

Inside YCS

A NEWSLETTER
BY AND FOR ALL YCS EMPLOYEES



Pia Ababon

Parents

As

Teachers

Supervisor

Parent Educator

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President's Message

To All Our Employees

When we revived our employee newsletter after a lapse of nearly two decades, one of our goals was to establish a platform to foster a genuine sense of community among all our employees - A place where our colleagues could access agency updates and share their personal and professional accomplishments.

In this edition of Inside YCS, I continue to be inspired by the photos, stories, and creative endeavors you submit to help the individuals in your care thrive. These stories reflect how hard you work. I am also impressed by the dedication of our leadership that supports our employees' growth. And, I am proud to report that in this issue 30 employees have been promoted. We are committed to supporting them in their new roles at YCS to ensure their continued success.



As a reflection of our investment in our employees, we launched the employment engagement survey. Thank you to everyone who took the survey. We really look forward to synthesizing your feedback and implementing positive changes that will further enhance your work experience.

Recently, YCS hosted its annual meeting for our Board of Directors. As the president this provided me an opportunity to share the amazing progress YCS has achieved over the last year. Many of these accomplishments directly affect employees.

We implemented financial incentives such as: shift differential pay on the weekends, compensation for dedicated employees working on holiday weekends, and new roles within the program that are compensated for quarterly. We also created a Capital Improvement Fund to update our facilities, and implemented processes to make sure each facility's needs are heard and remedied in a timely manner to create environments where employees feel safe and enjoy working. We look forward to continuing work experience enhancements in 2024.

As we head into colder weather, I hope you all take good care of your health and enjoy the upcoming holiday season.

Respectfully, 

Chaplain's Message

As the VP/Chaplain of an agency that cares deeply about the well-being of individuals affected by trauma, my heartfelt thoughts are with the thousands of children and families affected by the humanitarian crisis in Israel and the Gaza Strip. I hope you can join me in prayer for the restoration of peace and the safety of innocent children and families whose lives have been devastated by this brutal conflict.

Sincerely, Chaplain William Waller

If you are feeling troubled or overwhelmed by these events, please join in our weekly prayer line, reach out to our agency chaplain, or take part in Wellness Wednesday conversations.

Welcome New Employees

New Employees who have completed 90 days, July - September 2023

Agunloko, Stephen G. Personal Assistant DDD-Pamela	Cordon, Esther Consultant DCF-PCH IDD Camden	FineSmith, Elizabeth Occupational Therapist DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	Jackson, Natasha Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Haddon Heights	Middleton, Tanya Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Laurie Haven
Albizu, Melanie Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Sawtelle Hall	Davis, Yasmin Shift Supervisor DCF-PCH Sayre	Flyn, Yvonne Program Director DCF-PCH BHDD Estell Manor	Jacobs, LeShea SRT Behavioral Assist SRT - N	Mitchell, Mellody Nurse RN Home Visitor CBP-NFP Promise Neighbor
Ashbrook, Zachariah A. Teacher Aide DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	Desrosiers, Rosemary Consultant DOE-George Washington	Francis, Carlene Consultant DOE-George Washington	Joachim, Jessie Personal Assistant DDD-Pearl	Moore, Kasondra Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Vineland
Bland, Nateyah Receptionist DCF-RTC Holley	Diamond, Keri Director of Development Foundation	Frierson, KeyMoney Personal Assistant DDD-EmergCapacity Haledon	Johnson Sr., Kyle Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Vineland	Morris M.D., Craig Advanced Practice Nurse HealthSvc- PsychPrescrib-N
Bowen, Symone Residential Assistant DCF-IRTS Holley Muller	Dorante, James Personal Assistant DDD-Emmans	Gaspar, Dafina Teacher Aide DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	Jones, Kiara Personal Assistant DDD-Buena Vista	Muhammad, Khadijah Case Manager DCF-PCH Sicklerville
Brito-Walker, Rebecca Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Haddon Heights	Dunbar, McArthur Personal Assistant DDD-Walnut	Gonzalez, Amanda Teacher Aide DOE-George Washington	Kirchgaesser, Katrina J. Psych Doctoral Intern CBP-HMSC Essex	Oechsner, Olivia T. Teacher Aide DOE-George Washington
Brown, Diamond Residential Assistant DCF-RTC Holley	Edwards, Bertha D. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Laurie Haven	Gonzalez, Carmen Teacher Stud w Dis TSWD DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	Major, Natasha Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Bright Start	Ofoeze-Morrison, Ugonna Program Director DCF-PCH IDD Sawtelle Hall
Chapman, Sharon D. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Fisher Hall	Farsang, Melissa Psych Doctoral Intern CBP-HMSC Essex	Hinds, Saderah Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Malcolm House	Marshall, Hannah Residential Assistant DCF-CSAP Winslow	Omolola, Helen Personal Assistant DDD - Cavan House
Clarke, Spring Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Coopers Crossing	Festa, Isabella M. Clinician DCF-PCH Vineland	Hood, Tinisha Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Laurie Haven	Medina, Cori House Manager DDD - Cavan House	Omoruyi, Osayekewen T. Personal Assistant DDD - Cavan House
Collins, Wesley SRT Behavioral Assist SRT - N	Fields, Dantaisha Personal Assistant DDD-Morris	Izquierdo, Beverly M. Support Specialist Info Management Systems	Mena, Brigitte Case Manager DCF-SPEC Kilbarchan	Page, Jessica Personal Assistant DDD-Apts Supvr Buffalo

