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A NEWSLETTER  
BY AND FOR ALL YCS EMPLOYEES  
VOLUME 28 | DECEMBER 2025



PRESIDENT/CEO  
**TARA AUGUSTINE**

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
**JANIS NICOLOSI-ENDO**

ART DIRECTION  
**BARBARA MAY**

### **INSIDE YCS**

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25 EAST SALEM STREET 3RD FL  
HACKENSACK, NJ 07601  
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### **CONTACT**

**JANIS NICOLOSI-ENDO**  
201-678-1312  
or jnendo@ycs.org

Cover photo: Urshala Herald and  
Holley residents.

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# President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year! I hope you all enjoyed the holidays and are looking forward to 2026. In this issue of Inside YCS, it is gratifying to see so many photos of the joyful faces of participants in our residences—wearing holiday PJs, opening gifts, and enjoying the season's festivities as well as Santa's visits to our schools and community programs, and staff gatherings. They all contributed to the heartwarming holiday spirit felt across the agency (see pp. 14-21).

I am happy to share with you that we ended the year fiscally strong because of your conscientious efforts during the final quarter of 2025. Our residences have been operating at near-full capacity; enrollment at our schools has increased, and our community programs and treatment homes are reaching their maximum levels of service.

In addition, all seven new behavioral health residential programs are now up and running. It has been exciting to see new staff join YCS—eager to be part of their teams and committed to learning our systems. I am grateful for their courage and dedication as they take on new challenges and adjust to their new home at YCS.

I am confident that our accomplishments and hard work in the final quarter of 2025 will serve as a springboard for 2026. We also have a strong roadmap to guide us, informed by the results of our Great Place to Work survey (see pp. 26-27).

If leadership at all levels of the organization strives to create the nurturing culture reflected in the survey, I am confident we will be recognized as a Great Place to Work next year. Everyone wants to feel listened to, inspired, encouraged to think and speak openly, thanked, and celebrated—to feel safe and to trust in leadership. While this may seem like a given, achieving it will require intentional effort from all of us.

Together, we can create a culture of collaboration, innovation, agility, opportunity, belonging, and well-being—if we are all invested. I look forward to seeing the action plans each division and department develops to help us reach this goal. I am excited about the important work ahead, and I hope you are too.

In closing, I want to thank our Foundation team for working overtime to ensure the success of our Secret Santa drive and holiday appeal—and each of you for partnering with them to make the holidays so special at YCS.

With warm wishes for your health and happiness,

*Tara*



Tara Augustine

# Welcome New Employees

## New Employees and Interns who completed 90 days by December 28, 2025

Abdul-Jaami I, Taahirah S. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Camden	Clark, Chanika N. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Lawnridge	Gude, Alexandra Intern DCF-RTC Holley	Pelaez, Melanie Intern DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	Valdiviezo, Ivan Intern CBP-HMSC Union City
Adejumo, Olamide Case Manager DCF-PCH Haddon Heights	Daniels Jr., William Residential Assistant DCF-IRTS Holley Muller	Jachzel, Marc Administrative Assist SRT - N	Pereyra, Jasmine Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Phoenix	Vallario, Julia Intern DCF-PCH Davis
Aderibigbe, Temitope Personal Assistant DDD-Apts Supvr Thomas	Donaghy, Cassidy M. Teacher Stud w Dis TSWD DOE-George Washington	Johnson, Jehizkiah Shift Supervisor DCF-PCH IDD Camden	Polter, Kayla Intern Regional Admin - 5502	Vassallo, Samantha N. Intern DOE-George Washington
Alce, Steve Bookkeeper Accounting & Finance	Dunkins, Jermaine Residential Assistant DCF-GH1 IDD Wood Haven	Ledbetter, Darlene Personal Assistant DDD-Buena Vista	Quintana, Jennesis J. Case Manager DCF-SPEC Kilbarchan	Warrington, Latia R. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Cedarbrook
Bayne, Tasha Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Malcolm House	Flores, Jennifer Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Phoenix	Lim, Jamie Intern DOE-George Washington	Shepard, Stefani Intern DCF-RTC Kilbarchan	Woolaston, Christopher N. Residential Assistant DCF-RTC Kilbarchan
Calabria, Joseph V. Technology Mgr Info Technology	Fogel, Gabriella Intern - UnPaid DCF-PCH Sayre	McCray, JiAsia D. Personal Assistant DDD - Davinchi	Sinclair, Meka M. Personal Assistant DDD-EmergCapacity Haledon	
Chiappa, Amy L. Teacher Stud w Dis TSWD DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	Gilmore Sr., Christopher R. Intern DCF-PCH Coopers Crossing	Mico, Sofia Lorainne Intern DCF-PCH Davis	Snyder, Alyssa Intern CBP-HMSC Essex	
Ciapanna Jr., Joseph Clinician DCF-PCH Coopers Crossing	Goodwater, Danasha A. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Cedarbrook	Oyebade, Adekunle J. Personal Assistant DDD-Burning Bush	Turner, Zaire Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Phoenix	

## Gordon Family Trust Employee Scholarship

There is still time to [apply for a scholarship for the spring. Click here.](#)

# Promotions

*Congratulations!!!*

*Your dedication and hard work have truly paid off.  
Wishing you all the best in this new chapter of your career at YCG.*



