

# Inside YCS

A MAGAZINE  
BY AND FOR ALL YCS EMPLOYEES



VOLUME 14 | APRIL 2024

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Cover Photo: Mary Vallo and Diane Roefaro,  
George Washington School



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# President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

This year's winter weather seems to have lasted a little bit longer, but spring has finally arrived, and the blossoming flowers are a lovely reminder of how beautiful change can truly be. At YCS there has also been some very positive, encouraging changes. In March, salary increases for residential assistants were implemented and the best part is, they are retroactive starting the first pay period of the year. See page 25 for details



**Tara Augustine**

Looking ahead, I am very happy to report that the agency will once again be giving bonuses to the top performers of the agency. To make sure you qualify, review and work towards meeting your performance goals, complete all mandatory trainings, and check into your YCS email account at least once a week.

It feels good to succeed and I would like to commend the staff in our children's IDD programs for all their efforts to prepare for the Office of Licensing (OOL) visits. These inspections were successful with a minimum of necessary corrective actions. Also, kudos to all the safety officers and superusers who earned bonuses this quarter. We want everyone in the YCS Family to share in the pride of doing their best on the job and reaping the rewards. I know that the work we do every day is exceedingly difficult, but this makes our successes even more rewarding.

I would also like to congratulate the Institute for just completing a rigorous seven-year self-study to maintain its accreditation as an American Psychological Association (APA) doctoral training site. The Institute is the only clinical program to be recognized by the APA in the State of New Jersey. Not to be outdone, YCS George Washington School and Sawtelle Learning Center have both just successfully completed arduous DOE State monitoring.

In every issue of *Inside YCS*, we share with you the insights of our fellow employees who have had years of experience on the job. They have been trailblazers, and we can learn from their experiences. Also, many newer employees have fresh, innovative, ideas to help our participants recover and lead fulfilling lives. See pages 23-4.

Lastly, I would also like to remind everyone to sign up for the 403b Match if you have not done so already. It could mean hundreds of dollars towards your retirement savings every year. This is the agency's gift to you, please take advantage of this!

On May 20<sup>th</sup>, the YCS Blossoms Art Exhibit and Award Show will be held in the prestigious Bergen PAC. I hope to see you there, to support the children. It is going to be great!

With Warm regards,

# Welcome New Employees

*New Employees who have completed 90 days, January– March 2024*

Barbary, Lasheera Nurse LPN DDD-Buena Vista	Escalliere, Marsha Coordinator ResidentSvc DCF-PCH IDD Lawnridge	Johnson, Shante D. Residential Assistant DCF-RTC Holley	McClure, Christelle Advanced Practice Nurse HealthSvc-PsychPrescrib-N	Williams, Comisha Teacher Aide DOE-SLC
Christopher, Charisma Residential Assistant DCF-RTC Holley	Fulmore Fowlks, Quincy Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Bright Start	Johnston, Paige Clinician DCF-IRTS Holley Muller	Ragland, Dawn Program Director DCF-PCH BHDD Estell Man- or	
Covington, Elijah R. Teacher Aide DOE-George Washington	Gomez, Kaitlyn Teacher Aide DOE-George Washington	Jones, Zakkiyya Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Coopers Crossing	Robinson, Mark Program Director DCF-PCH IDD Lawnridge	
Davis, Isaiah A. Nurse LPN DDD-Buena Vista	Hampton, Tamar Program Director DCF-PCH Coopers Cross.	Lorick, Shawnte Clinician Fee for Svc DCF-PCH IDD Sawtelle Hall	Sholaja, Olanrewaju A. Personal Assistant DDD-Forest	
Daymon, Tafana R. Teacher Aide DOE-SLC	Hedgespeth, Shakia Teacher Aide DOE-SLC	Manning, Shamyah Case Manager DCF-PCH Malcolm House	Thomas, Yakema Consultant NonEE DCF-RTC Holley	

## Welcome New Interns

Adams, Danielle DCF-CSAP Hammonton	Kitzmiller, Kelsey DCF-PCH Vineland	Streater, Quinelyah DCF-PCH IDD Camden
Forrester, Celeste DCF-PCH Haddon Hts.	Peralta, Miguel Communications & PR	Williams, Tawanda A. DCF-PCH Sayre
James, Anaiah Communications & PR	Stephenson, Alicia DCF-PCH Sicklerville	