Welcome New Employees

Pascal, Jolina Teacher Aide DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	Roach, Tyshan Personal Assistant DDD-Burning Bush	Thom-Rogers, Candace C. Clinician DCF-PCH Bright Start	Vargas, Eric Residential Assistant DCF-RTC Holley	Williams, Yaahmera Residential Assistant DCF-RTC Holley
Paulino, Henessys Psych Doctoral Intern CBP-HMSC Union City	Russell, Victoria Residential Assistant DCF-RTC Holley	Todd, Brittney B. Personal Assistant DDD-Willingboro	Walker, Aliyah N. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Fisher Hall	Wiseley III, Charles A. Program Director DCF-CSAP Hammonton
Perez, Jacqueline Teacher Stud w Dis TSWD DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	Scott, Haneefah SRT Behavioral Assist SRT - N	Tolentino Jr., Carlos J. Youth Develop Specialist CBP-21st Century	White, Sharonda Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Bright Start	Witherspoon, Shekera Shift Supervisor DDD-Willingboro
Petrie, Carene Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Laurie Haven	Smith, Destiny Case Manager DCF-PCH Haddon Heights	Valles, Angela Program Director CBP-SchoolBaseYthSvc SBYS	Williams, Kelly Teacher Aide DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	
Powall, Mariah Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Laurie Haven	Smith, Jessica Personal Assistant DDD-Apts Supvr Buffalo	Vandunk, Danielle SRT Behavioral Assist SRT - N	Williams, Shelinda Teacher Aide DOE-George Washington	

Welcome New Interns

Caizza, Julia G. Intern - DCF-PCH Sayre	Duncan, Brielle Intern DOE-George Washington	Kalmowitz, Juliana L. Intern DCF-PCH Sayre	Newton, Eden Intern DCF-PCH BHDD Estell Manor	Santamaria, Katie Intern CBP-HMSC Essex
Campbell, Shamoya Intern DCF-PCH Phoenix	Galasso, Catherine M. Intern DCF-PCH IDD Lawnridge	Martinez, Gladys Intern CBP-HMSC Union City	Perez, Leslie Intern CBP-HMSC Union City	Self, Gabrielle Intern QAPI
Cortez, Virginia Intern DCF-PCH Coopers Crossing	Caroline Givens Intern Haddon Hts.	Mathesen, Emily Intern DCF-PCH Sayre	Perone, Jacob R. Intern DCF-PCH Davis	Thomas, Darryn Intern DCF-PCH Vineland
Cruz, Dashmarie Intern DCF-CSAP Winslow	Goff, JaKeia A. Intern DCF-PCH Davis	Murphy, Kayla M. Intern CBP-HMSC Essex	Petrick, Christine Intern DCF-RTC Holley	Vahitova, Karina Intern DCF-PCH Bright Start
Dominguez, Gianna Intern DCF-RTC Kilbarchan	Jaquez, Valerie Intern - UnPaid DCF-PCH Laurie Haven	Netta, Annette C. Intern - UnPaid DCF-PCH Laurie Haven	Rodriguez, Jill Intern DCF-PCH Davis	Williamson, Michelle Intern DCF-PCH Malcolm House

Shout Outs

TO ALL OUR AMAZING EMPLOYEES!

