

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES**



**Testimony of
Neil A. Stanley, Director
Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services**

**Performance Oversight Hearing
Committee on Human Services**

March 9, 2012

Introduction

Good morning Chairman Graham and members of the Committee on Human Services. For the record, I am Neil A. Stanley, Director of the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services. I am joined today by:

- Garine Dalce, Acting Chief of Committed Services
- Christopher Shorter, Chief Operating Officer, and
- Michael Umpierre, Acting Chief of Staff.

I thank you and the Human Services Committee members for the opportunity to testify on behalf of DYRS.

I would like to begin by saying that it is an honor and a privilege to serve as Director of DYRS. Every day I see the dedication, passion, and commitment that our staff brings to work. I personally want to thank our staff for all they do on behalf of youth and families in the District.

In my time as Director, I have had the great pleasure of receiving guidance and counsel from Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, BB Otero, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, Paul Quander, and of course, Mayor Gray. Their leadership has been invaluable and I would like to thank them for their support.

I would also like to acknowledge all of our partners. I would especially like to thank Chief Lanier and MPD, Chief Judge Satterfield, Judge Bush, and the Family Court judges, our counterparts at Court Social Services, including Director Terri Odom, the *Jerry M.* Special Arbiter Grace Lopes, our partners at the Office of the Attorney General and the Public Defender Service, and all the folks who are part of DC YouthLink, including Reverend Donald Isaac and Dr. Fred Phillips. The District is fortunate to have such an expansive network of dedicated individuals working in the juvenile justice system.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Human Services Committee for all that you do on behalf of youth and families. Over the past year, we have worked closely together with each of you to shape a juvenile justice system that is focused on rehabilitating young people and protecting the community—objectives that go hand in hand.

Councilmember Alexander, we have enjoyed working with you and your staff, and appreciate your deep commitment to youth and families. We are especially grateful for your leadership on the issues facing young women, and are committed to working jointly with you to expand services and programs for them.

Councilmember Barry, we are honored to benefit from your leadership. We look forward to continuing to work together on issues affecting youth and families, which you have done throughout your distinguished career in public service.

Councilmember Brown, we particularly appreciate your guidance on workforce development. DYRS has made great strides in expanding job training and workforce development opportunities for young people, and we look forward to working with you to build upon our success.

Councilmember Wells, you have been a steadfast advocate for young people and families, and played a critical role in shaping many of the successes and accomplishments we are reporting on today. We look forward to working with you to expand many of the initiatives that took root during your tenure as Committee Chair.

Finally, Councilmember Graham, we have sincerely appreciated your thorough and thoughtful oversight, which has included:

- Regular meetings, including monthly meetings which you have described as very productive, a sentiment with which we agree;
- Regular communication by phone and email;
- Tours of DYRS facilities; and
- Tours of community-based programs, including group homes.

Your guidance on issues such as substance abuse, gang prevention and intervention and workforce development has been extremely valuable. We appreciate your commitment to the issues facing young people and families, and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Before continuing, I would like to inform everyone that earlier this week, DYRS published the agency's first ever Annual Report. While my testimony will highlight the agency's key initiatives, the Annual Report provides a more comprehensive look at DYRS programs, including rich data on outcomes and indicators. The Annual Report, and other reports such as the latest DC YouthLink Performance Quarterly report, can be found at the DYRS website: dyrs.dc.gov.

Today, I would like to answer three central questions we believe are important to District residents:

- I. What is DYRS doing to keep the community safe?

- II. What is DYRS doing to make sure that youth get the services they need?
- III. What is DYRS doing to operate efficiently and transparently, and to take care of its staff?

I. What DYRS Is Doing to Keep the Community Safe

The heart of the agency's mission is to rehabilitate young people and to protect the public. While youth committed to the agency are in the community DYRS strives to ensure that:

- Youth are appropriately supervised;
- Youth are held accountable for their behavior;
- Youth are engaged in productive activities (such as school and work); and
- Youth are getting the services they need (such as counseling and substance abuse treatment).

Over the last year, DYRS has implemented, improved, and expanded many initiatives targeted at protecting public safety. These efforts include:

- Increased Community Supervision;
- Increased Accountability of Youth Behavior;
- Increased Monitoring and Accountability at Community-Based Residential Facilities;
- Increased Resources for Gang Prevention and Intervention;
- Improved Placement Decision Making; and
- Enhanced Collaboration with MPD and Public Safety Partners.

Increased Community Supervision

DYRS is working hard to ensure that youth in the community are supervised appropriately. To this end, over the last year DYRS has undertaken the following efforts:

- *Increased Use of Global Positioning Systems:* We have significantly expanded our Global Positioning Systems (GPS) Program, also known as electronic monitoring, which allows the agency to monitor a youth's location in real time. Today, approximately 170 DYRS youth are on GPS on a daily basis. To put this in perspective, in 2009, no DYRS youth

were on electronic monitoring, and just 26 were on GPS in all of FY 2010. In FY 2011, a total of 570 youth benefited from the program.

- *Improved Abscondence Efforts:* DYRS is working harder than ever to bring youth in abscondence back into custody. The DYRS Abscondence Team works jointly with MPD on these efforts. As a result of this partnership, DYRS has significantly reduced the abscondence rate—from 26% in 2003, to approximately 6% in FY 2011. The average length of time in abscondence has dropped as well. The median length of abscondence in FY 2010 was 22 days, and in FY 2011 it was 11 days—a full 50% reduction.
- *Increased Supervision of High Risk Youth:* DYRS employs a special unit dedicated to supervising high risk youth. The High Intensity Unit works jointly with MPD to supervise youth with serious offenses and high needs. As part of this effort, MPD officers conduct weekly in-person visits with youth, and work closely with DYRS staff to ensure that youth stay on the right track.
- *Expanded Network of Eyes on Youth in the Community:* The DC YouthLink initiative is the primary vehicle by which youth in the community are provided services. The initiative is led by two Lead Entities, Progressive Life Center (PLC) and East of the River Clergy Police Community Partnership (ERCPCP). Additionally, approximately 40 community-based organizations, located in every Ward of the District, serve as part of the service coalition. Through DC YouthLink, DYRS has expanded the network of individuals connected to and supervising youth.