## Welcome Back

*We were sorry to see you move on, and are so happy you've come back to the YCS Family.*

Cavalcante, Zachary Clinician DCF-PCH Sicklerville	Dubois, Rossini Residential Assistant DCF-SPEC Kilbarchan
Daniels, Yakima C. Behaviorist HealthSvc-Behaviorists-S	Russell, Cardett E. Nurse LPN HealthSvc- ResidentNurse-N

# Shout Outs

## ¡TO ALL OUR AMAZING EMPLOYEES!

- ★ **April Wright** and **Ayana Fields** are such strong leaders at their programs! They have been doing an amazing job helping pick up shifts at other programs and helping to train new staff who come into their programs! Great job helping!
- ★ **Mariah Thomas** is such a great help at Coopers! Mariah is always willing to help with different tasks whether it's going food shopping for the program, helping to clean, or supporting the youth!
- ★ **Ted Mayo** from IT is such a help to the Southern Region! He is quick to respond to the different struggles our staff have with technology and has even come out to the programs to assist in different ways! Ted is such a great asset to YCS, and his hard work does not go unnoticed.
- ★ **Isabella Festa** is such an incredible clinician at Vineland. We are so lucky to have such a strong and passionate clinician to work with the youth here (and at Sayre & Sicklerville!)
- ★ **Michelle Robbins** has been such a help with the clinicians throughout the agency. She works hard to advocate on behalf of the youth, interns, and clinicians! Michelle is a great support and role model for new clinicians at our agency!
- ★ **Natasia Terry** is a great advocate and support for the youth at Sayre House! She is a strong leader and always helps in any way she can on shift. Natasia is a team player and positive role model!
- ★ **Ashley Hill** is doing incredible with covering intake! Not only is she responsive and quick in scheduling, but she is going above and beyond in this role. Thank you, Ashley, for all of your hard work!
- ★ **Tamar Hampton** is doing amazing in her new role as Program Director at Coopers Crossing! Her dedication and commitment to the program, staff, and youth is inspiring!
- ★ **Virginia Cortez, Carly Monaco, and Marisa Klemowitz** are such strong interns at Coopers Crossing! We are so lucky to have such passionate interns!
- ★ **Northern and Southern Region nurses** for all you do for the individuals served and our agency!!! YOU ROCK!!!
- ★ Thank you to nurses **Carlos Fajardo, Alexandra Dziubek, Samantha Litchfield, Latoya Pope, Paul McGann and Deanna DeStefano** for all your help providing coverage at GWS and Sawtelle Learning Center!
- ★ Thank you to nurses **Lisa Guargilia, Shona Little, Sharon Marshall, Chante Scott, Kyle Wdzieczkowski, Casey Burns and Deanna DeStefano** for providing staffing support to Sawtelle Buena Vista!

# Shout Outs

## ¡TO ALL OUR AMAZING EMPLOYEES!

- ★ **Carlene Colston** is always so gracious to every person who calls or visits our office. Everyone is treated with respect and consideration. She is the lynchpin that keeps us all focused on the positive and good in our suite. #Grateful
- ★ **George Rudisill** and **Amanda Garrett**- had a couple of challenging situations with clients and handled them amazingly. They developed plans, worked with the clients and were successful.
- ★ **Ashely Hill**- Has stepped into the role of intake coordinator and made it so the S.R. department has not missed a beat.
- ★ **Pfeni Flicker**- is the heartbeat that makes the region run. Anytime something is needed, she is there, willing to help, offer guidance, support and feedback. Thank you for everything you do, it would not be the same without you.
- ★ **Thomas Johnson** has been doing an amazing job balancing the hundreds of new hires, while also being supportive, responsive, helpful, and upbeat through all of his work! We are so grateful to work with him!!
- ★ **Nahla Nesheiwat**, GW school art teacher, for not only working so hard to create a beautiful yearbook for GW students but enlisting the support of her family to donate the funds to cover production costs.
- ★ **Michele DiFillipo** for all of her help and support for all staff! She attended Coopers Crossing staff meeting and provided full training on UKG and timekeeping. Michele answered questions and provided support to all staff!
- ★ **Kyle Johnson** for all of his continued advocacy for those at Vineland! Kyle is an awesome staff, and all of his dedication to the program is seen not only by his co-workers and administrative team, but the youth as well. It has been said that Kyle is accepting and supportive to all youth at the program and does a great job with them!
- ★ **Kristin Wistuba** for all of her hard work in QAPI! Not only is Kristin dedicated to her work, but also is always looking to improve programs in the best interest of the youth we serve! Kristin is awesome!!
- ★ **Molly Holt** has been an incredible advocate for the youth at Sayre House! Molly continues to go above and beyond in her role, while also helping in other areas of the agency including LGBTQ+ support group, cultural competence committee, and client satisfaction!
- ★ **Lisa Rapp** is a great clinical supervisor for clinicians! Not only is she helpful when meeting, but she is always supportive and helps guide towards bettering clinical practices. Thank you so much Lisa for all of your help!!
- ★ **Shanaya Battle** from Vineland is such a dedicated supervisor! Shanaya goes out of her way to make sure the program is the best it can be! She advocates on behalf of the youth in the program and does all she can to make it more comfortable for them (even redecorating the game room)!
- ★ **Zach Cavalcante** is doing amazing in his new role as clinician at Sicklerville! He has been an awesome clinical support on the team, and a great leader/teacher for our intern! We're so lucky to have Zach on our team!

