

Inside YCS

A NEWSLETTER
BY AND FOR ALL YCS EMPLOYEES



VOLUME 11 | JULY 2023

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Cover Photo: Djabia Axelle M-S Kablansi,, YCS H.R. Data Analyst



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President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

As we put this issue of *Inside YCS* to rest, we have one last chance to look back at all our program accomplishments and colleagues' achievements over the past three months. The 2022 fiscal year has ended, but if the adage "endings prophesize new beginnings" is true, then we can expect many more wonderful achievements in the current fiscal year.



Tara Augustine

It is an exciting time at YCS. This past spring, we were awarded RFPs to open two new I/DD homes, received several significant grants to expand mental health and autism services for young children at the Institute, and secured a new, cost/time saving accounting program called Oracle. (pp. 23, 24) Our frontline staff is also stepping up and introducing new ideas at their sites. Please check out program innovations by the Southern Region Treatment Home program and a joint project originated by Sayre House and Cooper's Crossing staff. Their fresh ideas may inspire some new ideas of your own. (pp. 21, 21)

As always, the "Leading with Heart" section of our newsletter captures the sincerity and true heartfelt efforts by our staff and makes YCS such a special place to work. A model example of this is Esther Edwards, Holley Campus R.A. For more than 24 years, Esther's passion to give the children on the campus new experiences has not diminished in the least. (p.18)

There are many more new initiatives currently "under construction" to ensure that your work experience at YCS is fulfilling. Look for updates to follow in the next few weeks.

I know many of you are now taking much needed vacation time to reconnect with family and friends. It is a great season to enjoy the outdoors and restore your body and spirits.

With my sincerest wishes for your health and safety,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tara".

What's the theme of your program's gift basket for YCS' Charity Golf Classic Auction?

It will be lots of fun to see who comes up with the most creative ideas and which baskets are the big winners.

Bonus! Last year, guests were so generous when it came to bidding on baskets donated by our staff that we raised a lot more money.



Baskets from GW School

This year, the program's basket that gets the highest bid will receive a prize (TBD).

*****All proceeds from the outing will benefit Allied Services throughout the agency*****

Look for more details to follow in an e mail from the Foundation

Welcome New Employees

New Employees who have completed 90 days, April - June 2023

Abarca, Katherine Personal Assistant DDD-Morris	Blouin, Michelle-Dominique Benefits Coordinator Human Resources	Diaz, Kaitlyn Teacher Aide Sawtelle Learning Center	Goldsboro, Kimberly Nurse LPN DDD-Buena Vista
Adote, Shaniyah F. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Phoenix	Bockowski Ph.D., Frank C. Chief Financial Officer Exec Administration	Diaz, Lisa Teacher Assistant Sawtelle Learning Center	Graham, Nayisha Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Lawnridge
Ajifowowe, Olatomide Personal Assistant DDD-Apts Thomas	Bowers, Shakeerah P. Personal Assistant DDD-Greenbrook	Elanani, Sandra Youth Development Specialist 21st Century Program	Green, Kelly SRT Behavioral Assist SRT NR.
Alvarez, Nicole Clinical Director Regional Administration	Brown, Clifton Residential Assistant DCF-SPEC Kilbarchan	Ellerbee, Keyana Teacher Aide -Sawtelle Learning Center	Guerrero, Laura M. Home Visitor Parents as Teachers
Atkinson, Anita Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Davis	Burke, Tarsi Personal Assistant DDD-Toledo	Fischer, Amber Residential Assistant DCF-RTC Kilbarchan	Haley, Rodha, LPN Health Svc-Res. N.R.
Auten, Sonya Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Haddon Heights	Casey, Danielle SRT Behavioral Assistant SRT N.R..	Foster, Kayla Personal Assistant DDD-Greenbrook	Hill, Ashley N. Intake Coordinator Ops - Intake Services
Bastidas, Stephanie Nurse RN Home Visitor NFP Morris	Codiot, Guerdine Personal Assistant DDD-Greenbrook	Francis, Shantel Teacher Aide Sawtelle Learning Center	Hill, Tiffany Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Laurie Haven
Berry Jr., James Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Fisher Hall	Davidson, Aqueelah A. Personal Assistant DDD-Greenbrook	Friday, Khalah Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Vineland	Holman, Cheryl A. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Fisher Hall