Increased Accountability of Youth

DYRS strives to guide youth behavior in positive ways. DYRS believes in holding youth accountable for their actions, and responding swiftly and certainly when they do not comply with their conditions of release. Measures addressing youth accountability include:

- *Graduated Sanctions and Rewards:* In February 2012, DYRS implemented a new tool to hold youth in the community more accountable for their behavior and to provide them

with incentives to do well. The DYRS Graduated Responses system provides agency case managers with guidelines and tools for (1) applying swift, certain, and immediate sanctions to youth who violate the terms of their community release, and (2) providing incentives and rewards to encourage youth to go to school, stay drug-free, abide by the law, and contribute to the community.

DYRS developed the Graduated Responses system in consultation with the Center for Children’s Law and Policy (CCLP), a public interest law and policy organization based in Washington, D.C. CCLP conducted national research on the most effective methods for guiding the behavior of court-involved youth, and found that using graduated sanctions and incentives together best promotes compliance with rules and progress toward individual goals.

- *Community Placement Agreements:* DYRS requires every youth to sign a Community Placement Agreement (CPA) prior to being placed in the community. The CPA sets forth the various requirements the young person must meet in order to remain in the community, such as school attendance, drug testing, meeting regularly with DYRS case managers and staff, electronic monitoring, counseling, and participating in other services. Violations of these requirements may result in the youth’s removal from the community.
- *Community Status Review Hearings:* DYRS has a team of staff dedicated to reviewing and addressing the behavior of youth in the community. The DYRS Community Status Review Hearing panel regularly reviews whether youth in the community are adhering to the conditions of their release. If the Community Status Review Hearing panel finds that a young person has violated their CPA, the young person may face a number of consequences, including removal from the community and placement in a more secured setting.
- *Call-Ins with MPD and Public Safety Partners:* In 2011, DYRS partnered with MPD to conduct “Juvenile Call-ins”. At the events, DYRS and MPD counseled young people placed in the community about the importance of staying safe, making the right

decisions, and complying with services. One call-in in November 2011 focused on the population of 17 to 20 year olds in the community. DYRS plans to have more call-ins upcoming months, including a robbery prevention-focused call-in on Monday, March 12.

Increased Monitoring and Accountability of Community-Based Residential Facilities

In the last year, DYRS has focused intensely on improving the services and supervision provided by community-based residential facility (CBRF) providers in the District. DYRS believes that increasing monitoring and accountability of the community-based residential facilities in which DYRS youth are placed will lead to increased public safety. To this end, DYRS has:

- *Issued the District's First Ever Community-Based Residential Facility Scorecard for Juvenile Justice Providers:* In February 2012, DYRS released a new tool to evaluate the performance of group homes and other community-based residential programs. The DYRS CBRF Provider Scorecard instrument, the first of its kind for District juvenile justice providers, will allow the agency to evaluate community-based residential facilities, including group homes, therapeutic group homes and therapeutic family homes, on three indicators: re-arrest rates, abscondence rates and successful completion rates. DYRS expects that the scorecard will increase accountability of all of our community-based homes and lead to improved supervision and services.
- *Trained Group Home Providers:* Between October 2011 and March 2012, the DYRS Office of Licensing, Contracting and Compliance conducted upwards of fifteen training sessions (for a total of approximately sixty training hours) for group home and community-based residential program providers. The training sessions focused on a host of issues related to appropriate supervision and services, including DYRS regulations, policies, procedures and protocols on electronic monitoring, abscondence, and home passes. Additionally, in January 2012 DYRS conducted a mandatory training for all providers' quality assurance staff. The training focused on having a more effective quality assurance program, learning how to properly document and track program administrative activities, and complying with DYRS reporting requirements.

Increased Resources for Gang/Crew Prevention and Intervention

DYRS, in partnership with its DC YouthLink partners, Progressive Life Center (PLC) and East of the River Clergy Police Community Partnership (ERCPCP), is implementing an agency-wide effort on gang/crew intervention and prevention. The approach is based on the principles incorporated by past successful initiatives led by the Gang Intervention Partnership (GIP) and Citywide Coordinating Council for Youth Violence Prevention (CCCYVP), and is rooted in six core elements: skilled assessment, crew identification, safety planning, development of pro-social relationships, increasing conflict resolution and anger management skills, and increasing family engagement. The agency's effort consists of:

- *Training on Gang/Crew Prevention and Intervention:* Progressive Life Center is coordinating the training and technical assistance portion of the initiative. DYRS and PLC are working with the Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Strengthening Collaborative (CHSFSC) to train over 300 DYRS and DC YouthLink staff on effective practices to work with gang/crew-involved youth. CHSFSC has developed a one-day training seminar that is being provided to staff at New Beginnings and the Youth Services Center, case managers, and DC YouthLink vendors. The training is focused on family group conferencing, solution-focused case management, identifying D.C. gang/crew signs and symbols, and assessment skills. The first series of training began in late February and will continue throughout May 2012.

CHSFSC is also facilitating a three-day intensive training for four community providers that will serve as Gang Intervention Specialists. This training focuses on developing participants' skills in assessment, solution focused case management, family group conferencing, as well as D.C. gang/crew culture and gang/crew signs and symbols. The training will equip the Gang Intervention Specialists with best practices from the field in keeping youth safe including partnering with school and community institutions, early interventions before incidents escalate, and supporting community intelligence efforts.