# Promotions

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

**Tahjanay Johnson**, Coordinator ResidentSvc, DCF-PCH Davis House

**Bria J. Troutman**, Program Director, DCF-PCH IDD Camden Home

**Emily M. Miller**, Case Manager, DCF-PCH Sayre House

**Melissa Baguidy**, Teacher Assistant, DOE-Sawtelle Learning Center

**Patrick M. Baguidy**, AVP of Training

**BiYonce C. Woodard**, Shift Supervisor, DDD-Pearl Residence

**Jacob L. Shambry**, Shift Supervisor, DDD-Echohill Residence

**Quinice Anthony**, Shift Supervisor, DDD-Emergency Capacity Haledon

**Casey Burns**, Director of Nursing Southern Region

*With this success, comes greater opportunities and challenges.  
Face it with the same zeal as you always have.*

## Milestones

### PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS



**Raiyona Roane** at Laurie Haven received her LPC.

# Work Anniversaries

*Congratulations!!!*

## 35 YEARS

**Boswell Brown**, School Janitor, GW School  
**Delroy Reed**, Asst Program Director, Laurie Haven

## 30 YEARS

**Annie C. Leacock**, Residential Assistant, Davis House

## 25 YEARS

**Andres Hernandez**, Maintenance Supvr, Facilitie North

## 10 YEARS

**Anaya Baker**, House Manager, Absecon  
**Christopher Bertino**, Clinician, Treatment Homes S.  
**Marva L. Jean**, SRT Behavioral Assist, SRT-N  
**Jhim Charles**, Residential Assistant, Lawnridge  
**Anastaycea B. Stroman-Mayhue**, Residential Asst., Sewell

## 5 YEARS

**Tia-jhna Garrett**, Shift Supervisor, Malcolm House  
**Steven G. Harris**, Residential Assistant, Holley RTC  
**Tina M. Harris**, Personal Assistant, Pamela  
**Nicole Gurovich**, Speech CorrectLang SPC, Sawtelle Learning Ctr.  
**Butler M. Blevins Jr.**, Personal Assistant, Blackwood  
**Alexis A. Treanor**, Clinical Supervisor, Malcolm House  
**David D. Lofland**, Shift Supervisor, CSAP Winslow  
**Kyle C. Price**, Personal Assistant, Blackwood  
**Shavona Boateng**, Personal Assistant, Absecon  
**Tkemia Brunson**, Shift Supervisor, Camden Home

*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.*

*Day in and day out, you continue to shine.  
Your devotion and dedication to our mission is a rare gift.*

*Thank you!*

# Frontline Snapshots



*Yadira Ruiz*

**Yadira Ruiz** is as passionate about her job today as a cook at GW School as she was eight years ago when she joined the YCS Family. "I love coming to work every day because I love the children," says Yadira. She puts this love into preparing hot nutritious lunches for the students.