Welcome New Employees

Hopkins, Breyon A. Personal Assistant DCF-CSAP Hammonton	McMillan, Janae Personal Assistant DDD-Morris	Robinson, MiYahna L. Personal Assistant DDD-Morris	Torres, Madelin Program Director DCF-CSAP Winslow
Hughes Jr., Charles Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Vineland	Mercer Jr., Edward W. Technology Mgr Assist Info Technology	Rogers, Keyona Case Manager DCF-RTC Kilbarchan	Turner, Devin R. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Fisher Hall
Jackson, Courtney Personal Assistant DDD - Cavan House	Miller, Jamil SRT Behavioral Assist SRT S.R.	Samms, Sherone Teacher Aide Sawtelle Learning Center	Umana, Digna M. Personal Assistant DDD-Apts Supvr Buffalo
Johnson, James A. Personal Assistant DDD-Absecon	Northern, Atiyah Personal Assistant DDD-Echo Hill	Sanders, Shamees Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Davis	Vilela, Crystal S. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Bright Start
Kaplan, Elyse Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Fisher Hall	Oates, Shantay Personal Assistant DDD-Emergency Capacity Haledon	Sotomayor, Brittany C. Personal Assistant DDD-Absecon	Way, Courtlynn Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Haddon Heights
Knowles, Malaysia Teacher Assistant Sawtelle Learning Center	Peeples, Tiffany Residential Assistant DCF-IRTS Holley Muller	Steward, Kareese Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Fisher Hall	Williams, Shray Nurse RN DDD-Buena Vista
Lloyd, Rashad Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Davis	Pierre, Guerdy Teacher Aide Sawtelle Learning Center	Stott, Thomas Maintenance Worker Facilities - N	Wright, TiAsha Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Phoenix
Lydon, Cynthia Residential Assistant DCF-IRTS Holley Muller	Robinson, Lehtisha Residential Assistant DCF-RTC Holley	Toone, Asha Teacher Aide Sawtelle Learning Center	

Y C S' Pledge to You

We will make sure every employee is...

Prepared with all the knowledge needed to fulfill their work responsibilities.

Equipped with ongoing training and tools to be successful at their work.

Supported with guidance and direction from supervising staff for their professional growth.

Shout Outs

¡TO ALL OUR AMAZING EMPLOYEES!

- **Kyle Wdzieczkowski** is doing an amazing job as Sayre's nurse! She goes above and beyond for everyone & Sayre is truly so lucky to have her!
- Sayre Intern **Emily Miller** for doing such an amazing job!! Emily has been working with one of our youth who was recently discharged, and she truly made such a significant impact on their life!
- **Dina Sundberg** is such a ray of sunshine! We always enjoy having meetings with her at Sayre House because of her positivity!
- **Anthony Raymond** - TX Homes Recruiter, for his determination and ongoing dedication to recruit new families. Anthony's goal for the 2022/2023 fiscal year was to open at least 3 homes. Anthony surpassed this goal and successfully opened 5 new licensed homes in the Southern Region! Congratulations Anthony!!!
- **Tina DeVico Price**, Sr. VP of Business Affairs for making a successful presentation to the Somerset County Council and securing unanimous approval for CDBG funds for renovations projects at YCS DD residences in Bridgewater Township.
- **Ed Mercer**, new member of the I.T. Team, for creating a green thumb section on the employee website and helping us with all our I.T. requests.

Congratulations to Nurtured Heart
Spring Contest Winner!