- *Gang/Crew Intervention and Prevention Programming at DYRS Facilities:* Additionally, DYRS is implementing gang intervention programming for youth at New Beginnings and YSC, using the Phoenix Curriculum which is an evidence-based gang prevention program. Phoenix resources are used in juvenile justice detention and residential facilities around the country, including in New Jersey, Arizona, New Mexico, West Virginia, New Hampshire, Virginia, and Georgia. The Phoenix Curriculum's Risks & Decisions Series contains the following modules: Friends and Peer Pressure, High Risk People and Places, Family Risk Factors including Drugs and Alcohol Addiction, Personal Risk Factors including Anger and Anger Triggers, and Internal Risk Factors including Negative Mindsets and Criminal Value Systems, and Thinking and Problem Solving. DYRS staff will be trained on the Phoenix curriculum, with services targeted to begin in late March.

- *Gang/Crew Intervention and Prevention Community-Based Services:* ERCPCP is coordinating the community-based gang/crew prevention and intervention efforts. As noted above, four service providers will serve as Gang Intervention Specialists responsible for providing intensive gang prevention/intervention services to 120 youth. The Gang Intervention Specialists will be responsible for conducting assessments, home visits, and the provision of intensive services. Included in the assessment will be the identification of gang affiliations, safety planning, as well as development of an Individual Plan and connections to ongoing Positive Youth Development Services in consultation with the DYRS Case Manager. Designated youth will be provided with 90 days of intensive gang prevention after-care services. Youth will be connected with GPS monitoring and will receive one-on-one mentoring including structured activities.

Gang Intervention Specialists will guide youth through activities in the Phoenix Curriculum, particularly those focused on anger management, conflict resolution, and peer pressure. The Specialists will also coordinate monthly family meetings to further engage the family in working in partnership with DYRS and DCYL to achieve the youth's goals. As part of this effort, Gang Intervention Specialists will implement re-entry strategies. Gang Intervention Specialists will be introduced to youth at New

Beginnings months prior to release in order to establish relationships and set expectations while in the community. The integration of after-care providers while youth are still in secure detention is a best practice in reentry planning and critical in the transition of youth from secure care to the community. The first cohort of youth for the community-based gang prevention services is currently being identified, and services are scheduled to begin in late March.

- *Tagging Elimination Procedures at DYRS Facilities:* DYRS has implemented aggressive tagging identification and elimination protocols at DYRS facilities. Tagging is not tolerated, and DYRS policies require staff to eliminate tagging immediately.
- *Intelligence Sharing with Law Enforcement:* DYRS continues to work in partnership with MPD on intelligence and information-sharing efforts. DYRS is in regular communication with MPD, and works jointly with public safety partners on efforts such as the High Intensity and Abscondence Recovery Units.

In an effort to ensure that gang prevention efforts are consistent and communicated appropriately within the agency and with our DC YouthLink partners, DYRS is establishing a Gang Prevention Workgroup. This workgroup will review agency gang prevention/intervention activities in both the facility and community, develop and update policies in reference to gang prevention, share intelligence specific to targeted neighborhoods or youth, and serve as the centralized point of information on DYRS and DC YouthLink activities relating to the goal of eliminating gang violence.

Improved Placement Decisions and Risk-Assessment Tools

Another key component of protecting communities is ensuring that DYRS placement decisions are thoughtful and adequately consider risk to public safety. To this end, DYRS has:

- *Re-Validated its Risk Assessment Tool:* DYRS placement decisions are guided by a data-driven Structured Decision Making (SDM) tool that assesses a youth's risk to the community based on factors such as offense severity, prior offenses, school discipline, and

peer relationships. In an effort to continually improve our placement decisions, DYRS partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) to review and re-validate our Structured Decision Making tool. Earlier this week, AECF and NCCD released the “Validation Study and System Assessment Report” which found that the SDM is valid. The report also recommended areas for improvement.

The report is available on the DYRS website. DYRS is evaluating the recommendations and intends to take immediate steps to improve the placement-decision making process.

Enhanced Collaboration with Public Safety Partners

DYRS works closely with MPD and other public safety partners to protect the community. Some of the ways DYRS has enhanced collaboration with public safety partners include:

- *Regular Communication with MPD:* DYRS regularly communicates with MPD, including weekly briefings at MPD headquarters. Additionally, DYRS sends a weekly report to MPD identifying youth with a history of serious offenses. This information is shared with precinct officers, so that they know which youth are entering or leaving their areas.
- *Participation in the Public Safety and Justice Agency Cluster Meetings:* DYRS maintains regular communication with the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, and attends Public Safety and Justice agency cluster meetings.
- *Participation in Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Meetings:* DYRS participates in joint meetings coordinated by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. Principals from public safety agencies in attendance at these meetings include officials from the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency, Pre-Trial Services Agency, United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, United States Sentencing Commission, MPD, Court Social Services, and the United States Marshal.

- *Interagency Incident Management Team:* In 2011, DYRS, in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, Metropolitan Police Department, Office of the Attorney General, Office of Risk Management, and the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, formed an Incident Management Team (IMT) to enable effective and efficient critical incident management. When a critical incident occurs, the IMT comes together to share critical information, review crisis responses, make recommendations on immediate next steps and review communication procedures.

II. What DYRS Is Doing to Make Sure that Youth Get the Services They Need

DYRS is working hard to ensure that youth receive the services they need in order to be productive members of the community. DYRS believes that youth are assets and resources to the community, and that with the right programs and supports they can develop to their full potential. To this end, DYRS strives to provide services that embody principles of Positive Youth Justice (PYJ), including the domains of public safety, work, education, health, relationships, community, and creativity.