**Cruz II, Juan**, Shift Supervisor, DCF-SPEC Meadow Ridge

**Emberger, Ashlea M.**, Program Director, DCF-PCH Fisher Hall

**Judy, Jessica**, Program Coordinator, DCF-SPEC Townsburry

**Mabande, Konah**, Shift Supervisor, DCF-SPEC Meadow Ridge

**Muse, Jesse**, Campus Director, DCF-SPEC Kilbarchan

**Reasoner, Jennifer**, Program Coordinator, DCF-SPEC Meadow Ridge

**Robinson Jr., Rogers D.**, Shift Supervisor, DCF-GH1 IDD Wood Haven

**Works, Brittany**, Program Director, DCF-GH1 IDD Wood Haven

**Wright, April**, Shift Supervisor, DCF-SPEC Pinewood Valley



## Work Anniversaries

*Congratulations!!!*

### 15 YEARS

**Ridley, Tracey**, Asst Program Director, DCF-PCH Laurie Haven

**Drennon, Darris F.**, SRT Behavioral Assist, SRT - S



### 10 YEARS

**Foster, Carmen V.**, Shift Supervisor, DDD-Blackwood

**Massaquoi, Korvah**, Personal Assistant, DDD-Apts Supvr Thomas



# Shoutouts

*To All Our Amazing Employees!*

- ✦ **Aimee Ciaravino** for helping so much with training new Program Directors, clinicians, and case managers! Aimee is always there when you need her and is a great leader in our region!
- ✦ **Frank Franceschini Jr** has been an incredible clinician at Woodhaven and Sewell. He goes above and beyond advocating for the youth, and takes time to support and provide training tools to the staff to help the youth. Thank you, Frank, for being so amazing!
- ✦ **Sasha Henriquez** for helping with our music group in Somerdale! Sasha helped facilitate a calm, therapeutic environment where the kids could have fun! Awesome work!
- ✦ **Laura Loray** for always going above and beyond at Sayre House. Laura is an incredible advocate and support for our youth, as well as a strong member of our clinical team.
- ✦ **Jacqueline Maddi** and **Eddie Bonacci** have been such a strong supports at Woodhaven! Helping educate staff on BSPs, assisting with meetings and clinical support. You guys are awesome! Your hard work is greatly appreciated!
- ✦ **Kayla Polter** for being an awesome intern in Southern Region! Kayla has been such an eager learner in her role as an intern, and we are so excited to continue to watch you grow!
- ✦ **SLC Staff** who participated in making the Sawtelle Learning Center Staff Potluck Luncheon a success!
- ✦ **Urshala Herald** had decorated the Holley sunroom with festive tablecloths and had the plates, napkins etc. all ready (for the volunteers). The kids and NCJW volunteers played games and chatted. Urshala was so organized and on top of everything!
- ✦ **Brittany Works**, Congratulations on your promotion to Program Director at Woodhaven! You're doing such an incredible job, and we value all that you bring to Woodhaven!

# Milestones



## Professional Accomplishments

Congratulations to **Rayletta Garrison**, Sr. VP, on passing the BCBA exam in December.

*The BCBA exam is notoriously difficult. We call it the beast in our profession. It only has a 54% passing rate for first time takers. I'm so impressed that Ray was able to pull that off with all her additional responsibilities. It was quite an accomplishment. Her dedication to applied behavior analysis is only coupled with her dedication to YCS.*

~Jacky Maddi, VP, BCBA

## Employee Snapshot



**Tameka Walton**

Newark Headquarters Reception

# Moving On

For more than a decade, the YCS family has had the privilege of working alongside two remarkable colleagues whose impact across the agency has been immeasurable.

**Jennifer Flores, Vice President, Northern Region Behavioral Health & Community Services**, has worked tirelessly on behalf of youth in the northern region. She also pioneered the Promising Path to Success and Nurturing Hearts initiatives, creating meaningful support and growth opportunities for employees across the entire agency.

**Erin McCloskey, Chief Information Officer and Privacy Officer**, spearheaded the launch of Evolve and later UKG—two platforms that have brought YCS technology firmly into the 21st century. Through her wisdom and insight, Erin consistently encouraged colleagues to embrace innovation and provided steady support as teams adapted to new systems.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Jen and Erin for their years of dedication and leadership, and we wish them continued good health and great success as they begin the next chapters of their lives.



After ten years with this agency, saying goodbye is much harder than I expected. This place has been a constant in my life; one that shaped me professionally, challenged me personally, and supported me in ways I will always be grateful for.

Over the past decade, I've grown alongside so many incredible people. I've learned from your wisdom, leaned on your support, laughed through long days, and felt proud to stand beside colleagues who care so deeply about the work we do and the people we serve. The relationships I've built here are what I will miss the most and are the hardest to leave behind.

Thank you for the trust, encouragement, and moments, both big and small, that made these years so meaningful. Whether we worked closely or crossed paths briefly, each interaction left an impression and contributed to my journey. This agency will always hold a special place in my heart.

While I'm stepping into a new chapter, I leave with deep appreciation, lasting memories, and immense respect for this organization, what it has become, the team, and its mission. I am better because of my time here, and I will carry that with me always.

With sincere gratitude,  
Jennifer Stratton

# Moving On

To my YCS family:

It truly is bittersweet that I am leaving the organization. I once thought that I would dedicate my entire career to YCS, but, unfortunately, life had other plans. Due to family medical issues, I have made the choice to leave YCS.

Someone once told me: "The opposite of Love is not Hate, it is Apathy". Love and Hate are strong emotions, whereas Apathy is the lack of caring altogether. If you are working here at YCS, you have chosen Love. You have dedicated your days to helping those less fortunate or in need of assistance, rather than looking the other way or ignoring. When most would choose to self-serve, you choose to serve others.

For the past (almost) 11 years, I have been so lucky to work with so many loving and kind people. My colleagues and participants alike have made my time working at YCS meaningful and fulfilling. I am grateful for each memory, each step forward, and each lesson learned. The enhancements we have made to the organization and in our approach to care over the past 11 years are truly remarkable, and we did that together – as a team. Sometimes we have had to push each other forward, other times we walked together with ease, but every time it was for the good of YCS, all YCS employees, and the people/families we serve. I am so proud of the work that we have done and know that it will continue for years to come.

Thank you, to the IMS team: Dina Sundberg, Christinia Bell, Yajaira Samayoa, Michele DiFilippo, and Amina Krakallah. You have helped this organization implement and utilize technology and software systems that have changed the way we operate and have achieved such high success. To the countless others who have impacted me and this organization so tremendously, thank you for your support, grace, and unrelenting drive to move forward and upward. I am in awe of your dedication.