Sara J. Eisenhuth, LSW,OTR/L
Cedarbrook Home Clinician



Promotions

**CONGRATULATIONS! YOU INSPIRE US ALL TO MOVE FORWARD
& KEEP WORKING TOWARDS OUR GOALS.**

Ebenezer Abuchi, Campus Director, Holley Center

Christinia Bell, System Analyst, Info Management Systems

Korey Clark, VP Program Operations, DD North Services

Yesenia Fulgencio, Regional Director, DD North Services

Rayletta Garrison, SVP Office of Operation, Regional Administration

Erin McCloskey, CIO Office of Operation, Executive Administration

Nalesha D. Reed, Shift Supervisor, DCF-IRTS Holley Muller

Samantha Sampson, Program Director, DCF-PCH Cooper's Crossing

Amanada D. Thomas, Shift Supervisor, DDD-Absecon

Tyanna Wilson, House Manager, DDD Echo Hill

*"The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."
~ Thomas A. Edison*

Work Anniversaries

<i>Congratulations!</i>	25 YEARS	20 YEARS
	Mary Jane Askew, APN IRTS	Gloria Ross Laurie Haven Jami Fields Human Resources
15 YEARS	10 YEARS	5 YEARS
Pamela C Pressley S.R.Admin. Faheemah Walton Nursing	Jorge A. Montanez Murillo Institute Anwar Mghari Nursing Pia Anjelica P. Ababon P.A.T Jean E. Toussaint Forest Home Kadijatu Saccoh Greenbrook Home	Rafael Hernandez N.R. Facilities John H. Brooks Phoenix House Karen White Winslow Home Kristina Garcia Vineland Home Temitayo Esan Thomas Home Morgan S. Boyer Sewell Home Daphne Louis Malcolm House Caliegh Anderson Blackwood Cardinal Johnson Burning Bush
<p><i>The pride and joy of any organization are its workers, and we are fortunate to acknowledge all of you as our treasured co-workers on your work anniversary.</i></p> <p><i>Day in and day out, you continue to shine.</i></p> <p><i>Your devotion and dedication to our mission is a rare gift.</i></p>		
<p><i>Thank you!</i></p>		

Milestones

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Camden Home clinician **Robert Schmus** conducted a workshop at Massachusetts Self Advocates Standing Strong 25th Annual Self-Advocacy Conference.

Jorge Montanez Murillo, program administrator for NFP & PAT was named vice president of the NJ Association of Infant Mental (NJAIM) after serving for 5 years as the association's treasurer.

Denisha Givens Laurie Haven shift supervisor, graduated with a Master's in Psychology from Kean University.

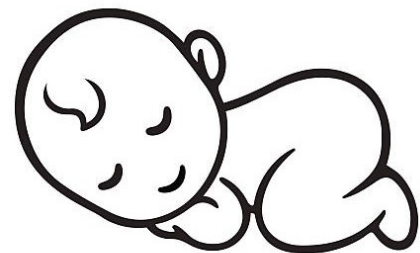


SRT supervisors **Raphael Lee, Senica Rogers, Lynette Sheard, Laverne Williams, Jonquea Walker** and **Dawn Atkins** successfully completed Mental Health First Aid Responders Training.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Seby George, Laurie Haven clinician, became the proud grandfather to Luke Thomas born on June 9, 2023.

Chaplain **William Waller**, is the proud grandfather of Gianna who was born on July 18th, 2023.



Employee Spotlight

Djabia Axelle M-S Kablansi
Human Resources Data Analyst

***When did you start working at YCS?
What was your initial job?***

I started working at YCS on February 14th, 2022. Prior to this opportunity, I was actively pursuing my master's degree in Analytics at Montclair State University. This educational experience equipped me with a solid foundation and deep understanding of the field, preparing me well for my current role at YCS.



What were the challenges you faced?

When starting my new position as a data analyst with the organization, I encountered a few notable challenges. Firstly, adapting to a new environment, and understanding the organization's mission, values, and goals, required a learning curve. Additionally, I had to familiarize myself with a new system for data collection, analysis, and reporting. However, I embraced these challenges by actively collaborating with team members through the UKG online community, taking relevant courses, and conducting independent research to enhance my knowledge.

Can you tell us a little about your journey from the Ivory Coast to USA, how has this shaped your view of your job?

My journey from the Ivory Coast of Africa to the USA, seven years ago, has completely transformed my life. Although it hasn't been easy being far away from my family, it has taught me valuable lessons about independence and determination. I've discovered the importance of relying on myself and putting in hard work to accomplish my goals. Those lessons have influenced how I perceive my job and understand the significance of creating a welcoming work environment where everyone feels included. I am forever grateful to my parents for providing me with this great opportunity to come here, and I want to express a special thanks to my big brother Jean, who has always been there for me and whose support has been invaluable on this journey of mine.

Employee Spotlight

What about your job that gives you the greatest satisfaction?

What I find most satisfying about my job as an HRIS Data Analyst is the opportunity to work with data and derive meaningful insights from it. I enjoy digging into the numbers, setting up the code and creating reports, analyzing and identifying patterns that help improve our HR processes and decision-making for the company. Being able to contribute to data-driven solutions that positively impact the organization and its employees gives me a great sense of accomplishment and fulfillment.

What do you want folks to know about the HR Department?

The HR Department plays a crucial role in our organization. We are dedicated to ensuring the well-being and development of our employees. From recruiting and onboarding to employee engagement and performance management, our team strives to create a supportive and growth-oriented work environment. Personally, I feel incredibly fortunate to be part of such an amazing HR team where everyone collaborates harmoniously.