DC YouthLink

In FY 2010, DYRS launched the DC YouthLink initiative, a coalition of community-based organizations that provide a network of resources, services, supports, and opportunities in community-based settings for committed youth and their families. Through DC YouthLink, which is led by East of the River Police Clergy Community Partnership and Progressive Life Center, youth are connected to approximately 40 community-based organizations that offer a

wide array of services, including:

- Academic support;
- GED preparation;
- Tutoring;
- Anger management;
- Substance abuse treatment;
- Physical activity;
- Job readiness;
- Arts enrichment;
- Civic engagement;
- Mentoring;
- Functional family therapy;
- Multi-systemic therapy; and
- Youth parenting classes.

Through DC YouthLink, DYRS youth in the community are receiving more services than ever before. I am pleased to report that in FY 2011, DC Youth Link served 756 youth in the community, and specifically connected:

- 265 youth to educational support like tutoring;
- 200 youth to job readiness training;
- 512 youth to a mentor; and
- 190 youth to health programming.

DC YouthLink continues to grow. In FY 2011, DC YouthLink expanded service linkages in all PYJ domains, including relationships, work, education, health, community and creativity. Com-

pared to FY2010, in FY 2011 there was:

- 27% growth in the number of youth served; and
- 63% growth in the service linkages per youth.

Additionally, we have reason to believe that DC YouthLink is enhancing public safety. FY 2011 showed improvements across several public safety outcomes for youth enrolled in DC YouthLink, including:

- 33% drop in the percent of youth on abscondence on any single day;
- 3% drop in the number of overall youth absconding; and
- 25% drop in the percent of youth having their community placement revoked.

DC YouthLink is also having an impact on the number of youth attending college. In FY 2011, 22 DYRS youth were enrolled in post-secondary education programs such as universities, colleges, community colleges, and technical schools.

Additional data and information on the DC YouthLink initiative can be found on the DYRS website in the DC YouthLink Quarterly Performance Reports. Earlier this week, DYRS published the report for the Fourth Quarter of FY 2011.

Office of Education and Workforce Development

DC YouthLink works in concert with the DYRS Office of Education and Workforce Development (OEWD) on education and workforce development services and programming.

OEWD develops and implements effective programs to support the agency's goal that committed youth be productively engaged. To achieve this goal, OEWD strives to provide committed youth with the appropriate services, supports, and opportunities within the community that promote education, work readiness, and employment. Achievement of OEWD goals has been accelerated by the receipt of the Department of Labor Young Offender State/Local Implementation Grant.

Between July 2009 and December 2011, OEWD served 355 committed youth. In that time, OEWD has accomplished the following achievements:

- *Work Readiness Training:* OEWD provided work readiness training for **234** youth. Additionally, in partnership with Sasha Bruce Youth Build, OEWD provided work readiness and occupational/apprenticeship skills training to **46** youth in areas such as barbering, construction, hospitality, green technologies and home health aide certifications;
- *Subsidized Internships:* OEWD placed **184** committed youth into subsidized paid internships and provided or arranged follow up assistance and support as needed (such as transportation assistance, clothing support, and job coaching). On-site training and subsidized opportunities are made possible by partnerships with the Office of the Mayor, Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Transportation, and Department of Public Works;
- *Post-Internship Employment:* OEWD assisted **28** youth in securing unsubsidized employment upon successful completion of internships by developing relationships with employers and assisting youth in negotiating the employment process;
- *Post-Secondary Assistance:* OEWD helped **16** youth enter post-secondary school, supported **44** youth in obtaining a GED, and **34** youth in obtaining a high school diploma. OEWD also helped **11** youth enroll in the University of the District of

Columbia/Community College High Tech Training Program to obtain certification and training in copper cable installation;

- *Educational Programming:* OEWD provided educational programs for **31** youth, **24** of whom obtained a high school diploma or GED, in partnership with the See Forever/Maya Angelou Academy; and
- *In-School Support:* OEWD provided intensive in-school support services for **75** youth, in partnership with the District Public Schools Office of Youth Engagement and Office of Special Education. OEWD worked directly with principals, counselors, registrars, and teachers to ensure that committed youth are successful academically and stay in school.

Educational Support and Services

In addition to the work by OEWD, DYRS has worked hard to improve the educational opportunities offered to young people in other ways. Some of accomplishments in education over the past year include:

- *Received recognition for the education program at New Beginnings:* The *Jerry M.* education evaluator found the Maya Angelou Academy at New Beginnings to be in compliance with the *Jerry M.* Consent Decree. She described the program as one of the best she had seen in a youth center, deeming the school's turnaround "remarkable." Subsequently the education program requirements for DC Model Unit youth were vacated by the D.C. Superior Court.
- *Enhanced services at the Maya Angelou Young Adult Learning Center (YALC):* In FY 2011, DYRS and the See Forever Foundation implemented an enhanced workforce programming and integrated learning program at YALC. This school-based workforce development program supports students' academic goals by offering GED preparation, while providing hands-on employment training and practical work experience. During

the 2010-2011 school year, YALC served 134 youth, 14 students earned GEDs, and three earned high school diplomas.

- *Developed partnerships with local universities:* This year DYRS partnered with local universities to provide expanded opportunities for New Beginnings residents. DYRS launched the Virginia State University Bridging program at New Beginnings which is designed to prepare residents for college and assist them with enrollment into Virginia State University. Students are given the chance to speak with Virginia State recruiters who provide them with the knowledge needed to prepare for the application process and possible enrollment.

Additionally, DYRS, in partnership with Virginia State University and the University of the District of Columbia, created an internship program which allows students at both universities to gain college credit by working directly with New Beginnings residents. Student internships include tutoring, conducting groups, coaching sports, and mentoring.

- *Increased health education at YSC and New Beginnings:* This year Metro Teen AIDS (MTA), a community health organization dedicated to supporting young people in the fight against HIV/AIDS, is providing health education services to youth residents at the Youth Services Center and New Beginnings. Through education, support, and advocacy, MTA works to prevent the spread of HIV, promote responsible decision making, and improve the quality of life for young people infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS.