- **Samantha Sampson** is a superstar at Coopers Crossing! She is such a great advocate for her youth!
- **CSAP Winslow. Staff Devin Davis, Sandra Walden, Lyric Johnson, Lauren Marks and Hannah Marshall** for hosting an amazing spa party week for our residents and the youth from Estell Manor and Cedarbrook.
- **Beverly Izquierdo** for always taking initiative in her new position at YCS. Beverly is a quick learner and is a great asset to the IMS Department!
- **Christinia Bell** for her eye to detail and taking on new projects, while training a new staff person. You are very much appreciated!
- **The Entire Treatment Homes family!** The movie night hosted for the treatment homes families and surrounding YCS Residential programs was truly remarkable.
- **Caitlyn Yerves** for our weekly Wellness Discussions. I look forward to these sessions every Wednesday and have learned a lot about myself in the process!
- **Malcolm House shift supervisor team: Ms. Tiah-jhna, Ms. Ronda, Mr. Trevor, and Ms. Daphney!** They have worked together flawlessly to take on new tasks with their supervisees, communicate with each other and the rest of the team constantly to ensure things are running smoothly, and have stepped up and provided a tremendous amount of coverage on open shifts over the last several months. Malcolm House would be lost without these four staff helping to run things!
- **Aimee Briscoe** for the amazing job she has done in her new role as Program Director for Sayre House!
- **Liz Barry** for being such a great leader at Davis House! The staff here are so lucky to have such a strong leader!
- **Isabella Fester** for doing a great job in her role as clinician at Vineland! The team is so lucky to have her!
- **Sayre House** for their amazing scores on their EOC report! Keep up the great work!
- **Brad Vetterly** for doing an awesome job as VP! His region is lucky to have such a great leader!
- **Jade Birts** for going above and beyond for Cooper's Crossing home as the new CRS!

Promotions

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

Edward W. Mercer Jr., Info Technology, IT Director
Nina Jones, CBP-21st Century, Academic Instructor
Kayla B. Billups, DCF-RTC Holley, Coordinator ResidentSvc
Sandra Arencibia, DCF-PCH Fisher Hall, Case Manager
Tameka McMillan, Regional Admin - 5501, Asst Regional Dir
Uzoamaka Njoku, DDD-Walnut, Shift Supervisor
Santos Escobar, Facilities - N, Maintenance Supvr Assis
Trevor Forde, DCF-PCH Malcolm House, Shift Supervisor
Lea A. Little, DCF-PCH IDD Camden, Residential Assistant
Dwayne L. Sheppard, DCF-PCH IDD Camden, Shift Supervisor
Courtney Medina, DCF-RTC Kilbarchan, Clinician Fee for Svc
Gabriela Montoya, DCF-SPEC Kilbarchan, Program Director
Kiana Barrett, CBP-Parent Linking Progr, Case Manager
Jeanine Vignone, DOE-George Washington, Supvr Curriculum&Instr
Robert Howell, DCF-PCH Bright Start, Shift Supervisor
Sandra Elanani, CBP-SchoolBaseYthSvc SBYS, Prevention Specialist
Rasheed Giles, DCF-RTC Kilbarchan, Shift Supervisor
Jasmine S. Woodyard, DCF-PCH Phoenix, Clinician
Sofia A. Boloix-Alarcon, CBP-HMSC Union City, Clinician
Jade Birts, DCF-PCH Coopers Crossing, Coordinator ResidentSvc
Aimee Briscoe, DCF-PCH Sayre, Program Director
Pfeni Flicker, Regional Admin - 5503, AVP Program Operations
Bradshaw Vetterly, Regional Admin - 5503, VP Program Operations
Barry Lastra, DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr, Teacher Assistant
Kali Fino, DCF-RTC Holley, Clinician
Tahjanay Johnson, DCF-PCH Davis, Shift Supervisor
Sally Sanchez, CBP-HMSC Essex, Clinician Fee for Svc
Giuliana C. Stillo, CBP-HMSC Essex, PostDoctoralPsychFellow
Tyesha E. Wright, DDD-Apts Supvr Buffalo, Personal Assistant

Work Anniversaries

	<p>20 YEARS</p>	<p>15 YEARS</p>
	<p>Rebekah Roberts, CBP-NFP Essex Falana Alston, DCF-IRTS Holley Muller</p>	<p>Sean L. Seal, DCF-PCH BHDD Estell Manor</p>
	<p>10 YEARS</p>	<p>5 YEARS</p>
	<p>Frank D. Burno, DCF-PCH Phoenix Alyssa. Manson, DCF-PCH Vineland Ronly C. London, DDD-Forest Dwayne L. Sheppard, DCF-PCH IDD Camden Alexandra Dziubek, HealthSvc-ResidentNurse-N Aaron E. Ruiz, DCF-IRTS Holley Muller Lea A. Little, DCF-PCH IDD Camden Nijasha Z. Wright, DCF-IRTS Kilbarchan</p> <p><i>Congratulations!!!</i></p> <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 anniversaries..</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>	<p>Brejhan Doss, DCF-PCH Haddon Heights Kyle Goodridge, DDD-Walnut Lakiba Fuller Savage, DCF-PCH Davis John G. Tillman Jr., DCF-IRTS Kilbarchan Dayzon T. Bean I, DDD-Blackwood Olushola O. Odeyingbo, DDD-Apts Supvr Thomas Lawrence Bayley, DCF-PCH IDD Lawnridge Darien M. Allen, DCF-SPEC Kilbarchan Tahj Paden, DDD-Echohill Donna Gibbons-Davis, DDD-Echohill Kasheim Butler, DCF-PCH Davis Lesly B. Heredia, DDD-Toledo Damita D. Small, DDD-Absecon Erica S. Diaz, DDD-Willingboro Tia D. Smith, DCF-PCH Haddon Heights Tanajah S. King, DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr Sanee Bishop, DCF-PCH IDD Camden Grethel Quintana-Beyra, HealthSvc-Behaviorists-N Mary M. Rector, DDD-Emmans Latanya Brown, DCF-IRTS Kilbarchan Anna Llabres, DCF-PCH Sicklerville</p>