What are your future professional goals?

My future professional goals include further developing my leadership skills and contributing to the growth and success of YCS. I also aspire to pursue additional certifications and expand my knowledge in the field to stay updated with the latest industry trends and best practices.



“Djabia helps YCS by creating workforce metrics that assist management and operations to create programs and processes to help our employees succeed. Djabia is very hard working and always pitches in wherever needed. She works well with her colleagues and always has a calm and kind presence.” Steve Kessler, CHRO

Intern Corner

Giuliana Stillo, M.A.

Doctoral Psychology Intern at the YCS institute

I found my way to the YCS Institute as a student looking for clinical training opportunities with children, and I first joined as a psychology extern in 2020. Not only did I get exposure to infant mental health, but I also learned about providing telehealth services amidst demands for remote work throughout the COVID 19 pandemic. I was excited to learn that YCS would be offering training opportunities for interns again during the 2022-2023 year and made the decision to apply for their year-long doctoral internship.

From previous experiences at YCS, I knew I would likely have opportunities to continue my training in infant and early childhood mental health while receiving reflective supervision to support my learning and work with clients. I was hoping to have an internship that supported these pre-existing interests, while also providing the opportunity to work in a supportive, full-time clinical setting.

After completing the year, I feel I have learned a tremendous amount from a clinical, professional, and personal standpoint. I have had a diverse range of experiences, providing clinical services like therapy and assessment, while also providing and engaging in peer supervision,

didactics, and case conferences. I also co-lead a group focused on self-regulation through my rotation at Montclair State University's Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health (CAECMH).

The opportunities for learning and growth at the Institute have exceeded my expectations, and it has been such a privilege to see my clients' growth over this time.



Intern Corner

My experience with the culture at the Institute has aligned with this reputation. Even as an extern working remotely during the pandemic, I felt very supported by the staff. This year's training cohort of interns and externs was enjoyable. I feel like I got to know them well, and I learned a lot from them considering our diverse backgrounds.

There has been a lot of support in exploring future opportunities here at YCS. I will be continuing my work with children and families, with a specific focus on providing services to young children with autism. I am hoping to continue to get to know more YCS staff members in this time too. It is exciting to know I will have the opportunity to continue working with YCS, while continuing in my clinical training, and hopefully contributing to the growing support for infant mental health across New Jersey.



"We are thrilled that Giuliana has accepted our invitation to be highlighted in YCS' summer newsletter. Giuliana is very special to the Institute. She has been with us as a doctoral extern and intern and has gone beyond support and advocacy for her clients. When one child was having difficulty in school, Giuliana helped his teachers implement strategies in the classroom to address his needs and support his strengths. She has recently transitioned to a postdoctoral fellow and will provide DIRFloortime therapy as the Institute's lead clinician." Christina Colon, Institute AVP

Graduations



Family, friends, and guests gathered at GW (George Washington) School to celebrate all the students graduating from the 8th grade and moving on to high school. New principal **Dr. Tatum Stein** congratulated all the students and praised them for the resiliency and determination that they demonstrated at GW. "Each graduate has the incredible potential to positively impact their community and beyond. I know because each of these students has already left an indelible mark on GW school," said Dr. Stein.

Shout out to the Foundation for securing funds to create this beautiful event from the Hackensack Fire Fighters IAFF Local 2081 and Hackensack Rotary

Graduations



Congratulations to all the Intern and Extern Institute graduates.
We wish you all the best as you pursue careers in your chosen fields!

VINELAND YOUTH ATTEND PROM



Three youths from our Vineland Home were all excited to go shopping for their prom outfits, and enjoyed getting prepped on the big day. One youth was dressed and ready to go by 2 pm, even though the prom didn't start until 6PM.

They all returned and said that it all went well. They danced the night away and fully enjoyed themselves.

The prom was organized by the DCF school where the youths attend.

Passion Bennett-Kennedy, P.D.

Graduations



“The Vineland Home program would like to congratulate **Diego Depalma**, who graduated high school on June 19th. Everyone at the program is very proud of Diego and the progress he has made not only in the program, but at school as well.”