**Do you have a colleague on the front lines that you would like to recognize?  
Send us a snapshot of them working on the job and a brief caption for this new section!**



**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](mailto: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](mailto:info@ycs.org)  
or call **Barbara** or **Janis** at 201-678-1312

*Deadline for the summer issue of Inside YCS is July 31st!*

# Employee Spotlight

## Mary Vogt and Diane Roefaro GW School



When Mary Vogt and Diane Roefaro began their careers at YCS 30+ years ago as school secretary and teacher assistant, YCS operated only one K-12 school, there was one person in HR, and almost everything was recorded with pen and paper. All of that has changed over the years, but the respect and admiration Mary and Diane have earned has only grown. Today, both women share the administrative responsibilities at GW School and are considered by their colleagues to be the lynchpins that keep the school running smoothly. They are so in sync that the joke is if one starts a sentence the other will finish it!

"Mary and Diane do not realize how much they do...They always go above and beyond for everyone here and are responsible for all the data on staff and students that are required by the State Department of Education," adds Dr. Tatum Stein, principal.

When asked how they sustain their motivation on the job after three decades, their answer is quite simple: "The people we work with are, and always have been, wonderful...Their commitment is inspiring, and of course, we love the children," says Mary. In turn, Mary and Diane agree that their colleagues are very respectful of the work they do, and they always feel appreciated.

Mary and Diane describe the atmosphere at the school as very familial. "We support each other throughout good times and bad, sicknesses and deaths, marriages and births," explains Mary, adding, "Nobody leaves GW easily."

Their personal secret to working harmoniously in the office is "mutual respect." They both agree that over three decades they have had to make many adjustments - whether adapting to new school leadership or administrative changes. Their solution is "be patient and be helpful," according to Mary.

Probably the biggest challenge that they've confronted as administrative assistants is the changes in technology. "When I started here," says Diane, "I was using a word processor." Diane and Mary admit that "technological" progress can be daunting, but they have a positive outlook. Mary's motto is "Nothing is really too difficult...It is just new."

Diane adds, "If I see that Mary is swamped working on Oracle, I pick up all the phone calls and I know she will do the same for me if I am overwhelmed with work."

They are especially proud of their knack for fixing a finicky copier. Joy Pagano, school social worker agrees "If the copier breaks or someone needs help with almost anything, Mary and Diane are the people we go to."

It is a source of pride that their children have also worked at YCS. Diane's daughter worked for two years as a student teacher at GW and Sawtelle Learning Center, while Mary's son worked for six years as a teacher assistant at GW. Her daughter also changed her career path from business to teaching after a summer internship at GW.

# Employee Spotlight

## Shamyra Ware

### NJAHMAA Champion of Children's Direct Care Services Award Nominee

When Charles Wiseley III program manager at the CSAP Hammonton program, learned about an opportunity to nominate one of his staff for the NJAHMAA Champion of Children's Direct Care Services Award, he jumped right on it. We would like to share with you his nomination for Shamyra Ware.

Shamyra Ware has been with YCS since 2014. She started out as a behavioral assistant and is currently supervisor at Hammonton CSAP program. I have known Shamyra for one year as a colleague at Hammonton. During the time I have worked with her, I have had the honor of witnessing her adaptability and excellent communication, problem solving and leadership skills. Shamyra is always supportive of behavioral and clinical plans and works well with all the consumers to eliminate challenging behaviors.

Even on the most difficult days, Shamyra stays focused and continues to perform her duties above and beyond. For example, a new consumer was assigned to the Hammonton CSAP. He was non-verbal and very shy. Upon arrival, he would wear a hoodie all day and his daily hygiene was a challenge for staff. The youth refused to wash his hair or allow staff to assist him.

For two months, Shamyra worked with the young man daily on his hygiene. As a result, he began to trust Shamyra. He removed his hoodie and allowed her to hand wash his hair, brush it, and apply hair products. Recently, the youth walked into my office smiling from ear-to-ear to show me his hair.

Due to Shamyra's dedication, patience, and love for her job, the young man no longer wears the hoodie and performs proper hygiene daily. He is making incredible progress due to Shamyra's patience and dedication.

As a program director with Hammonton CSAP, I have nothing but positive things to say about Shamyra. There is no doubt in my mind that Shamyra is the cornerstone of what YCS represents.



Shamyra helps a young man get ready for the Sneaker Ball.

# Intern Corner

## Interview with Communication Department Interns, Anaiah James, Public Health student at Rutgers University and Miguel Peralta, Marketing student at Berkeley College



### **Miguel Peralta**

#### ***What part of your academic journey are you on? What college do you attend?***

I am currently finishing the last semester of my senior year and will be graduating this upcoming May. I will be receiving a bachelor's degree in marketing communications from Berkeley College.