Though I know I am leaving, I will continue to support the organization and wish you all health, happiness, and success. I am truly grateful to walk this Earth with such incredible human beings. Continue to choose Love.

Sincerely and gratefully,  
Erin McCloskey



# Leading with Heart

## Reflections on the Rewards and Benefits of Working with Volunteers



For more than 20 years, **Rachelle Tighe**, YCS trainer and parent advocate, has worked closely with a dedicated group of volunteers who handcraft quilt blankets for new participants entering our residences and treatment homes.

Rachelle coordinates regular meetings at YCS's Somerdale headquarters, bringing together the quilters and the children. She helps set up tables lined with colorful quilts and arranges one-on-one time for each child to select a blanket of their own.

"The quilters love helping the children pick out a quilt," Rachelle shares. "I often hear them say to a child, 'These quilts are as unique as you—no two are the same.' It's one of my favorite moments to witness."

Rachelle believes cultivating strong relationships with volunteers is essential to the success of programs.

"When our volunteers feel valued, they are more engaged and more connected—not only to our youth, but also to our organization and our mission," she explains.

YCS has been fortunate to partner with such a talented group of fabric artists who help children feel safe and comforted during their time in care. Since 2002, the quilters have donated more than 1,500 handcrafted quilts to children in out-of-home placement. .

Although coordinating volunteer visits is an addition to her regular responsibilities, it is a role Rachelle truly treasures.

"It still warms my heart to see children walk out the door smiling, wrapped in a beautiful quilt at the end of each visit," she says.



# Employee Spotlight

**Urshala Herald**

**Residential Assistant Supervisor, Holley Campus**



Urshala Herald began her journey at YCS 14 years ago as a volunteer on the Holley Campus. At the time, she was a student at Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) and president of a campus club called Nubian Ladies, which hosted events and activities for children at Holley. Encouraged by a friend who worked at Holley and recognized her natural rapport with the youth, Urshala applied for a part-time position as a residential assistant while pursuing her Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice and later her Master's Degree in Public Administration.

On January 3, 2012, Urshala officially joined YCS, working weekday mornings and weekends. Over the years, she has worked on nearly every unit across the Holley campus, including Sawtelle Hall, the RTC units, Fisher Hall, and Muller IRTS. Each experience, she says, offered a different perspective and presented unique challenges that contributed to her professional and personal growth.

Although Urshala acknowledges that her professional passion lies in the criminal justice system—she has spent the past six years serving as a U.S. Probation Officer in the Southern District of New York, where she is also an Officer Response Tactics Instructor and a Non-Lethal Training Ammunition Instructor—her heart remains with the children at YCS.

She is candid about the emotional weight that comes with caring for youth in crisis, yet she remains deeply grounded in her purpose. "Being there for a child—offering comfort, showing empathy, and knowing that I can make their world a little better—makes it all worthwhile," she shared.

Through her work, Urshala has learned firsthand what it takes to be successful in residential care. "We wear many hats, and every role matters," she explained. "Above all, the most important thing we can do is show up. Children need consistency, and dependable staff allows youth to build trust and form meaningful relationships."

# Employee Spotlight

She adds that direct-care staff is truly on the front line. "In many situations, we are teaching essential life skills—how to make a bed, practice proper hygiene, behave appropriately in the community, count change, or work through math problems. These moments matter more than people realize."

For Urshala, the most rewarding part of the job comes long after a youth leaves care. "The phone calls or visits from former residents mean everything to me," she said. "Hearing them say they were actually listening to the

advice I gave them, sharing their accomplishments, or simply saying 'thank you' reminds me why this work matters. It reinforces the impact we can have long after they leave our care. That's why I continue to show up for the youth—day in and day out."



*Urshala shines as a Resident Assistant Supervisor at the Holley Center—leading events, guiding staff, and serving as a positive role model. Her passion, teamwork, and dedication to uplifting the youth make a lasting impact on our community.*

Kayla B. Billups, BSW  
Coordinator of Residential Service Holley Campus

## Urshala's Advice on Successfully Maintaining Two Professional Careers

*Balancing two careers is not easy, but it has been incredibly worthwhile. My role with the Southern District of New York is fast-paced, demanding, and comes with a different level of stress. Both positions require a lot from me, and at times it can feel overwhelming.*

*Staying organized is what keeps me grounded. I rely heavily on my calendar—if it's not written down, it isn't happening. Managing both my professional and personal schedules often means switching between two phones, but it helps everything run much more smoothly.*