Milestones

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Kristen Wistuba, QAPI analyst. completed a certificate program in Developmental Disabilities.

YCS Institute interns **Giuliana Stillo** and **Zachary Hubert** both successfully defended their dissertations this summer.

Institute clinicians **Samantha Spencer**, **Rosanne Moreno**, **Sally Sanchez**, and **Esther King** have been trained in the ADOS (Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule).



Barbara “Bohulá” May’s film, *Në Tyalá* (I’m Hungry), has won an award for Best Television/Pilot Program or Series from the Beyond Border International Film Festival. It was screened at the end of September at Kolkata City of Joy, India. *Në Tyalá*, the first episode of *Peletya*, a comedy series on EtyoTV.com, is performed in her ancestral native tongue called *ëtyo*, spoken by the Bubi people from Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea. *Në Tyalá* can be viewed on the EtyoTV Youtube channel.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christina Colon was showered with love

All her colleagues from the Institute, NFP, PAT and Helen May Strauss Clinics and more gathered at the Institute to celebrate the upcoming birth of her baby

On October 13th, Christina Colon, AVP, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Amaia Elise. Mother and baby are both doing well!



Agency Updates

Thanks to all our colleagues who participated in the Employee Engagement Survey

As part of YCS' "Speak Up" Initiative, the agency launched a confidential Employee Engagement Survey in October. The survey was conducted by Qualtrics, a qualified, third-party survey organization that ensured all responses were confidential. The Survey gave all employees the opportunity to provide their honest feedback to help YCS improve the employee experience.

In a letter to all employees introducing the survey, YCS President **Tara Augustine** stated, "Your voice can influence the critical issues that shape our work environment, processes, culture, and help YCS have an engaged and satisfied workforce and enable YCS to fulfill our mission..."

Leadership will receive the survey results and implement action plans to address areas of concern.

Steven Kessler, Chief Human Resources Officer

Grant News

The YCS Institute has been awarded a new 5-year SAMSHA grant with Montclair State University to continue and grow our trauma informed work with children ages birth-12 and their families. The project is titled the "Clinical Formation Initiative in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health."

We are also excited to be moving into year 2 (of 3) of our Detection, Connection, Intervention autism state funded grant. With this funding we are able to continue our partnership with Rutgers University and serve more families whose children may be affected by autism. **Dr. Dayna Zatina Egan**, VP Practice Integration.

Foundation News

We would like to welcome **Keri Diamond**, director of development to the Foundation. Keri comes to YCS with an extensive background in development and is a welcome addition to Team Foundation!!

New Member of NH/PPS Team

Welcome to **Lorenzo Brown**, Program Director of Holley Muller IRTS, to the Promising Path to Success (PPS) Leadership team. With Lorenzo's input into the Promising Path to Success, we're looking forward to new and exciting activities and opportunities for the programs at YCS. Lorenzo has been a great help in facilitating the Agency PPS Monthly Meetings.

Agency Updates

42 Clinicians attended the clinical rounds meeting in October!

The success of the October in-person clinical rounds meeting was very much a team effort to encourage as many clinicians as possible to attend. **Jessica Lew**, clinician from Fisher Hall, presented on Yoga for the Treatment of PTSD/Trauma and the Polyvagal Theory. She did a wonderful job of introducing and modeling beginner level yoga movements that can easily and discretely be incorporated into sessions with our youth.