#### ***What are key learning takeaways you received from the internship? How can this apply to your career?***

This internship helped me find ways to communicate with the internal and external members of the organization. Some of my responsibilities included creating the activity sheet for YCS houses; the highlight section of the newsletter; and helping the team with the creation of different social media posts. The most challenging part of the internship was learning the proper ways to communicate through the voice of the company.

#### ***How was it working alongside your fellow intern?***

Working with the communications department was one of the highlights of this internship, as we were able to create a productive and enjoyable environment. The department made it easy for me to feel comfortable to participate in conversations and provide my insights on the projects we worked on.

# Intern Corner

## *How was your experience working with your direct supervisor?*

Barbara May welcomed me with open arms and made sure that she created a safe space for my ideas to be heard. She gave me the creative freedom to work on the different projects, and then guided me on how to make them stronger and be more efficient with the creation. Every question and concern that I raised to her, she was more than willing to help, and I am beyond grateful for her time and expertise.

## **Anaiah James**

### *When did you start your internship? What were your favorite assignments?*

I started my internship in mid-January of 2024. My favorite project since then was taking lead on the activities for March Women's History Month. During this month I developed the Women's Empowerment Playlist compiled from YCS staff's favorite female artist. The purpose of this playlist was to honor and share women artists who have empowered many of us over the years. My favorite contribution however was creating the Women's Entrepreneur Spotlight. I designed posts that gave distinction to the many women entrepreneurs, donors, and leaders partnering with YCS. I am incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to curate and publish my own work.

### *Overall, how has this internship impacted your career goals?*

Working alongside my supervisors has encouraged me to pursue my passions. Seeing the joy they have for advocating and communicating for those with special needs has emboldened my pursuit to work in public health and later apply to medical school. This experience has given me the confidence to explore and nurture my creative side while continuing to delve into my healthcare interest.

### *How has it been working alongside your fellow intern?*

Getting to know and collaborate with Miguel has genuinely been one of the best parts of this experience. We have managed to share more than just project ideas but many laughs and boba teas throughout these past few months. It was a pleasure having someone to talk to about school, the internship and life. Miguel quickly became a friend rather than just a fellow intern.

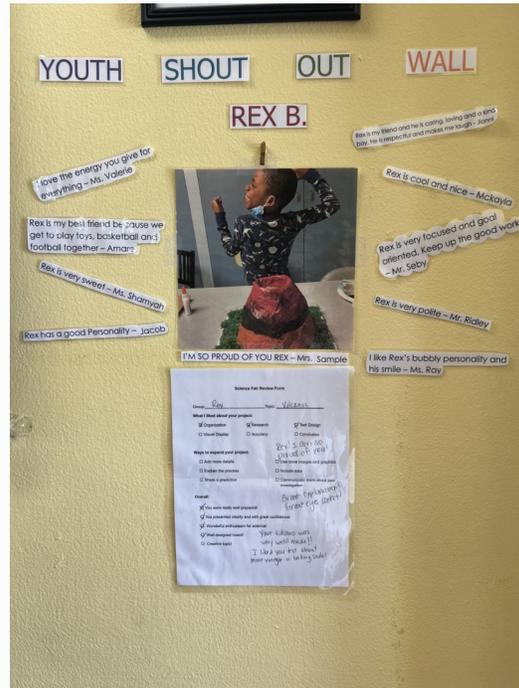


*It has been a real pleasure working with Miguel and Anaiah. They were always ready to take on any task whether it was social media posts, PR research, creating campaigns, creating graphics, or a mailing. They brought fresh creativity to our work that was well noted. As a supervisor, I appreciated their respectfulness and gratitude for sharing my knowledge with them. I wish them both great success for all their future endeavors.*

~ Barbara May, Director of Communications

# Leading with Heart

## Case Manager Intern Valerie Jacquez



“Rex B. had the opportunity to be a part of his school's science fair, he worked very hard with Valerie Jacquez case managing intern, for over 2 1/2 weeks to build a volcano and create a poster board explaining his project. On the poster board he wrote his hypothesis, his theory and his outcome of the theory after experimenting with the elements. The day he presented the project, he came home, with a huge smile on his face and a letter from his teacher with a rave review. To congratulate him we had the other youths, and some staff write some nice things and we created a shout out wall and had a pizza party with cake.” Valerie Jacquez