# Happy Birthday!!



## December Birthdays

Abdul-Jaami I, Taahirah S.	Dawkins, Nia	Green, Latiesha	Mangual, Luis	Reels, Quadair	Toth, William
Allen-Jackson, Gregory	DeLaCruz, Leillanie	Gurovich, Nicole	McElroy, Cerenthia	Reinert, Emily	Tripp, Brian
Atkins, Mecca J.	Deroche, Keimora	Hall, Demara L.	Mckever, Wayne F.	Reyes, Yanira	Wade, Breyanni
Austin, Ann	DeStefano, Helena	Hall, Jaquai	Medorzil, Miss-Eve	Riddick, Anetra D.	Walden, Aivery
Bagley, Tyrone	Diaz, Erica S.	Hamwright, Yvonne	Meyers, Thomas R.	Roberts, Venus I.	Walton, Faheemah
Bender, Dane	Dobson, Edward	Hendricks, Hayley R.	Mouzakes, Alethea R.	Rollins, Faquaya	White, Shana
Best, Shavonne	Donat, Levard	Herald, Urshala D.	Muse, Jesse	Russell, Cardett E.	Wiggins, Cheryl
Blackmon-Hayes, Eric	Donovan, Erica L.	Herzog, Danielle	Neals, Sherry	Saah, Sigourney	Williams, Frances
Boursiquot, Sandra M.	Earl, Tara	Huger, Naaja	Ngwa, Evelyn K.	Salvary, Eric	Wilson, Jamilah
Bright, Chanelle D.	Edwards, Esther-Shama T.	Jackson, Dwayne	O'Bryant, Christopher	Scaglione, Caitlyn E.	Wilson, Phillis
Brown, Kaliem	Fasoro, Titilayo	Jackson, Shawn R.	Paneva, Angela	Slappy, Jamal D.	Wolk, Joseph
Butryn, Kelly	Fentress, Dondre	James, Brandon	Parks, Erica	Smith, Christopher G.	Woodard, BiYonce C.
Cabrera, Fabiana G.	Festa, Isabella M.	Jones, Annette	Pascal, Jolina	Smith, Jordan Q.	Woolaston, Christopher N.
Carter, Dijah	Flicker, Pfeni	Jones, Dominique	Paulino, Henessys	Smith, Maria	Woolley, Keena K.
Champagne, Sharajhen	Forman, Shayla	Jones, Latia	Perdomo, Julia	Steward, Kareese	
Clark, Aminah	Fox, Jaime D.	Jones, Myeesha	Perry, Nicole	Stillo, Giuliana C.	
Clark, Chanika N.	Garrett, Amanda L.	Kessler, Steven	Preston, Markeece J.	Svorec, Magda	
Colston, Carlene	Gault, Phillip	Lawrence, Aiyona	Pritchett, Kim I.	Tahhan, Dana	
Cunningham, Stanley S.	Gelston, Kayla N.	Lee, Jamir	Quinones, Jessica	Taylor, Brandon	
Daley, Marjorie	Gilliens, David	Lewis, LaTora	Ragland, Dawn	Taylor, Nakeyah	
David, Eunice E.	Gilmore Sr., Christopher R.	Little, Lea A.	Raisin Sr., Donald	Thomas, Parrish	
Davis, Yasmin	Goree, Shermyra D.	Maier, Laura	Readus, Kyle B.	Timlin, Jessica	

# Highlights

## Holiday Wrap Up



*Vineland*



*Walnut*



*Sawtelle Learning Center*



*Lawnridge*



*Parents As Teachers*



*Haddon Heights*



*School Based*

# Highlights

## Holiday Wrap Up



Hilltop



Lawnridge



Cedarbrook & Sewel



Buffalo



Whispering Mills



Toldeo



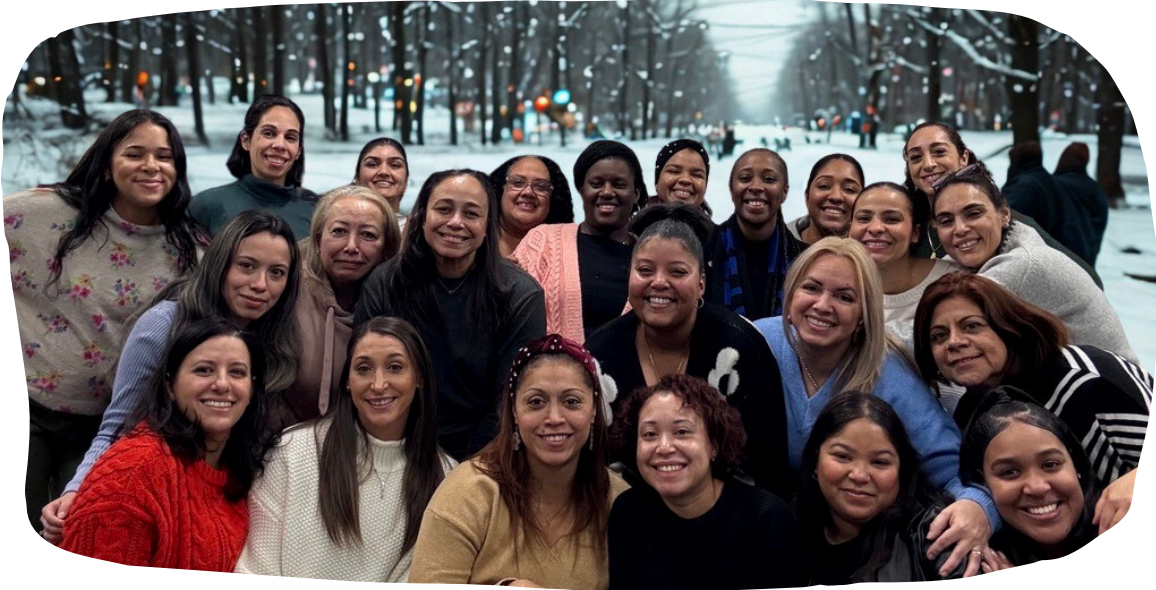
Bright Start



Buena Vista

# *Highlights*

## **Passaic Service Coordination Unit's Holiday Party**



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## **NR Managers' Appreciation Dinner**



# Highlights

## SR Employee Appreciation Luncheon



Brad, Aimee, and Pfeni held their annual appreciation lunch for their programs to share their gratitude for everyone's hard work this year! They are so grateful for their team and all of their dedication to the region!

# Highlights

## YCS Treatment Homes Staff Appreciation & Holiday Luncheon at Topgolf



YCS Treatment Homes recently hosted a Staff Appreciation and Holiday Luncheon at Topgolf to celebrate the dedication and hard work of our team. The event provided staff with an opportunity to relax, connect, and enjoy a fun-filled afternoon in a festive setting. **Tracie Bass**, AVP, expressed heartfelt gratitude for the commitment and compassion our staff demonstrate every day in supporting the youth and families we serve. The luncheon served as a meaningful way to recognize their contributions and celebrate the holiday season together.

## YCS Treatment Homes Holiday Brunch

On December 18th, Treatment Homes hosted a festive evening Holiday Brunch with the youth and their Treatment Home Parents. The celebration was filled with laughter and holiday cheer as the youth sang karaoke, played games, danced, and created gingerbread houses. Everyone enjoyed a delicious brunch-style dinner, complete with a special Grinch Punch that added to the fun and festive atmosphere.