- Brad Vetterly

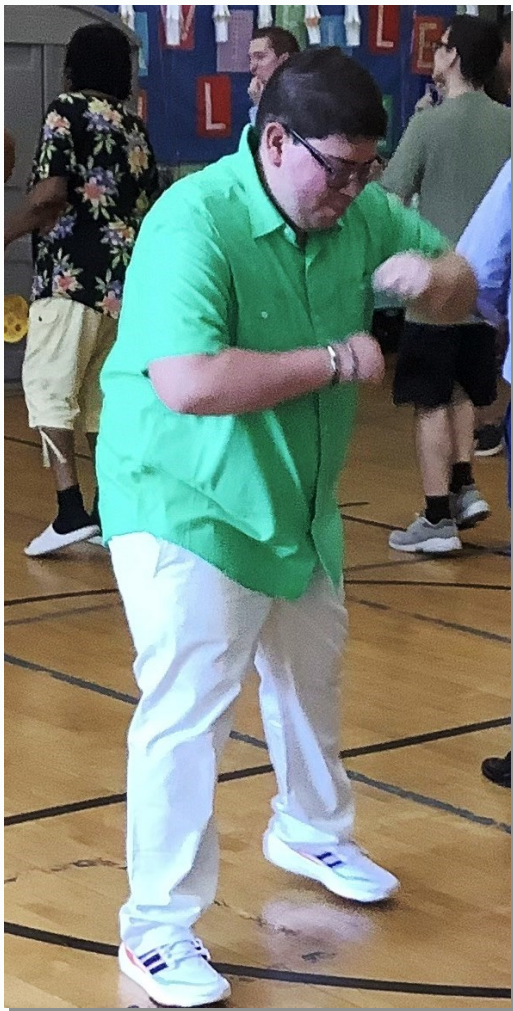


Southern Region Treatment Home staff would like to congratulate **Judline Reneville** on graduating from Timber Creek Regional High School on June 15th. Judline hopes to pursue a career in cosmetology. We know she can do it!

Graduations

SAWTELLE LEARNING CENTER GRADUATION AND YEAR-END FESTIVITIES

June was a very busy month for Sawtelle students. It started off with a field day filled with games, sporting activities, and a surprise visit from the ice cream truck. On another day, there was a prom for the nine graduating students. After the ceremony and luncheon, all the students were invited to the gym to participate in a dance party.



Leading with Heart

“Leading with Heart” - the theme of our 2022—2023 Annual Report—was inspired by our colleagues. Their endless acts of thoughtfulness and compassion on the job are a daily occurrence that continues to happen—but are often overlooked in the rush of the day. We hope to rectify this by including in every issue of *Inside YCS* a “Leading with Heart” section. It highlights some of our co-workers’ many contributions on the job.



For the past 24 years, **Esther Edwards** has been quietly making her mark at the Holley Center, and if anything, her devotion to helping the children has only gotten stronger over the years.

“Esther’s passion to give the youths at Holley Center creative outlets is unmatched,” says **Ebenezer Abuchi**, new Campus Director.

Her title may be Residential Living Assistant but her impact at Holley goes far beyond her job description. Since 2014, she has voluntarily taken on the responsibility of maintaining

the Todd Ouida Garden and is dedicated to giving the youths an opportunity to learn about horticulture and experience the joy of gardening.

Esther is a talented artist and has initiated interesting, allied therapy art projects with the children that currently brighten up the hallways and shared areas at Holley.

According to Ebenezer, Esther always seeks ways to broaden the children’s life experiences and gets them engaged with seasonal activities like pumpkin picking. Esther may be soft spoken and a little bit reserved, but she has definitively earned the children’s respect with her genuine kindness and endless patience...proving that when you lead with your heart anything is possible.

Leading with Heart



GERALDINE WARD MAY HAVE MOVED ON FROM HER LAWRIDGE POST BUT SHE WAS DEFINITELY NOT FORGOTTEN!

When P.D., **Geraldine Ward**, transferred to the Holley Center RTC, the staff at the Lawnridge Home where she had been working did not have a chance to organize a “good-bye” party. So, they decided to surprise her with a proper send off at her new location. All the children and staff arrived at Holley with balloons, a big cake and hand-made cards from the children.

“We wanted to show Ms. Gerry how much we appreciated her for everything she did, and we wanted her to know how much she was going to be missed,” said **Korey Clark**. Ms. Gerry was presented with a with a plaque, then they all posed for pictures and enjoyed cake baked by her colleague **Tajerei Parker**, YCS House Manager at the Northvale Home.



Leading with Heart



When Cavan House P.A. **Lateefa Little** learned that Gabriel, a resident at the home, loves trains, she surprised him with a gift of an official Transit Authority hat. He has been proudly wearing the hat ever since. #Little acts of kindness mean so much!