Plans for Expanding Services

DYRS is in the process of expanding services offered to youth in the following key areas:

- Vocational training at New Beginnings;
- Workforce Development – Earn, Learn, and Grow program;
- Substance Abuse Treatment and Services;
- Parent and Family Services;
- Girls Programming; and
- Re-Entry Services

Vocational Training at New Beginnings

DYRS is currently broadening the types of vocational experiences available to youth placed at New Beginnings. This year DYRS brought on the DC Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (DC RAMP), through an Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Program grant, to conduct career-focused mentoring for youth at the facility. DC RAMP is providing career preparation-focused, peer-supported goal setting, and one-on-one mentor meetings with Individualized Mentoring Plans (IMPs). IMPs will include youth's personal, educational, career, and reentry goals, including related support services.

In addition to DC RAMP, DYRS is in the process of developing vocational training programs that will help youth receive real world job skills that will translate when they leave New Beginnings. DYRS is in the process of introducing vocational programs focusing on:

- Automotive training;
- Culinary arts;
- Barbering;
- Electronics;
- Music engineering; and
- Carpentry.

The automotive training will be provided by AYT Institute, Inc. They will provide three groups of four to six youth ages 17 to 20 with up to 120 hours of training and instruction.

The program prepares youth for Automotive Service of Excellence (ASE) certification in "Braking Systems" and "Suspension and Steering". The goal of the program is to prepare youth to transition into existing mechanic certification training or immediately transition into an entry level position in the industry.

The program curriculum, which is based upon ASE standards, will include the following:

- I. Braking System - This course will consist of 48 hours training on shop safety procedures; introduction to automotive braking systems; familiarization with components of the hydraulic braking system; and hydraulic system diagnostics and repair.
- II. Suspension and Steering – This course will consist of 48 hours training on shop safety procedures; introduction to automotive steering and suspension systems; familiarization with components of the steering and suspension.

Each module has specific outcomes that each participant is required to meet in order to continue to the next module and eventually complete the program. In addition to teaching the necessary skills, this program incorporates a firm attendance policy, service learning hours and experiential field trips (as appropriate).

The culinary arts program will be provided by Holder Enterprises. They will provide three groups of four to six youth ages 17 to 20 with up to 96 hours of training and instruction. Youth who successfully complete the culinary arts training are prepared to earn a nationally recognized food protection management credential, such as ServSafe of the National Environmental Health Association.

The program curriculum modules include the following:

- I. Food Code - Hand washing; employee illness; food handling techniques-avoiding bare hand contact; utensil washing-manual and mechanical; personal hygiene; thermometers; safe cooking; reheating; hot and cold holding; safe cooling; date marking; safe handling of raw animal foods; safe storage of raw animal foods; food surface sanitizing and food borne illness.
- II. Food Preparation and Dining - Fundamentals of cooking; principles of baking; continental cuisine; dining service; and personal and professional development.

The barbering training will be provided by Fresh Start. They will provide youth with the

necessary skills and knowledge for meeting the requirements of the District of Columbia State Barber Board. The program will serve approximately ten to twenty youth with a minimum of 120 hours of training which will enable them to focus on a career in the barbering profession.

Students who complete course requirements will receive certificates of completion from the New Beginnings Barbering and Stylist Training Program. The curriculum will include: shampoo; scalp treatments; haircutting and shaving; personal hygiene and sanitation; D.C. law; anatomy and physiology; bacteriology and pathology.

The music engineering program will be offered by Bring the Noise. Bring the Noise is a company that offers a range of technology programs to students. In each program students will be placed on “creative teams” and given various projects on which to work. Bring the Noise staff teach courses in music engineering, song-writing, film production, graphic design, and animation. All classes are taught by industry professionals who use industry-standard equipment.

Additionally, in March, the Maya Angelou Academy will provide courses and instruction on graphic design, and is scheduled to conduct a curriculum on electronics and carpentry in April. Maya Angelou Academy is also providing life skills and workforce development training.

Workforce Development - Earn, Learn and Grow Program

DYRS, in partnership with Progressive Life Center (PLC) and East of the River Police Clergy Community Partnership (ERCPCP), is also developing a comprehensive program focusing on workforce development. The Earn, Learn, and Grow (ELG) Program provides youth with job readiness training, career development and exposure, and subsidized work experiences in green jobs. The program also aims to assist youth to attain permanent job placements or enrollments in continuing education or the military. The ELG program began in March 2012 and will continue through September 2012.

The program will serve up to 50 DYRS youth in two 25 person cohorts. Eligible youth are those who are 18 years or older, with or without a high school diploma, who are able to work 30 hours a week and are interested in career exploration, particularly in green industries. Youth will be

paid for their participation in training and work at \$8.25/hour.

At orientation, youth are administered an assessment to test their basic skills in reading and math. Youth will also complete a career assessment using the ONET tool developed by the Department of Labor. Using the results of both of these assessments, an Individual Development Plan will be developed for each participating youth.

Following orientation, job readiness training will be provided to youth for 30 hours a week for up to four weeks. Pendergrast Alston Consulting (PAC) will facilitate the job readiness training and focus on preparing youth for work, providing youth job seekers with the necessary pre-employment skills, and promoting job retention and advancement. Youth participating in job readiness training will develop the following skill sets: workforce preparation skills including dress for success, attitude, and work ethic, communication skills including listening essentials, body language, and conflict resolution, interpersonal skills, life management skills including timeliness, support system development, and resource management, decision-making skills including problem solving, managing anger, and assertiveness, and customer service skills including courtesy, telephone etiquette, and handling customer complaints. In total, youth will receive approximately 120 hours of job readiness training prior to transitioning into the subsidized work experience component. Each youth will be expected to have attended at least 85% of the job readiness trainings in order to be eligible to participate in subsidized work experience. Ongoing drug testing is a program requirement and youth must be drug-free for continued participation in the program.