Throughout the evening, youth participated in activities and games where they received prizes such as McDonald's gift cards, candy canes, and other special presents.

To honor their commitment and support, Treatment Home Parents were presented with a special gift in appreciation of their hard work, dedication, and the positive impact they make in the lives of the youth every day.

On December 23rd, the youth and Treatment Home Parents enjoyed a special outing to the movies to see Zootopia 2. This movie provided a fun and relaxing opportunity for everyone to spend quality time together and continue celebrating the holiday season.



# Highlights

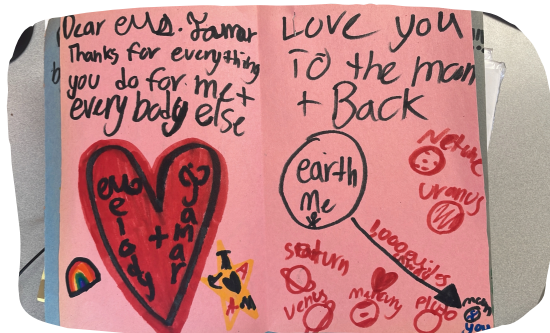
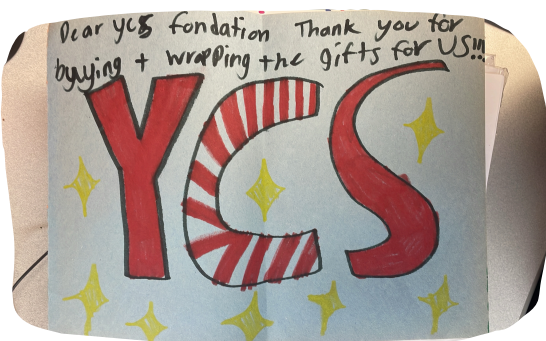
## Cooper's Crossing Staff Appreciation



Joe Ciapanna, Stephanie Martinez, Thomas Johnson, Tamar Hampton, Olamide Adejumo, Tanya Thomas, Nakima Mayo



## Cooper's Crossing Residents Write Thank You Cards



# Highlights

## Holley Christmas Celebration



**Urshala Herald,  
Dominique  
Williams,  
Juanita Holt**

## Ugly Sweater Day at Kilbarchan



**Taj Taylor and Maria Boom**  
spreading that Holiday cheer  
on Ugly Sweater Day!

## Skating Trip!

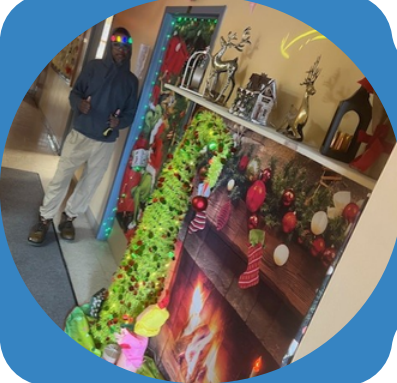
School Based Youth  
Services went on a Skating  
trip at Branch Brook  
Skating Park.



# Highlights

## Southern Region Holiday Door Contest

2ND PLACE



**Kamal Johnson**  
Maintenance Dept  
"Cindy Lou & The Grinch"

1ST PLACE



**Jessica Smith, SRT**  
"A Christmas Story"

3RD PLACE



**Dyamon Divine,  
Ashley Hill, Taina Montalvo**  
Intake/Behavioral Health  
"A Nightmare Before Christmas"



**Christina Bell**  
IMS Dept.



**Jaime Fox**  
QAPI



**Shamaine Williams  
Thomas Johnson**  
HR Dept.



**Bianca Dumas**  
DD Dept.

# ***Promising Pathways***

*A Shared Journey to Success, where your voice leads the way*

## **Save the Dates! Important upcoming Trainings**

**Friday, January 16th, 2026**

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

***Presentation:***

"The What and How of Psychiatric Diagnosis in Children and Adolescents: An overview of identifying mental health issues and how to treat symptoms."

***Presenter:***

Dr. Mary Jane Askew, DNP, APN, and Medical Director of KB & Muller IRTS

**Thursday, February 5, 2026**

***Presentation:***

*Child and Adolescent Psychotropic Medication: Understanding Use, Benefits, and Challenges.* This workshop takes a more in-depth look at psychotropic medication.

***Presenter:***

Dr. Mary Jane Askew, DNP, APN, and Medical Director of KB & Muller IRTS

# ***Admin Departments in Focus***

*In this issue of Inside YCS, we are pleased to introduce a new section that will spotlight one of the agency's administrative departments—highlighting the important work it does, the many functions it performs, and how it supports and impacts employees across YCS.*

## **Welcome to the Infrastructure /Business Affairs Department**

Headquartered in Newark, the Infrastructure / Business Affairs Department oversees the maintenance of agency facilities, food services, building grant applications, and the monitoring, purchasing, and management of the Transportation (Fleet) Division across the entire agency.

"I am very proud to be part of a great team that is an integral part of YCS' commitment to providing quality services with heart and enthusiasm—and it's truly a joy working with them,"

— Carolyn Mullen, Vice President of Real Estate and Infrastructure Development

### **Food Services Division - Director: Carlos Acosta**

- Oversees school-age nutrition programs at YCS schools. YCS participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program and is monitored by the state.
- Works closely with each site where school-age participants reside, assisting cooks with menu planning, shopping lists, and food-safety compliance.

Important Reminder:

When submitting monthly grocery budget requests, please be sure to note in Oracle the number of participants in your program and their age ranges. For questions, contact [Carlos.Acosta@ycs.org](mailto:Carlos.Acosta@ycs.org).

### **Fleet Division – Fleet Manager: Barbara Franklin**

The Fleet Division manages all agency vehicles and transportation-related vendor contracts.