KB CAMPUS CREATES WELCOME PACKS FOR NEW STAFF & CLIENTS

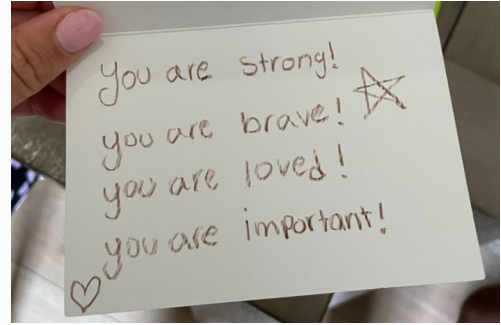
To help new residents and clinical staff feel welcomed in their new “KB Home,” the staff has prepared individualized gift packs. New residents are greeted by a sign that is put on their bedroom door with some encouraging messages from other kids and a gift bag filled with hygiene products, a journaling notebook, and some fidgets/stress ball. New clinicians are also greeted with a welcome sign, a personalized water bottle, some fidgets, and a journal with inspiring messages. **Lissa Captain**



Innovations

CHILDREN AT OUR RESIDENCES: THE LEARNED VALUE OF HELPING EACH OTHER

Sayre House youth put together sensory baskets for Cooper's Crossing youth with different sensory toys, fidgets, and art supplies to bring to the new home. The Sayre girls brought their sensory boxes and gifted them to each of the youth and explained to them about how to use the tools inside. They also wrote kind messages about resilience and strength.



All the youth then enjoyed a pizza party and several fun activities together where they were all able to practice their skills of mentorship, building positive relationships, and appropriate socialization while having fun!

The Cooper's Crossing kids also gifted the Sayre girls several toys as well! This will be a monthly activity night together that the kids can all look forward to!

- Pfeni Flicker



Innovations

FOSTERING P.R.I.D.E AWARENESS IN TREATMENT HOMES

At a Southern Region Treatment Homes (TH) meeting in April, TH mentor **Anitra Frayer** brought up the idea of finding ways to be more sensitive to the needs of youth with different sexual orientations and identities in their Treatment Homes. She proposed the idea of providing training for current families and strategizing to recruit new families that could provide gender affirming, loving care for youth.

According to Treatment Home AVP **Tracie Bass**, the team was immediately on board. “Anitra came up with a creative idea that we had never really thought about before, and she and **Anthony Raymond** [recruiter] really ran with it...I am very proud of them,” said Tracie.



In June, Anthony and Anitra hit the road and attended the Merchantville Pride Day Festival/Fashion Show. They handed out pamphlets and spoke with many participants about the Treatment Homes program. “Everyone was so kind and very receptive,” recalled Anitra.

They were both very encouraged by the reception they got from visitors to the event, vendors and helping organizations. “I hope we can continue to raise awareness and help our kids [in YCS THs] to grow and feel comfortable,” said Anitra. Several days later, the current Treatment Home parents participated in a training presented by Michele Robbins-YCS Clinical Director-on the challenges and needs of youth who identified as LGBTQ+. The training was very successful and plans for follow-up training in the fall are in the works.

“Our goal for the 2023/2024 fiscal year, is to develop an effective marketing strategy that will help us to connect, establish and build community relationships, and to identify/recruit prospective gender sensitive Treatment Home families,” noted Tracie.

Accomplishments

NEW ACCOUNTING PROGRAM

Since our last newsletter, the YCS Finance Department—under the leadership of our new CFO Dr. Frank Bockowski—has been diligently working to revamp the agency's accounting system and replace it with Oracle. Since June, administrative assistants, program/house managers, and senior leadership have received multiple trainings to prepare for the roll out in July. This new system will streamline the invoice process, set up a file of approved vendors, reduce the amount of paperwork, and maintain one uniform electronic system across the agency. This will make it easier for persons using the system and reduce agency costs. "We realize that it will take a couple of months for everyone to get used to the new system, but we are here to help," said Dr. Frank.