Nicole Alvarez, LCSW
Clinical Director, Northern Region

Clinical Rounds Upcoming Schedule

The training is open to all clinical and administrative personnel as well as Interns

November 10-11:30am Zoom	11/8/2023	Regulation Focused Psychotherapy for Children	Tatianna Kufferath-Lin , Psy.D. Impact Psychological Services
December Somerdale Office 10am-2pm	12/13/2023	Didactic: "OT and Sensory Diets" by Sara Eisenhuth Case Presentation: on Sensory Diets and OT benefits in Residential treatment. Restorative session:	Nicole Alvarez , LCSW Dayna Egan , Psy.D. Michelle Robbins , LCSW Caitlyn Yerves , YLM Sara Eisenhuth , LSW, OTR/L
January 10-11:30am Zoom	1/10/2024	Presentation: <i>Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder</i>	Debbie Riscica Central Jersey Family Health Consortium

BCBA Up Coming Trainings—Overview of Positive Behavior Supports & Applied Behavior Analysis

October 26 & November 30th 9:30am -2pm
in Somerdale

November 16th - 9:30am -2pm
in Somerdale

Virtual Training
Saturday, December 16th, 10am –2 pm

Agency Updates

YCS Prayer Line EVERY TUESDAY

@12PM

phone:
605-313-4162

passcode:
853485

LIVE PRAYER

Led by Chaplain
Dr. William Waller

Taking Requests:
chaplain@ycs.org

Prayer Line Testimonials

Two of our colleagues share what the Prayer Line means to them

I absolutely LOVE the YCS Prayer Line. It's a brief call - where prayer and positive intentions are anonymously offered by our Agency Chaplain. Sometimes I send an email asking for prayers for a specific family member or troubling situation - other times I just call in to silently pray alongside my colleagues. It is a huge comfort to know that I have that kind of support at the workplace. ~**Jacky Maddi**

“If we want to be successful as an organization, we must follow God’s plan. The only way to know God’s plan is through spending time talking with Him in prayer!” ~ **Dawn Jones**



Adolescent & Youth Clinical Training for Suicide Prevention: *Assessment & Management for Outpatient Providers* 8:30 AM Registration | 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Training

Northern New Jersey

January 30th

Youth Consultation Service
60 Evergreen Place, 10th Floor
East Orange, NJ 07018

Designed for outpatient providers who see youth under 18. Training is relevant for licensed mental health professionals with any level experience. Training topics include:

- Understanding Youth Suicide
- Gathering Information + Documentation
- Formulating Risk & Clinical Screening
- Pathway Planning & Responding: Stabilizing the Crisis

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS
TRAINING AND TO REGISTER, VISIT:
WWW.SPTSUSA.ORG/NJACTS**



Employee Reflections

**“What a privilege it is to work with Esther, a young PAT mom.”
PAT Supervisor and Parent Educator, Pia Ababon**



November 2021-- I was just coming back from maternity leave when I heard that I may be working with a Deaf mom. It took about six weeks to find an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter before I could meet her in person. I had a lot of mixed emotions. I was nervous because I had not worked with clients for about 6 months, but I was very excited to help this mom and her children. I have been working at YCS for 8 years have never had the opportunity to work with a mother who was Deaf.

When I finally met Esther, there were many logistics for the visits I had to learn. Barb Coffan, our amazing ASL interpreter, communicated for me and interpreted for Esther over Zoom. Not knowing a lot about deaf culture, I found that communicating direct and literal things to Esther was complicated.

I was determined to learn more about the deaf culture and make sure she was receiving the most out of the Parents as Teachers program with her children.

My primary intent was to help Esther learn how to better understand her child’s development, grow her positive parenting practices, and connect her to resources she might not have known about. Her case was unique. Not only was she a deaf mother of 2 children, but her youngest, Jeff, was born with Noonan Syndrome, a genetic disorder that causes hearing loss, heart problems and behavioral issues. When I saw the challenges she endured without an interpreter by her side for ordinary, everyday things, I was committed to advocating for Esther and her children.

Employee Reflections

I accompanied Esther to the police station when the officers did not provide an interpreter and were unable to understand her and her stolen money situation. She had another situation with her bank where she was not understood because she was not provided with an interpreter. We decided to fix the issues together that she repeatedly could not resolve alone.

I am most proud of helping Esther get an interpreter at her children's school. For two years, Esther attended teacher meetings, school presentations, and parents' nights for her 6-year-old daughter without the benefit of an ASL interpreter. Many times, the school promised that there would be an ASL interpreter, but Esther would show up and no interpreter was there.

Esther was frustrated and cried multiple times during our visits because she envisioned being at her children's future graduations and not being able to understand anything. After we tried to advocate for her at the school unsuccessfully, I spoke to a lawyer who specialized in American Disabilities Act law. With her legal advice, a strongly worded letter to the school district, and constant calls to her children's schools, Esther now attends school meetings and functions with a school provided interpreter. She is finally free to communicate her concerns without being misunderstood.