- Oversees all agency vehicles, vendor contracts, and vehicle usage tracking.
- This year, IT and Fleet rolled out a new electronic trip-log system. All pre-trip and post-trip vehicle logs are now completed electronically.
- Drivers can access forms by scanning the appropriate QR code provided to each program using their phones.
- This system replaces handwritten or typed logs and allows all trip records to be stored digitally in one central location.
- Training on the QR-code system was conducted on December 23. If you have questions or would like to request additional training, please contact [Barbara.Franklin@ycs.org](mailto:Barbara.Franklin@ycs.org).
- For vehicle repair or maintenance requests, continue to email [repair@ycs.org](mailto:repair@ycs.org) or submit requests through YCS eOnline using the green repair icon.

# ***Admin Departments in Focus***

## **Welcome to the Infrastructure /Business Affairs Department**

### **Facilities Division - Director: Luis Mangual**

The Facilities Division responds to repair and maintenance needs throughout the agency. Facilities teams are in both the Northern and Southern regions

- Requests for repairs or maintenance issues (including plumbing, electrical, heating, or structural concerns) should be submitted to [repair@ycs.org](mailto:repair@ycs.org) or [Freshdesk@ycs.org](mailto:Freshdesk@ycs.org).
- Requests are entered into an automatic ticketing system that facilities teams can access on their phones. You will typically receive a response within 24 hours.
- For emergencies requiring immediate attention (such as heating issues at a residence), please clearly mark the request as urgent so it can be addressed promptly.

# ***Employee Scholarship***

## **Congratulations to the Employees Who Accessed the Gordan Family Trust Scholarship Fund**

<b>Employee</b>	<b>Institution</b>
Shamaine Williams	Rutgers University
Christian Herbert	Rutgers University
Charlese Mathis	Grand Canyon University
Shani Alexander	Rutgers University
Jennifer Barbosa	Montclair State University
Kelly Butryn	Montclair State University
Megan Daniels	PROMPT Institute
Sheri Brown	Rutgers University
Jorge Montanez-Murillo	Parents as Teachers Conference Workshops

# Agency Updates

## Results of the Great Place to Work® Survey

Congratulations to all employees who participated in our first Great Place to Work survey this fall. A total of 501 employees (49% of our workforce) shared their feedback, contributing 566 written comments—an impressive level of engagement that provides valuable insight into our workplace culture.

We earned an overall score of 63%, placing us just two percentage points shy of being recognized as a Great Place to Work. This is an encouraging result, especially considering we were benchmarked against the top 1,000 nationally and internationally ranked organizations across all industries.

With the 2026 action plans currently being developed by leadership—with meaningful input from managers and frontline staff—we are confident we can close that gap and achieve certification next year.

The first two charts below highlight the areas where we performed well, as well as the areas where there is opportunity for improvement.

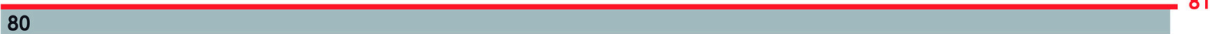
The third chart outlines the key attributes leadership must continue to cultivate to build a thriving, supportive workplace culture.

We now have a clear roadmap. With strong action plans and continued collaboration, we are well positioned to reach our goal of becoming a Great Place to Work.

## Strengths

### GAP TO BENCHMARK

My work has special meaning: this is not "just a job."



I am offered training or development to further myself professionally.



I feel I make a difference here.



I am able to take time off from work when I think it's necessary.



I believe management would lay people off only as a last resort.



0

100

— 2025 United States - 100 Best - Top 100

■ Dec. 2025

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**Great Place To Work®**

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# Agency Updates

## Results of the Great Place to Work® Survey

### Opportunities

#### GAP TO BENCHMARK

People here are paid fairly for the work they do.



People look forward to coming to work here.



You can count on people to cooperate.



This is a psychologically and emotionally healthy place to work.



Management hires people who fit in well here.



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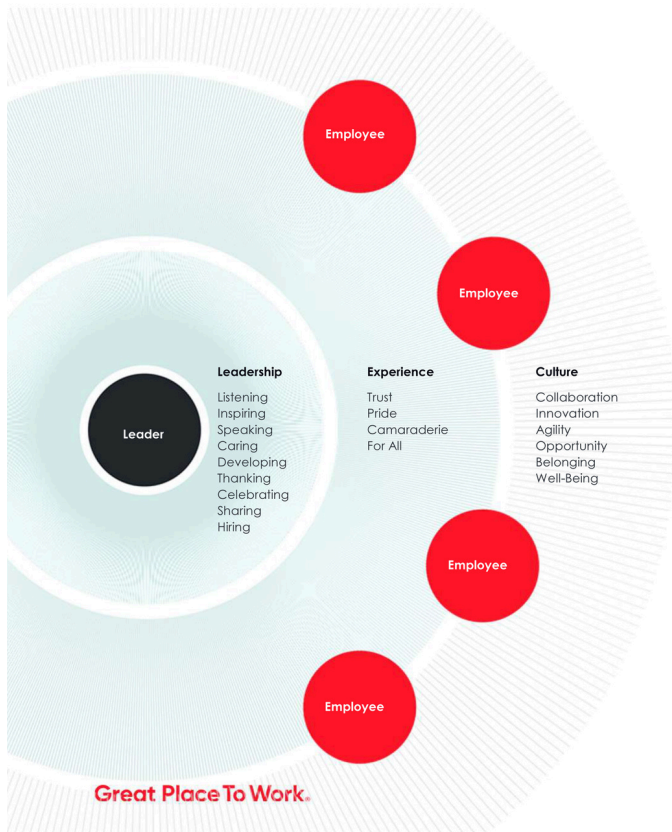
— 2025 United States - 100 Best - Top 100

■ Dec. 2025

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**Great Place To Work.**

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### Experience shapes culture.

By continually measuring and improving their employee experience, organizations turn culture into a competitive advantage, with increased collaboration, innovation, agility, belonging, and employee well-being.