Hats Off to DCF and DDD Residential Top Performers

Congratulations to the following residential programs for achieving outstanding scores and compliance for the first quarter of '23 in the following areas: Intake and Assessment, Medical/Nursing, Coordination of Care and Treatment Planning*:

DCF Home Top Scorers

Sayre House - 98% compliance
Kilbarchan RTC/SPEC - 95% compliance
Kilbarchan IRTS - 91% compliance

DD Residences : Top Scorers

Buena Vista 100% compliance
Absecon 99% compliance
Toledo 98% compliance

Environment of Care - Top Performers

Sayre House— 100% compliance
Absecon, Buena Vista, and Laurie Haven - 99% compliance in a 3-way tie

Accomplishments

DCF SELECTS YCS TO OPEN TWO NEW I/DD HOMES



In June, YCS was notified by DCF that the RFPs submitted for the creation of two new group homes for older youth with significant I/DD and behavioral health challenges has been granted by the State. These homes will be a step down from our PCH IDD programs for youth prior to their aging out of the children’s system of care into adult DDD services. “We are keenly aware of how desperately this service type is needed, and I am thrilled YCS was awarded both its application/proposals from DCF through a competitive bidding process.” reported Tara Augustine in an email announcing the new programs. One home will be in the southern region and the other in the central region. Tara continued, “I very much appreciate all the folks who contributed to writing and completing the proposals (there were many!), under the grant writing leadership of Christina Colon and Rayletta Garrison.”

YCS INSTITUTE GRANT NEWS

YCS has received a generous grant of \$49,930 from the Farris Foundation in support of a YCS initiative: Improved Access to Early Intervention Care for Underserved in Hudson County. This grant gives YCS the ability to team up with the North Hudson Community Action Corporation to provide on-site support for babies, toddlers, their caregivers, and staff. “We’re excited to teach parents how to best help their children reach important milestones and thrive,” says Christina Colon, YCS AVP.



Through the Detection, Connection, Intervention grant, two members of the team have already completed the ADOS-Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule training (additional staff will be beginning in the fall). Due to this grant, the Institute and clinics are currently providing DIRFloortime treatment to 15 children ages four and under who are affected by autism. “In the past three months we’ve also been able to assess four children for autism. This is significant considering most programs have 6–12-month waitlists. We plan to assess 20 children in our first year of the project,” says Christina.

Highlights

YCS BLOSSOMS ART EXHIBITION



Thanks to everyone who participated in the 16th Annual YCS Blossoms Art Exhibit & Awards Show at the bergenPAC (Bergen Performing Arts Center). It was truly a joyous occasion after a three year pause due to the pandemic. The theme of this year's exhibit "When the Seeds of Imagination are Nourished, Creativity Blossoms," was celebrated throughout the evening. The evening was made that much more special by an unexpected gift from the PAC: For the first time all the children performed on stage to enthusiastic applause from the audience. It was an evening they will remember for a long time! Special thanks to the staff from Phoenix House, Lawn Ridge, Sayre House, Davis House, Laurie Haven, GW School, Kilbarchan, Holley Center, and School Based Youth Services for encouraging and working with the children so they could participate.

Special Thanks to the YCS Board of Trustees for underwriting the YCS Blossoms Exhibition

Visit YCS Photo Gallery to see all the artwork and highlights of the event:

<https://www.ycs.org/photo-gallery/2023%20Blossoms%20Exhibit/>



Highlights

MEMORIAL DAY

What would Memorial Day be like without an outdoor celebration with family and friends? YCS homes in the northern part of the state wanted to give residents who were not able to return home for a family visit, that same experience with all the traditions. Staff prepared a home-made sumptuous BBQ with all the trimmings,. It was a wonderful afternoon filled with friendship, laughter and fun!



Buffalo Home Staff and Residents



Trevor Jackson in charge of the grill



Tajerei Parker doing face painting

COOPER'S CROSSING HOME



In April, Cooper's Crossing Home officially opened as a I/DD home for five children. After a challenging beginning, the residents and staff gathered for their first community meeting. This was a big step forward for the children, according to Brad Vetterly, "The children were excited to be involved in their treatment and they all expressed a "positive" about their day and they were adamant about having no negatives to report," said Samantha Sampson, Cooper's Crossing, PD

Photo Caption: **Samantha Sampson** (l., **Angela Jackson-Banks** (CRS standing) and **Gabriele Torres** (clinician sitting)

Highlights

NURTURED HEART Day of Caring

Program Directors, House Managers and Supervisors from the southern region Sawtelle DD and I/DD programs gathered in Somerdale to reconnect with their colleagues and participate in a day filled with games and creative activities aimed at soothing minds and rebooting their energy and enthusiasm for their jobs. “The day was so refreshing and insightful,” said **Chanae Maynard**, Sewell, PD. “It gave me a lot of ideas to take back to my program to do with the staff and kids.” Chanae especially enjoyed the Bingo game of positive personal characteristics and the sensory arts and crafts projects.