Valerie is a Case Manager Intern at Laurie Haven. She is a wonderful team player working closely with youths' clinicians. She is very enthusiastic about her internship. She engages with children and offers emotional support when needed. Valerie helps the children with homework, assists clinicians to conduct clinical groups, prepares home pass schedules, and coordinates weekend home passes. Valerie does it all! The staff and children are dearly going to miss her when the internship ends. **Seby George, LCSW**

# Highlights

## Celebrating Black History Month



The Jamaica Organization of NJ (JONJ) - Bergen Chapter hosted a robust Black History Month celebration at the Word of Wisdom Church in Teaneck. The event kicked off with the reading of a proclamation from Josh Gottheimer and was followed by a score of gifted guest performances including a youth joint choir of children from the Holley Center and several local churches.

Special thanks to YCS staff **Ester Edwards** for providing the children a wonderful opportunity to participate in the community and share their talents.

## Sip and Paint with the CREW



YCS SRT have been organizing creative events for the residents at various DCF and DDD homes. They make each event special with a delicious meal, festive decorations, music, and an interesting activity everyone (staff included) can get involved in.

# Highlights

## Just in Time for Spring!

The Holley Center has a beautiful new gazebo in the center of the Todd Ouida Children's Garden thanks to a generous grant from our very thoughtful partners at The Home Depot Foundation. To ensure that the gazebo can withstand inclement weather, Team Depot laid down a cement base to secure the permanent structure. They also donated a picnic table for the children to enjoy a snack, do homework or participate in therapy sessions. Home Depot Team is not done yet! Once the weather warms up, they will return with garden products to refresh the vegetable patch and flower beds. Special thanks to **Esther Edwards** for advocating on behalf of the Holley Center to make the garden area a beautiful and restorative place for the children and staff.



## Liz Jessen, YCS Occupational Therapy VP, works with children at her church to spread cheer at YCS



“Because holidays and special occasions should be celebrated, the St. Rose of Lima candidates for confirmation gathered for a special service project to create and decorate 60 special birthday boxes for children in YCS residences. I am thankful to each of our volunteers for their time and help.” Liz Jessen Coordinator of Faith Formation.

The birthday boxes have been distributed by the YCS Foundation to the Holley Center, Davis House, Laurie Haven, Coopers Crossing and Estell Manor.

# Highlights

## With a “Dig In!” Grant, KB starts a Vegetable Garden



Kilbarchan case managers, **Keyona Rogers** and **Brigette Mena**, went above and beyond to secure a grant for a community garden project on the KB Campus, according to Lissa Captain, AVP and campus director. The design for the grant, called Dig In!, is providing three large raised planters, soil, seeds, hoses, trellises, and fencing. Most importantly, Keyonna and Brigette are getting a valuable education on the fundamentals of gardening that they are sharing with interested youth on the campus.

In a letter confirming the grant City Green wrote, “[We] are proud to become your partner in community gardening...We were impressed by your vision for the YCS Kilbarchan campus garden to function as a space to cultivate new skills, cooperation, and independence among residents.”

## *What you need to know if your program is working directly with a donor.*

The YCS Foundation is very grateful to employees who have established personal connections with friends, family, organizations, or businesses who want to contribute to your program. In order to give the persons or organizations the proper credit that they will need for tax purposes, please forward information about the donor/donation to the YCS Foundation at [heart@ycs.org](mailto:heart@ycs.org). The Foundation will send a thank you letter and all proper tax documentation.

The YCS Foundation appreciates your enthusiasm and we are here to assist you in any way that we can.