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# Agency Updates

## QAPI's Safety Contest

QAPI promotes safety by hosting an annual Safety Month Contest. During the month of November, programs were required to complete at least one safety-focused activity with both staff and participants on a topic of their choice that promoted safety awareness. This year's submissions were exceptionally creative; dare we say even better than last year. Submissions were evaluated by judges in three categories: creativity, benefit to participants and staff, and effectiveness of the safety message. Each program dedicated time and effort to participate in the contest. QAPI would like to thank everyone for their commitment to promoting a culture of safety.

Congratulations to Holley Center, Sewell, Toledo, Haddon Heights, Hilltop, Buena, Davis House, and Kilbarchan Campus for being nominated as the top 8 entries in the Safety Month contest. Your hard work and commitment did not go unnoticed!

## Winners

### 1<sup>ST</sup> Place - Holley Center



Submission: Awareness Blanket

The YCS RTC Holley Center youth collaborated to create an 'Awareness Blanket' on relationship safety issues. Each cloth square reflected their personal understanding of healthy versus unhealthy relationships. When stitched together, the blanket became a powerful visual reminder that healthy relationships are built on respect, trust, and communication, while unhealthy ones are marked by control, dishonesty, and harm. This project not only fostered creativity but also encouraged meaningful conversations about building positive connections.

### 2nd Place - Davis House



Submission: Wellness Wednesday/Fruit Wednesday (Video)

This specific project "Couch 2 Active", focused on integrating physical activity into daily life, especially during television and electronic time. The goal was to build movement habits for those who spend time sitting. Youth and staff created personalized movement schedules by committing to a daily or weekly walking schedule with peers, friends, or family members. Furthermore, "Couch Workouts", were incorporated, so during TV commercial breaks or between episodes, youth performed simple, couch-assisted exercises like sit-to-stands, single-leg raises, sit ups/push-ups or side steps.

# Agency Updates

## QAPI's Safety Contest

### Winners

#### 3rd Place - Toledo



Submission: First aide and training (3D model)

The goal was to create an activity that truly resonated with the participants. Staff first observed and listened to the ideas shared by the participants. Collectively, the participants and staff decided to create a first aid-based activity. This activity served as a reminder for participants and a refresher for staff on the importance of properly caring for both small and large cuts and wounds, as well as how to correctly use first aid supplies.

## YCS Training Department: Thoughts on Teamwork & Collaboration

When teams communicate openly and work together, barriers turn into opportunities. Collaboration across departments strengthens understanding, builds trust, and drives meaningful progress. Growth happens when everyone shares responsibility and supports one another towards common goals. Through teamwork and clear communication, challenges become lessons and improvements become sustainable. Through teamwork and clear communication, challenges become lessons and improvements become sustainable. In the end, working together doesn't just create success; it creates more winners. {The goal of the training department team} is to make everybody a winner.

~ Mike Baguidy, VP, Training Department

# Agency Updates

## **New Unpaid Intern Hiring Process**

The prospective intern and their school liaison reach out to the YCS Clinical Training Director to inquire about internship opportunities.

Clinical Training Director verifies that a current Affiliation Agreement is in place.

Prospective intern is directed to complete an intern application on the YCS site.

Clinical Training Director sets up an interview with prospective intern after application is complete.

Once interviewed and preferences are shared, Clinical Training Director reaches out to preferred sites and shares intern information with Program Directors and Clinical Staff.

The Program Director sets up an interview with the prospective intern. Program verifies that a Clinical Supervisor has capacity to clinically supervise can the intern.

Program Director works with the school to ensure that the intern's assignment aligns with all school requirements such as service type and hours and then Program Director makes offer to intern.

If offer is accepted, the Program Director completes a New Hire PSF the final approver.

Clinical Training Director launches the intern to the Onboarding Gateway.

Intern goes through an abbreviated onboarding process which includes all mandated clearances.

Once onboarding is complete, the intern participates in a one-day orientation and then begins working at the program.

## **New YCS Intranet**

We're excited to share that the "new" YCS intranet (a secure network for employees only) will be LIVE in January. Why is this important for you?

The YCS Community Intranet has been redesigned to make it simpler to find the information and resources you need. All documents have been reviewed, updated, and properly organized into clear categories to help streamline access across departments. As part of this transition, the YCSEOnline.org site will redirect to the new Employee Portal, which is available through YCS.org.

Please take a few minutes to explore the YCS Community (linked). All of the most commonly requested resources are housed there – so if you need a form, manual, or any information, you should be able to find it there. If you CANNOT find what you are looking for, please contact [info@ycs.org](mailto:info@ycs.org) with your specific request.

We appreciate your engagement and welcome all feedback! Again, please contact [info@ycs.org](mailto:info@ycs.org) with any questions or comments.

Thank you for your support and feedback as we continue improving our internal tools and communication.

# Managers Meeting Bulletin

## Department Updates & Key Takeaways from December's Monthly Managers Meeting

### Foundation/Allied Services

The Foundation requests holiday photos at your sites or in the community. Our donors really love to see all photos and receive thank you notes, Please send handwritten thank you notes. Any testimonials you can provide about the impact of donations/gifts is also appreciated.

A lot of our extracurricular fun activities are also funded through the foundation. We're here to help We are a resource, and it's better for us to know what you need than to guess what you need. Contact us at [heart@ycs.org](mailto:heart@ycs.org), .

### Real Estate and Infrastructure Development

For updates on Food Services, Fleet and Facilities divisions see pages 23-24.

### Finance Department

As of November, we are in a surplus compared to November 2024 due to issues with low levels of service. However, we made a huge turn around towards the end of our fiscal' year in June of '25 and we've been continuing strong. All your hard work increasing the number of clients your programs serve has paid off. Overall, we're doing much better than we were last year.

#### *Credit card usage*

We are in the process right now of updating the procedure for using credit card. There's going to be a mandatory training for all employees who have a credit card on January 16th.