The event was made extra special by the support of the Sawtelle leadership team who festively decorated the room, prepared a home-cooked feast, and thank you gifts for all the attendees, according to Nurtured Hearts facilitator and VP of Training, **Yvonne Montemurro**.

The next Nurtured Heart event for managers will be in the fall for southern region DCF programs.



CAMDEN HOME TEAM IS ALL SMILES



Sawtelle Camden House team celebrates a successful licensing inspection with a pizza party. Tara visited the home to thank the staff for the excellent job they did preparing for an OOL visit. The home received the fewest citations of all YCS youth residential IDD programs and was able to remediate most of the violations on the day of the inspection. “Camden is an awesome team who has had little turnover, and a true family feel led by Driss,” commended Tara.

Highlights

SAYRE YOUTH LEARN ABOUT DOG THERAPY



CHILDWIN secured a grant to bring a dog therapy educational program called AIR (Attitudes in Reverse) to Sayre House. The visitors facilitated a group on creating a mental health toolkit & using animal interaction in treatment. The youth absolutely loved the presentation and learned all about ways animals can improve mental health as well as the benefits of working with animals!

- Pfeni Flicker

Somerset County Cavan House residents enjoyed a bike ride along a Somerset Park trail with **George Owusu-Sekyere**



Self Care Benefits

Look for your invitation to Wellness Wednesdays in your email!

All YCS employees are invited to come together for Wellness Wednesday via Teams. The first 15 minutes will be a physical restorative activity and it will be followed by a 30 minute optional discussion.

Did you know?

You can schedule in-person or remote wellness sessions with **Caitlyn Yerves** for your teams. You can contact her at Caitlyn.Yerves@ycs.org

Wellness Recordings (10-15 mins) are also available at https://res.cdn.office.net/assets/mail/file-icon/png/folder_16x16.png Wellness Practices

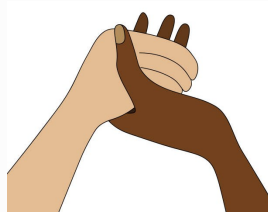


A Moment to Reflect in Prayer is just a Phone Call Away

Start your day with our Agency Chaplain **William (Bill) Waller** as he delivers a non-denominational invocation every Wednesday morning at 7:30 am via conference call. You can send a confidential prayer request to chaplain@ycs.org Call 605-313-4162. -Passcode: 853485 for the prayer.

Need a quiet moment to gather yourself?

Visit the YCS Spiritual Mindfulness Library for quiet inspiration at: <https://www.ycs.org/index.php/spirituality-library/>



Self Care Benefits

E.A.P: A HIDDEN GEM OF SERVICES AT YCS

Employees have access to a wealth of wellness resources for personal and work-life challenges at their fingertips.



The Employee Assistance Program is a voluntary, confidential free program that can help employees work through various life challenges that may adversely affect job performance, health, and personal well-being.

EAP offers assessments, counseling, and referrals for additional services to employees with personal and/or work-related concerns, such as stress, financial issues, legal issues, family problems, office conflicts, and alcohol and substance use disorders.

** To create your EAP virtual wellness account - visit lifebalance.net. When you visit the site, the login and password are both life balance, then once you are in the portal, you can create your own login to explore e-learning and wellness programs.

If you have any questions about the EAP, contact the Michelle at Michelle.Blouin@ycs.org

EAPs also often work with management and supervisors providing advanced planning for situations, such as organizational changes, legal considerations, emergency planning, and response to unique traumatic events.

How is your garden growing?

Helpful garden tips are now available on the employee website homepage. Look for a garden thumbnail photo on the left side of the page!

If you are participating in the **Green Thumb Project** and have a question about your garden, contact Janis Nicolosi-Endo at: jnendo@ycs.org.



Remember gardening is a way to reduce stress, get some sun, exercise and more !

This page is waiting for you!

Tell us about the amazing work your colleagues are doing at YCS and share your program's accomplishments!

"Many ideas grow better when planted in another mind than the one where they sprang up." – Oliver Wendell Holmes

Send news and photos to info@ycs.org.

If you need us to cover an event or help you tell a story, please reach out to us at info@ycs.org or call Barbara or Janis at 201-678-1312

Deadline for the autumn Issue of Inside YCS is September 30th!



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