Working with Esther and Barb has been a real eye opener for me. I never realized how isolating and difficult life can be for a deaf person. Navigating the school, medical and social service systems are almost impossible when your primary language is ASL and ASL interpreters are rarely or never provided.

I give all the credit to Esther for fighting for her rights – she is an amazing mother. Esther works extremely hard to stay positive and keep an optimistic outlook on her life with her children. It has truly been my privilege to be her parent educator.



It has been a privilege to work with Esther for the past year and a half. It has changed my life immensely. As a hearing person, I will always be understood and able to communicate the way I want to, wherever I want to. What families in the deaf community go through every day is arduous and I will never again take my voice, my words, and my hearing for granted. I am still learning more about the deaf community every day and how to say things more directly instead of using metaphors. I also started learning words in ASL and am using it at visits with Esther and in my personal life with my two-year old daughter. Pia Ababon

Intern Corner

Sandra Elanani
Capella University, MSW Intern, PLP/SBYS



Sandra Elanani (r) and a student at SBYS having fun during a field trip to Rock 'n Air amusement center. "We are doing a lot of serious work with the students at school. It is good to be able to get out and just have fun together."

When did you start your internship at the Parent Linking Program (PLP) at Eastside High School? What were your initial assignments?

I started my year with the PLP internship in January of 2023. Initially, my assignments were to shadow the case manager and program director and assist with group activities. I did not know what to personally expect from internship, but I did not expect to learn as much as I did. For one thing, I learned that the way I communicated with the young women as students and then as moms needed to be a little different.

Intern Corner

Congratulations on recently becoming Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (PJD) coordinator. You are in a unique position now as SBYS intern & PJD coordinator. How are you balancing both roles?

Thank you so much! Balancing being a PJD Program Coordinator and a SBYSP intern can be challenging at times. I am very lucky to have a wonderful team here that helps me juggle between the two hats while I am here. It has been a big jump and learning curve. I am learning how to get through to the students, help them set goals and how to reach them.

I heard you have taken the initiative to start new projects at SBYS. Can you talk a little about this?

In September, I arranged for speakers from 2nd Floor, a confidential helpline for New Jersey youth, to talk with the students about suicide prevention. They presented on suicide awareness and coping techniques to assist during times of stress and increased symptoms of depression.

Overall how has this internship impacted your career goals?

This internship has brought me many steps closer to my career goal of becoming a licensed clinical social worker. Through my positive experience with YCS I have become more excited to continue learning and growing with YCS.



“Sandra has done some great work [at Eastside High] especially on suicide prevention. She is also coordinating Project Cope coming to Eastside for bullying prevention as well as a few other events that she will take the lead with special events. “

Angela Valles, SBYS, Program Director

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.

LATASHA PEOPLES shares what it means to her to work besides VP, DAWN JONES



Dawn Jones, center with Latasha Peoples, left, and the Sneaker Ball committee in 2022

My VP **Dawn Jones** is an amazing leader and is the reason I am still here at YCS. She sees value and talent in the staff that work under and alongside her. Even when the odds are against the team, she finds ways to keep us on track and pushes us towards the better cause: the youth we serve.

Since the pandemic, working in mental health has been extremely difficult and overwhelming, but having a leader of faith in God and a call to work in this field is amazing. She has been very supportive and

understanding and plays a very important part in my career here at YCS. She always tells me that I can do anything I put my mind to. We need more leadership like her: Encouraging, Supportive, Understanding, Role Model, Honest, God Fearing, and most of all a team player.

Ms. Dawn has done things for her team that were not even part of her job description, just to lighten the burden, even though hers was heavy. I could write a book on this lady, but her reward is so much greater than these words because of who she serves.

I believe YCS would be very successful if they mirror her humbleness and her willingness to look at her job as not just a job, but a place to give back, not only to the clients we serve but to the team members that work under her.

So, Thank You to Ms. Dawn, keep walking in your calling to be a service to others.

Latasha Peoples

Behaviorist – Southern Region

Leading with Heart

YVONNE is passionate about nurturing the hearts of her colleagues



Yvonne Montemurro, VP of YCS Training and Development Department, is passionate about guiding and instructing new employees at orientation as well as providing on going required trainings to all employees.

She began her career at YCS in 1995, as a speech therapist in the Title 1 Daycare Pilot Project. Six years later she transitioned into the HR Department as a trainer and went back to school to get her master's degree in human services with a specialization in counseling studies. She has completed a number of certificate programs since then that helped her as a trainer understand the field of behavioral health.

“Yvonne truly leads with heart. She has a deep knowledge of YCS and an intense level of caring for all our program participants, and employees,” says Steve Kessler, Chief Human Resources Officer.