Youth without a high school diploma will be required to participate in supplemental educational services through the DCYL Service Coalition or through other community providers. Those who are in an existing program will receive supplemental tutoring services through one of the DCYL providers.

Once youth complete the job readiness training, they will be divided into work crews and participate in subsidized work experiences that will introduce them to a variety of careers, including those in green industries. Each career module will focus on a career path in various industries and will provide training opportunities to connect with professionals in the fields, and relevant entry-level work experience opportunities. The planned career modules include

landscaping, environmental sciences, and weatherization. DYRS has developed partnerships with the Office on Aging, the Department of Environment, and the Department of Public Works to assist in this effort. The Department of the Environment will provide subject matter experts to assist our work crews in learning about environmental sciences and provide guidance on specific work projects. The Office on Aging and the Department of Public Works will provide specific beautification projects that our youth can do to assist seniors and/or to beautify community “green” spaces. Youth will participate in subsidized work experiences for up to six months for 30 hours a week.

Weekly, by work crew, youth will participate in a one-day supplemental trainings that reinforce the job readiness concepts discussed in the initial training and that provide youth with an opportunity to process the events of the week and what worked and did not work. This weekly training will be facilitated by PAC.

Beginning in July 2012, ELG youth will receive intensive services focused on locating permanent employment or enrollment in college, vocational training, or the military. PAC will meet with youth weekly as a group and individually throughout the weeks to finalize resumes, schedule mock interviews, complete applications, provide job leads, and/or explore and enroll youth in vocational training programs including those coordinated by local non-profits and approved Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training providers. Upon employment placement, PAC will provide retention support including weekly check-ins and continued relevant trainings. Youth who need additional support and have not obtained employment or enrolled in school by the end of September will be linked to ongoing workforce development services offered through DCYL and DYRS.

Substance Abuse Treatment and Services

DYRS is working to expand the continuum of substance abuse treatment and services to youth in the agency’s care. DYRS is focused on three key areas: substance abuse assessments; in-patient services; and community-based services.

Substance Abuse Assessments

DYRS is exploring ways to increase the number of youth receiving comprehensive substance abuse assessments. The agency has identified a vendor to train behavioral health staff at New Beginnings and YSC, along with other DYRS staff, to conduct the comprehensive Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN-I) instrument. Once trained, DYRS staff will be able to assess youth residents at New Beginnings and YSC using the GAIN-I tool. Expanding internal capacity in this manner will enable the agency to better guide treatment and development plans with regard to substance abuse.

Additionally, DYRS is working hard to ensure that youth in the community also receive appropriate substance abuse assessments. DYRS connects youth who demonstrate substance abuse treatment needs, including youth who test positive for illegal substances, to APRA-certified ASTEP providers for assessment and services. DYRS regularly requires youth in the community to drug test as a condition of their community release.

In-Patient Substance Abuse Services

DYRS is also looking to expand the universe of in-patient substance abuse facilities serving youth committed to the agency. The agency has submitted to the Office of Contracting and Procurement an RFP for a program that offers in-patient substance abuse treatment beds, and focuses on addressing core issues of addiction, prevention, and treatment.

Community-based Services

DYRS is working to further develop and enhance the substance abuse programming available in the community as well. East of the River Clergy Police Community Partnership (ERCPCP) has launched a Center of Excellence to address the substance abuse needs of youth in the community. The Youth in Focus: Exodus House (YIFEH) Residential Recovery Program is a program based on evidence-based practices designed specifically to meet the needs of DYRS youth with substance use disorders. The program's mission is to provide a comprehensive continuum of quality enrichment for youth and families, whose needs can best be met by targeted substance

abuse treatment and family therapy services in a safe and structured environment.

YIFEH will serve cohorts of six youth for periods of four months. The program will operate twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week, and will house youth between the ages of 15 to 17 years old, and who have been assessed at the American Society of Addiction Medicine Placement Levels I or II. YIFEH will be led by a Clinical Director, and the program has partnered with Hillcrest, an Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration certified ASTEP provider, to provide in-house substance abuse treatment. The program will begin serving youth in March.

The YIFEH model is based on several evidence-based models shown to be effective in the juvenile justice populations. These models include Living in Balance substance abuse treatment model, Across Ages mentoring model, and the CHOICE wraparound services model. Each model is an evidence-based practice shown to be effective in this target population by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs (OJJDP) and SAMHSA's National Registry of Effective and Promising Programs (NREPP). The YIFEH program also incorporates Rites of Passage activities designed to promote self-esteem, self-reliance, self-determination, and hope, and incorporates principles of Functional Family Therapy which seeks to prepare families for reunification and involves systemic skill-training in communication, parenting, and conflict management.

YIFEH will address the substance abuse needs of the youth by providing structured substance abuse treatment services and additional supportive services designed to help youth reintegrate into their communities. The wrap-around services offered will include counseling, life and social skills training, educational enrichment opportunities, job readiness, recreational activities, and other services designed to enable youth to successfully matriculate their new environment, and to ultimately develop and grow into well-rounded, productive citizens. In addition, family reunification is a critical component of the program. Both the youth and the family members will sign a contract with YIFEH to ensure compliance with all program elements and personal investment by the participants and their families. Additional program activities include:

- Community service: YIFEH will ensure that youth are paired with community-based organizations to regularly perform community service.
- Social competence training: YIFEH will use the Social Problem Solving Module of the Social Competence Promotion program.
- Family activities: YIFEH will organize regular family events for youth, families, mentors, and loved ones.

