 4 pm
- Volunteers will help prepare meals for those in need
 - Pick-up starts at 12 pm
- **Contingent upon DCPS Schedule**



Hello DYRS,

Once again it's your favorite Wellness Connoisseur welcoming you to a beautiful Fall season and a perfect opportunity to enjoy outdoor events including local 5k runs/walks, team sports (flag football, soccer, basketball etc.), nature walks (Shenandoah or Rock Creek Park), or even some overdo "honey do's" (lawn care, raking leaves, trimming trees, washing & waxing cars) to activate your metabolism while many others are slowing down to prepare for hibernation. Just 30 minutes of any of the above on most days can lead to improved mood, health, weight, and the ability to live a more independent and fulfilling life. However, the exercise(s) need not be athletic or difficult, but more so steady for that time period and consistent to the point of becoming a daily regimen. Your DYRS cohorts proved these theories as they transformed during the months of July and August successfully competing in the Employee Summer Fitness Challenge, and became recognized as one of one Top Performing Agencies within the District government. Led and encouraged and sometimes literally pushed by Lisa Smiley and Melissa Milchman, DYRS performed flawlessly and rose to the challenge against a slew of competitors in a real display of grit and determination. CONGRATULATIONS DYRS! YOU MAKE US PROUD!

Positive Staff Development
A Month of Milestones



However, healthy relationships with youth, families, and communities are required to get their job done safely and effectively. The work of the team is challenging and specialized. It requires an intimate knowledge of the District's neighborhoods and an understanding of adolescent culture. Take a bow Kweku Akoto, Norman Morrow, Mario Richardson, Khoran Newell and Adrian Richardson. Thank you for your efforts and hard work!

On September 14, DYRS realized a historic milestone. The number of youth in abscondence reached an all time low of three youth or 1%. The agency's newly named Youth and Public Safety Team, formerly known as the Abscondence Unit, works diligently every day - collaborating with Case Management and Secure Facilities - to return as many DYRS youth into contact with the agency as possible.

Led by Adrian Richardson, the Youth and Public Safety Team utilizes GPS as a tool to locate our youth.

Save a Life - Enroll in CPR Training

CPR training is part of the agency's mandated training - everyone is required to take this important, life-saving class. If you haven't taken it, or your certification expired, ENROLL per the schedule below!

- YSC, The Community Room, 9 am - 3 pm on 10/19, 11/2 & 11/16
- New Beginnings, Training Room, 9 am - 3 pm on 11/11/17

Everyone is encouraged to sign up for this important training. Please email Silvia Moody with your requested date and location. A minimum of six people must enroll for a course to be held.

Health Services Solutions

The Health Services department recently implemented a new electronic medical record (EMR). After nearly a year of careful planning, the team launched the Centricity Electronic Medical Record. This EMR solution is designed to enhance the clinical productivity of the medical, behavioral health, and dental practices in both the Youth Services Center and New Beginnings. The staff is looking forward to devoting even more time to treating youth as a result of their efficient online access to patient records.

Community Engagement



Southeast 67 - Restoring Hope and Restoring Communities

DYRS hosted a showing of Southeast 67 on September 29 at the Miracle Theater in SE Washington, where members of the community and DYRS staff watched the film documentary's story about the role of caring relationships and the community in determining the trajectory of the lives of its youth.

The film highlights the story of District youth in the tumultuous 1980s who are offered a college scholarship film through the "I Have a Dream" program with one condition - that they graduate from high school. And the crux of the film? Well, how do you make the dream of college attainable to a kid who doesn't expect to live to his 20th birthday?

Several members of the cast - including former "Dreamers" Antwan Green, Tenille Warren, and Johnny Sidbury - attended and participated in a panel after the film. When reflecting on the role of the professionals associated with the "I Have a Dream" program, the "Dreamers" spoke about the importance that youth place upon considering anyone who tries to help them "credible." Panelists also said that when working with young people, professionals need to understand, and hopefully be a part of, the community.

This point was reinforced by Kenneil Cole, a young man who moved from the streets to the classroom and is now a student at Delaware State College.

The film, the panel, and the audience response made it clear that many of the conditions of the 1990s still hold true today, reinforcing just how important and essential it is to try to reach our youth in different ways.

DYRS will continue to show Southeast 67 throughout various settings and opportunities within the District.

- John Ducksworth, Special Asst. to the Director, Restorative Justice

It's Customer Service Week!

We all work in customer service in our own right, and our customers are the community we serve. This year's theme - Service Champions - especially resonates with DYRS. It recognizes that delivering excellent service is only possible with a team of dedicated professionals working together. To be Service Champions, each individual must: Lead by example • Achieve success • Exceed expectations.



"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.