For some employees, online trainings are difficult. She is very sympathetic to this challenge and has not hesitated to visit many programs across the state to provide personal onsite training. She has a reputation for being patient and understanding with nervous learners.

She has also gone above and beyond to offer evening and weekend trainings to help on board new employees and help staff to fulfill their training requirements.

Yvonne has also volunteered to become an instructor for Promising Path to Success and Nurtured Heart (NH) along with Jennifer Stratton, Northern Region VP. Together they took the initiative to create daylong, NH events for different divisions, so that staff would have an opportunity to restore their spirits and model NH practices at their sites.

Her commitment to ensure every employee feels valued for the hard work that they’re doing every day at YCS has earned her the staff's respect.

“In my heart I see myself as a teacher and a lifelong learner. I think my curiosity about how things work, how they can work better and asking questions spurs my enjoyment of learning and ways to increase my own knowledge and skills to share with others. My hope is that others are inspired and motivated to be successful in their work.” **Yvonne Montemurro**

Innovations

FINDING NEW WAYS

to help residents connect with a faith based community



The Praise and Worship team from Cornerstone Baptist Church of Hackensack visited the Holley Center on Sunday September 10th. For many years, the parishioners have participated in YCS' Secret Santa campaigns, but this is the first time they visited the residence. The youth group choir shared uplifting messages of song and praise with the children. At one point, the children began requesting spiritual songs that they remembered from their past and joined in with the choir. Reverend Carolyn Davis and the members in attendance were so encouraged by the reception received that they are in discussions with the agency chaplain to return every month.



October 2023 Kindness Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Meet some people and share the love you don't earn.	2 Get someone's face acquainted. They are not here to help you, they are here to help them in your life.	3 Have one negative thing go, and thank the person who helped you.	4 Acknowledge a past connection with a big smile and a warm greeting.	5 Write the names of three people you care about on a card and give it to them.	6 Check your smile. Does it reach your eyes? If not, try to smile more often.	7 Do something nice for someone who is not your friend.
8 Take fresh baked goods to parties at the office or to a friend's house.	9 Leave a note on the public mailbox or on the door of a neighbor's house.	10 Write and send a thank you note to someone who has helped you.	11 Allow someone to merge in front of you in traffic.	12 Check your smile. Does it reach your eyes? If not, try to smile more often.	13 Do something nice for someone who is not your friend.	14 Do something nice for someone who is not your friend.
15 Text a friend to let them know you are thinking about them.	16 Take time to really listen to someone and respond with kindness.	17 No customer and offer your seat to another on the bus or train.	18 Remember to thank the people who help you in your daily life.	19 Do something nice for someone who is not your friend.	20 Do something nice for someone who is not your friend.	21 Do something nice for someone who is not your friend.
22 Take a friend to family member on a weekend excursion.	23 Write a letter to yourself, forgiving past mistakes.	24 Have fun in a group.	25 Do not ignore compliments today.	26 Be thankful of the things you bring to your workplace.	27 Do something nice for someone who is not your friend.	28 Do something nice for someone who is not your friend.
29 Choose a card tag for a friend or family member and give it to them.	30 Put aside your own concerns and try to understand how the other person is feeling.	31 Attend a thank event in your community.				

Keri Diamond, director of development, is creating monthly Kindness Calendars to share with staff to encourage acts of kindness amongst staff and clients. The first calendar was published in September.

“A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees.”
– Amelia Earhart

Innovations



LETTERS ARE ON THE WAY

from Children at YCS to Students in Tanzania

YCS GW School and Laurie Haven have partnered with the Lighthouse English Medium Pre and Primary School in Tanzania, Africa to initiate a Pen-Pal program. The idea for the exchange came after a conversation YCS Chaplain **Bill Waller** had with a former colleague who founded the Tanzanian school. Both men felt that this exchange would broaden the children's perspective on life as they began to understand what life is like in these distant countries and awaken them to the commonalities that they share.

The children at YCS have worked hard with the support of their teachers and residential staff to compose their first letters which were sent to their counterparts in July. They are eagerly waiting for responses from the Lighthouse students, who are learning Swahili and English.

Special shout out to **Dr. Tatum Stein & Etta Sample** for making this project a reality.

TESHA BRIGHT, RN

conducts a labor comfort measures class for expectant moms in the NFP program

Tesha Bright, RN conducts a labor comfort measures class for expectant moms in the NFP program. By adding the role of doula to her certifications, she is able to offer this service to moms. Tesha is very committed to expanding the services they can offer. "I hope to offer more Labor and Delivery classes, Breastfeeding support, and educational classes along with continuing infant massage classes," says Tesha.