The overall goal of this program is to provide an opportunity for DYRS committed youth to address their substance abuse issues within a structured treatment environment, rebuild their relationships with their families and guardians, prepare their home environment for successful reunification, facilitate their matriculation in an academic setting; and facilitate their successful transition to substance abuse aftercare treatment and wraparound services. Secondary goals include increasing knowledge of the consequences of incarceration, gang involvement and substance use and to help youth avoid later substance use by teaching them appropriate resistance behavior. More specific goals include treating the substance abuse addiction of the youth, improving the youth social skills and social responsibility, teaching positive coping skills, improving and demonstrating a commitment to school, improving positive problem solving skills, and providing positive cultural and recreational activities

Parent and Family Services

DYRS values the critical role parents and families play in the rehabilitation of young people. The DYRS Parent and Family Liaison is working to expand parent and family services in concert with community-based organizations such as ParentWatch. DYRS currently provides parents and families with:

- *Resources*: DYRS provides parents with a variety of educational resources and information, including but not limited to the Directory of Youth Resources from the Public Defender Service and the DC Lawyers for Youth Parent Handbook.

- *Community-Based Services:* DC YouthLink connects youth and families to services that support the home. Evidence-based programs such as Multi-Systemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy provide valuable and intensive support to families.

- *Opportunities for Involvement in Service and Placement Planning:* DYRS values family involvement in the placement and service decision making process for youth. The DYRS Youth Family Team Meeting process provides parents and loved ones of youth to provide input and assist in the development of service plans.

- *Transportation to DYRS Facilities:* DYRS provides parents and family members of youth residents at New Beginnings with transportation to the facility in Laurel, Maryland. DYRS offers transportation on the weekends and major holidays.

Girls Programming

DYRS is dedicated to expanding the breadth and quality of services available to girls committed to the agency. Recent initiatives include:

- *University-Based Girls Program:* In FY 2011, DYRS implemented a University-Based Girls Program (Worthington House), a local, staff-secure, residential treatment and re-entry initiative for eight committed girls ages 15-20. Through a partnership with Howard University, girls in this program receive a host of services.

- *Alternative Solutions for Youth:* In FY 2011, DYRS began utilizing the services of a local locked and staff-secure residential program in Southeast, Alternative Solutions for Youth

(ASY), to house girls who are awaiting their next placements. ASY serves as an alternative to secure detention for committed females.

- *New Day II Transitional House for Females:* I am pleased to announce that earlier this week DYRS also began utilizing the services of New Day II, a therapeutic transition housing program for females. The program, located in Southeast, provides gender-specific programming, and provides 24-hour on-site monitoring, curfews, and drug testing.

Re-Entry Services

DYRS is committed to greatly improving re-entry and transitional services for youth placed in secure confinement and residential treatment programs. We are implementing two new initiatives as well as focusing more agency resources on this area.

- *HomeQuest Program:* This year DYRS youth who are placed at the VisionQuest residential program in Pennsylvania, and their families, will participate in the HomeQuest program. The HomeQuest model focuses heavily on improving family functioning and supporting a successful and safe return to the community. This is accomplished by 1) intensive family intervention beginning at the time of a youth's placement; 2) focused and intensive treatment of the youth in placement; and 3) intensive re-entry services that build on the VisionQuest residential interventions and programs. Once youth return to the District from the VisionQuest residential program, HomeQuest staff provide a large number of services including Family Functional Therapy, trauma informed care, aggression replacement therapy, life skills, daily monitoring, weekly group activities and curfew checks.
- *Bridge Builders Aftercare Program for Excellence:* In upcoming months, DYRS youth will benefit from a new innovative community-based program focused on re-entry. Administered by Progressive Life Center and leveraging the services provided through DC YouthLink, the Bridge Builders Aftercare Program for Excellence is a 12 month program

that begins at New Beginnings, transitions with the youth to a community residential center, and follows the youth when they return to their families. The program will incorporate Positive Youth Justice principles and provide services across all Positive Youth Justice domains.

III. What is DYRS doing to operate efficiently and transparently, and to take care of its staff?

DYRS is dedicated to being a good steward of public funds by continually improving its effectiveness in operations, management, finances, and administration of services and programs. The agency is also committed to being transparent about its work, and to ensuring that staff are taken care of and receive opportunities for development. In FY2011, DYRS launched a number of initiatives to promote effective agency management in the following areas:

- Transparency;
- Data-Driven Management;
- Fiscal Stability;
- Safe Facilities;
- Staff Development; and
- Staff Appreciation.

Transparency

As an agency responsible for serving the citizens of the District of Columbia, there are a number of ways that DYRS is held accountable for its performance, management, and administration of services. DYRS is committed to continuing to be transparent about operations, programming, and services. Recent efforts include:

- *Annual Report*: As I discussed, earlier this week DYRS issued the agency's first ever Annual Report which offers a comprehensive look into the agency. The report is available on the DYRS website.

- *DC YouthLink Quarterly Performance Reports:* DYRS also produces comprehensive reviews of DC YouthLink on a quarterly basis. Reports from the third and fourth quarters of FY 2011 are also online.
- *SDM Validation Study:* As I noted earlier, the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) recently conducted a review of the DYRS Structured Decision Making tool. The study, entitled, “Validation Study and System Assessment Report” is available on the DYRS site.
- *Jerry M.:* DYRS receives oversight from the Special Arbiter in the *Jerry M.* consent decree. I am proud to announce that during FY 2011, the Court vacated three Work Plan requirements, related primarily to educational services at New Beginnings and exercise requirements for youth at both DYRS facilities. These vacated requirements more than double the number of indicators that have been removed from the Work Plan since the inception of the *Jerry M.* lawsuit.

Data-Driven Management

The agency asks its managers to make data-driven decisions, and does its best to provide them with tools and information to enable this. Data-driven initiatives include:

- *YouthStat:* The YouthStat process provides a platform for consistent and regularized course correction for performance strategies. Initiated in January of 2009, YouthStat is a performance management system based on the CompStat model, and is dedicated to the principles of data-driven decision making, thoughtful experimentation, continuous improvement, and relentless follow-up. It is built around frequent, regularized meetings between executive staff. These discussions focus on fixing performance deficits through creative, targeted interventions.