Note: in the case of unusual or unexpected emergencies, take care of the actual true emergency and then just reach out to Frank Bockowski, CFO. [frank.bockowski@ycs.org](mailto:frank.bockowski@ycs.org) He will work with you to figure out what kind of documentation is needed so that YCS is fully in compliance with DCF/DDD/DOE, Federal funding and all the other regulatory agencies we must report to.

#### *403B Plan.*

Previously there was a 2000 hour requirement for part-time people to participate in the plan. Now, it is open to everyone from their first day of employment. YCS matches dollar for dollar up to 2% of their paycheck.. We encourage all employees to participate (Note: the match has a three-year vesting period)

#### *Bonuses*

Tara added that she and Frank will be changing the cadence, of the dissemination of bonuses - instead of waiting until the end of the fiscal year, YCS will be looking into doing something in the beginning of the new year instead. We're not waiting until the end of the fiscal year for some of those pieces to come into play. It's most important to echo that when the organization is doing well, the rewards are returned to the employees.

# Managers Meeting Bulletin

## Human Resources

Results of our first Great Place to Work survey:

501 employees (49% of our workforce) took the survey, and there were 566 verbatim comments.

We received an overall score of 63%. To be certified as a Great Place to Work, an organization, the score must be at least 65%. We're only 2% shy of the mark. For the first year, this is a very positive result for our agency considering we were benchmarked against the top 1000 nationally and internationally ranked agencies across all industries.

We hope through action planning this year we can get that extra 2% to be certified next year. See pages 25-26 for more details.

## Training Department

There has been a small improvement in completed trainings by 2.7%. We were at 76% and now we were, we are now at 79.5 – that means we are trending up. Specific topics due between July and November were basic corporate compliance, workplace safety, preventing, identifying, and responding to abuse and neglect, and infection control.

In January, there's a couple of trainings for, critical incidents and URR trainings for DCF// DDD programs. Everyone in the agency should also be doing essentials for HIPAA security awareness.

*New Training:* Optimizing school meals training is available in Relias, beginning in January. Not everybody is responsible for those trainings, but anyone that is working at a DCF program and working for SRT is recommended to take this training.

## IMS

The format for monthly productivity program reports for next year is going to change. You will see the data presented in a much more visually appealing and understandable way.

We're also going to be looking a lot more at the schedules in UKG and pulling out data on, ratios, shifts and things that'll make sense in your day-to-day operations.

If you have any questions about reporting data you can reach out to [ECRhhelp@ycs.org](mailto:ECRhhelp@ycs.org),

UKG scheduling trainings: All employee schedules must be entered into UIKG in advance – including time off requests. By doing this, it can eliminate doing work after the fact.

If we're doing everything in real time – the way the UKG system was designed to work – your jobs will become exponentially easier and furthermore when it comes time for Medicaid audit, which DDD and DCF both encountered, there will be a lot less scrambling to try to prove that we were in ratio on a specific day.

Our goal is to better equip employees to use the system. For questions you can reach out to Jerry Henderson at [jhenderson@ycs.org](mailto:jhenderson@ycs.org).

# Managers Meeting Bulletin

## Practice Integration

Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) Training: it's highly effective way to teach coping skills to youth in residential care, who are affected by PTSD depression and behavioral issues. It is specified for staff in residential programs, but it is open and recommended to all staff working with youth. CEUs are available. Using TFCBT in residences when parent involvement is difficult focuses more on skill building. The first session was on January 8th, the next is on February 5th, Doctor Mary Askew, is presenting virtually on psychopharmacology. CEU's available.

Tara added: It's very critical that we're working with families to get kids back home. Any family counseling is always a good thing - documenting your levels of engagement with families is critical.

## IT Department

85% is a threshold for us to maintain the grants that we get from Microsoft to keep the products that we enjoy every day free. We can reach 100% simply if staff check their email and calendar, go on SharePoint of Teams, use PowerPoint, or Excel. We did have an increase in adoption by 1.58 and now have an 89% overall usage rate. However, 28 of the programs are not compliant.

Reminder, there are links on the YCSeonline for training UKG login, evolve and things of that nature. If you need help, you can contact the IT helpdesk. IT monitors messages over the weekends as well. If there is ever an emergency, you could always reach out.

Suggestion: If you often use texting to communicate with your staff, switch over to e mail help staff get accustomed to using these Office 365 products.

## QAPI

*Safety Officers:* the stipend for the fourth quarter will be paid in January. Date TBD for October - December 2025. Please make sure you fulfill all requirements to receive a stipend. Double check the emergency procedures that you are putting it in correctly according to the calendar.

Make sure new programs and current programs are completing new admission fire drills within 24 hours definitely encouraged to put it in the ECR.

In 2026, Jenna Howley will be taking over the lead safety officer role and will be the point of contact.

Disaster drills for the new programs: Please remember to complete the drills and check in with your disaster plan to see where you will go. Make sure you're looking at your plan because some people must go to a different program and others must go to a hotel. So, it will depend on your plan.

Emergency evacuation plan. Be sure all staff are signing the most recent plan for 2025.

# Managers Meeting Bulletin

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## **EOC Update:**

Utility shutoffs and circuit breaker boxes should be labeled and completely unencumbered. There should be no storage in front of those areas. Be sure that all staff know where they are.

Grievances: one of our PMMP goals is to respond to all grievances within a week. So please review the grievance procedure with your staff and remind participants about the grievance process during your community meetings. We want to address these issues before they fester. Resentment is corrosive, so we want to get these issues into the open and resolved quickly.

## *Office of Licensing Upcoming Visits*

OOL is coming to Holley in early February and PCHIDD and CSAP throughout the month of March. Jenna will be starting the DCF audits in January. Aja covers the DD audits, and Matthew and Jaime will be assisting her with some of the EOC pieces.

Note: QAPI will be conducting a workshop on how to write a plan of correction for program directors and house managers.



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