Highlights

SAYRE HOUSE BEAUTY NIGHT



We've been partnering with Coopers' kids and doing different activities together so the Sayre girls can mentor them! Last night we did a "beauty night" (we do this once a month) but this time we included one of the youth from Coopers to join! The girls did her make up, nails, and played dress up in prom dresses! It was really fun and a great experience for the Sayre kids to practice being positive role models and leaders! ~ Aimee Briscoe

Highlights

CSAP WINSLOW HOME HOSTS SPA PARTY



The spa party was planned and hosted by Winslow staff members **Devin Davis, Sandra Walden, Lyric Johnson, Lauren Marks and Hannah Marshall** in collaboration with Estell Manor and Cedarbrook. Clients enjoyed a day of pampering including Mani-Pedi's, facials, makeup, and hair. The clients were served a fabulous brunch and also engaged in activities building self-esteem and positive affirmations. The clients were all dolled up by the end of the party, looked beautiful, and felt relaxed.

Simone Craig, MSW
Program Director
CSAP Winslow

Highlights

SAYRE HOUSE CALMING ROOM



Sayre House clinicians, **Molly Holt** and **Kara Metz**, and their interns recently presented at Clinical Care Rounds ! The clinicians did another informative presentation on the importance of using sensory tools in therapy and treatment. Molly and Kara expressed ways in which using sensory items can be a benefit for youth and the uses of Nurtured Heart Approach, along with reducing physical controls in their program.

CSAP HAMMONTON BBQ



Charles A. Wiseley III, Hammonton PD, cooked for everyone at the summer BBQ.

Highlights

HACKENSACK PD VISIT TO HOLLEY WAS A SLAM DUNK!



Children at the Holley Center had a wonderful afternoon with Hackensack Police Department officers. They played an exciting game of basketball on the Holley playground and afterwards were invited by the children into each of their units for a chance to talk and get to know each other better. The officers personally encouraged the children and worked on building their trust. Special shout out to Holley staff, **Falana Alston**, for arranging the visit. Falana has made a personal commitment to engage the children in the community. In the spring, she arranged for two young women to share their essays at an Elks event. The children received gift cards and lots of encouragement from Elks members.

COOKING AT HOLLEY



Residential assistant, **Anne Bolt** teaching RTC youth cooking and baking skills at the Holley Center.

LAWNRIIDGE DINNER



Tywana Ross PD talking with young men as they have dinner.

Highlights

MOVIE NIGHT

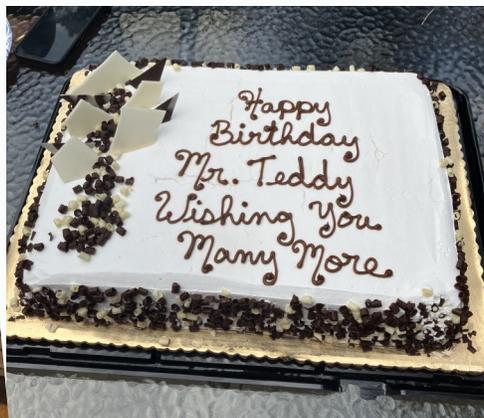
The entire treatment homes family hosted a movie night for their foster families and surrounding YCS residential programs. “It was truly remarkable...The kids, staff, and parents enjoyed a night outdoors, on inflatable furniture, eating pizza, popcorn, and socializing,” said **Tracie Bass**, TH AVP.



Treatment Home Staff
Anitra- Mentor
Darryl-Recruiter
Demira- Clinical Case Manager
Brittany-Clinician
Tracie—AVP
Ashia- Case Manager

Highlights

MR. TEDDY'S 70TH BIRTHDAY PARTY WITH HIS FAMILY, STAFF, AND FRIENDS AT CAVAN HOUSE



Thanks to all our colleagues who supported the 2023 YCS Charity Golf Classic

Please accept our sincere thanks to everyone who participated in the YCS Charity Golf Classic. Because of you, YCS raised over \$230,000 in support of vital YCS programming. Employees were event sponsors, foursomes, purchased tee signs, attended the dinner/auction and bid on items, and purchased 50/50 raffle tickets.

A HUGE thank you to the 15 departments who created the most amazing auction baskets!!!! We are excited to announce that the DDD Southern Region Lottery Basket raised the most \$ over retail cost!!! Tara is planning a thank you dinner for the winners.

Because of you, the event was the MOST successful EVER!

Thank you again.

Best,

Ruthie & The YCS Foundation Team

Congratulations to Tina Divco Price, Sr.VP of Business Affairs, winner of the 50/50/ Golf Classic raffle. Tina graciously donated half of her winnings back to YCS.

This newsletter 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 winter issue of Inside YCS is December 30th!



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