- *Performance based-Standards:* Administered by the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators, Performance based-Standards (PbS) is an evaluation tool that benchmarks performance of juvenile justice facilities around the nation. DYRS participates in PbS.

Fiscal Stability

DYRS has undertaken a number of initiatives to ensure fiscal stability and compliance with regulations, including:

- *Medicaid Billing Reform Taskforce:* In partnership with the Department of Health Care Finance and other District agencies, DYRS established a task force to vigorously pursue Medicaid funding. This initiative will allow important services to continue while leveraging existing federal funds and reducing the overreliance on local funding.
- *Federal funding and Foundation Grants:* As I mentioned earlier, DYRS secured an Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Program grant to develop DC RAMP, a career-focused mentoring program at New Beginnings. Additionally, DYRS continues to use Department of Labor grant funds for education and workforce development programming.
- *Small Business Enterprise requirements:* In FY 2011, DYRS fully complied with DC Department of Small and Local Business Development requirements on expenditures on small business enterprises (SBEs). More than 50% of the DYRS expendable budget was spent on SBEs.

Safe Facilities

DYRS has made great strides to ensure that agency facilities are safe for staff and youth. Accomplishments include:

- *New Beginnings Security Enhancements:* DYRS has taken a number of measures to enhance security at New Beginnings. I am pleased to report that earlier this week the construction efforts to replace unit and facility doors with detention-grade hollow metal doors was successfully completed. DYRS expects that the installation of the new doors will have a significant positive impact on facility operations and safety. Other security measures include the addition of lighting in particular areas of the facility, installation of new monitors in the control room, and installation of a lobby guard system for identification of visitors. DYRS has also implemented policies that provide for additional security at New Beginnings, including having a Manager on Duty, improved communication at roll call, daily incident briefings of the Superintendent, and a newly updated search and contraband prevention policy. DYRS formed a Security and Safety Council tasked with reviewing security measures and making recommendations for improvement. Additionally, DYRS has worked with the Department of Corrections (DOC) to conduct canine searches at New Beginnings, and earlier this week DYRS and DOC entered into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding periodic drug and unauthorized cell phone checks at New Beginnings with the use of canines.

DYRS is committed to continuing to improve the safety and security of our facilities and staff. In the upcoming months we will be making additional security upgrades, including issuing personal security devices to our direct care staff.

- *Population Management:* Through improved data-sharing between DYRS and sister agencies, the average daily population at YSC has sharply declined. During FY 2011, YSC was over its 88-bed capacity only 4% of the year and had zero days during which the population exceeded 100 youth. This is a marked turnaround since FY 2010, when YSC operated above capacity during 55% of the year and had populations exceeding 100

youth during 32% of the year. DYRS has also reduced administrative barriers and increased efficiencies to lower the awaiting placement population at New Beginnings. The average length of time a youth spent in awaiting placement status decreased from 16.9 days in FY 2009 to 7.4 days in FY 2011.

Staff Development

DYRS is committed to ensuring that staff have opportunities for growth and professional development. Staff development programs and initiatives include:

- *Training:* The DYRS Office of Training and Professional Development provides over 60 types of training to staff, including programs on leadership development, professional development, computer skills, and DYRS policies and procedures. Each new Youth Development Representative receives 119 hours of training, and staff also receive specialized training in Advancing Youth Development and Navigating Youth Culture. In FY 2011, DYRS provided over 300 training events to staff, totaling approximately 14,000 training hours.
- *Leadership Academy:* DYRS implemented the agency's first ever Leadership Academy, a six month training program focused on developing future leaders of the agency. DYRS partnered with the George Washington Center for Excellence in Public Leadership to provide the training. In FY 2011, 12 DYRS staff graduated from the Academy, and each earned 4.8 Continuing Education Units (CEUs).
- *Case Management University:* DYRS developed a training program specifically for case managers. The Case Management University focuses on developing skills of case managers including motivational interviewing, caseload management, ethics, and professionalism.

Staff Appreciation

DYRS values the contributions of its employees, and believes that staff should be recognized for their hard work. Staff appreciation initiatives include:

- *Alternative Work Schedules:* Earlier this week, DYRS announced a new voluntary Alternative Work Schedule program for staff. The program allows eligible staff to structure their work schedules in a manner more compatible with their needs outside of DYRS. The program provides for two types of Alternative Work Schedules: (1) FlexTime Schedules, which allows any set arrangement of eight work hours between certain hours of the day, Monday through Friday; and (2) Compressed Work Schedules, which permit staff to work eight nine-hour work days and one eight-hour day in a biweekly pay period.
- *New Beginnings Staff Appreciation:* New Beginnings administration has implemented a number of staff appreciation programs and initiatives, including the Employee of the Month program, quarterly town hall meetings, and regular recognition ceremonies. New Beginnings also formed a Human Relations Council that focuses on improving the quality of the work environment.
- *Youth Services Center Staff Appreciation:* Youth Services Center administration also works hard to let staff know they are appreciated. YSC hosts “Thank You Thursdays” to celebrate staff accomplishments and birthdays and organizes, regularly brings in outside vendors for health and wellness, and financial literacy fairs, and in the last year has greatly improved the quality of the staff lounge at the facility.

Conclusion

I firmly believe that DYRS is working hard to protect the public, ensure that youth receive the services they need, and operate as an efficient and transparent agency that cares for its staff. I am heartened by the numerous stories of DYRS youth who have overcome significant challenges to complete their education, get jobs, attend college, and become productive members of the community. I am also inspired by the tireless efforts of DYRS staff on behalf of youth and families in the District.

While I am proud of our successes, more work remains. We must not and will not rest until we achieve our mission of rehabilitating young people and protecting the community. In the upcoming year, DYRS looks forward to continue striving to be the best juvenile justice agency in the country, one of which all District residents can be proud.