# Highlights

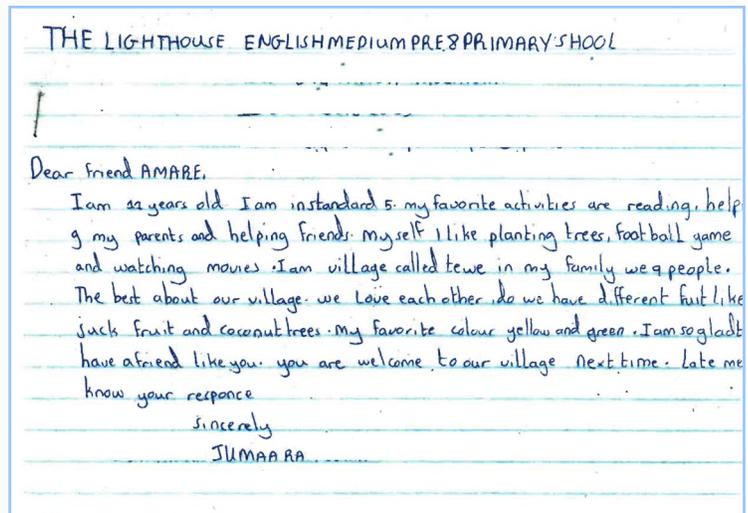
## Making Friends Across the Globe

*Children at George Washington School and Laurie Haven are learning about life in Ghana and Tanzania from their new pen pals.*

At the Laurie Haven group home, children are exchanging letters with students from Lighthouse English Primary School in Tanga, Tanzania. Learning about a different culture and way of life has been a real eye opener for the students, according to Etta Sample, program director.

"The children were elated to receive letters from the Tanzanian students and their reactions to the letters were priceless... Knowing that students from another country read their letters and wrote back to them was exciting, and they are eager to continue the exchange and learn more about Tanzania," said Ms. Sample. The Tanzania pen pal project is spearheaded by YCS Chaplain William Waller.

At GW School, students recently decorated T-shirts for students at Independence Municipal Assembly Junior School in Obuhsai, Ghana following an exchange of letters last year. The project was initiated by Focus on the Future - a non-profit founded by Deanna Craig. "Over the years, my Focus on the Future friends have grown and are generous enough to share some of their own bounty with me to assist in my many ventures at YCS...Whenever I can, I try to extend the enrichment activities with the children to encourage charity," explained Ms. Craig.



# Highlights



## Valentine's Day Celebration at Sayre House

The staff set up the dining room for Valentine's Day and surprised the youth at Sayre with a breakfast. The youth had bagels, heart shaped donuts and received little goodie bags with candy and balloons.

Thank you to Ms. **Yasmin Davis** who helped set up the party! Yasmin was a great help in making sure the kids enjoyed their breakfast while playing music for them to sing and dance to.



## Valentine's Day Celebration at SLC

The entire Sawtelle Learning Center took part in a Valentine's Day scavenger hunt in the gym by finding, and matching and collecting 10 various valentine pictures. In the afternoon the students made popcorn in a popcorn maker in their classroom. Everyone enjoyed the fun activity and the smell and taste of warm buttered popcorn!

# Highlights

## Staff Potluck Luncheon at YCS Kilbarchan

“We started to do potluck lunches every few months for the staff. Usually the clinical team organizes it, but it’s for the campus! Since most kids are in school, the clinical or nursing staff take turns even for 15 minutes so RA staff on the floor can come down, say hi, make a plate and go back to the unit if they can’t sit longer. The lunches are closer to 2 pm so we could get some of the second shift staff as well! We did one around the holidays, improved it for this one, and then plan to do another one I think around April or so (aiming for every 2 months maybe)...just a way to bring everyone together with some food!” Lissa Captain



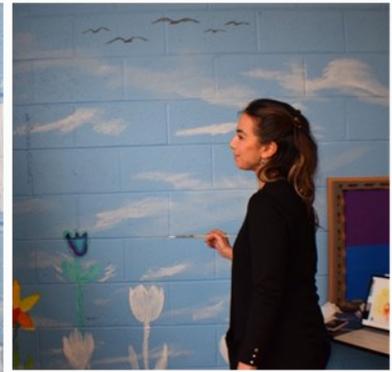
## Celebrating with Co-Workers



# Highlights



## Mural painting with Lara Arbore YCS George Washington School



Lara Arbore, visiting artist at YCS GW School, was originally contracted to teach the students about color and textures. Finding that the children enjoyed the workshops and could do much more, GW principal Dr. Tatum (Stein) Johnson approached Arbore about creating murals with the students. The idea blossomed and Arbore was commissioned to create murals in the school's soothing rooms (called Zen Dens) and hallways. The students eagerly volunteered to assist Arbore in bringing the school walls to life with colorful images of landscapes, powerful ocean waves, and the solar system.

The best part for Frank, 13, an upper grade student, was the individual sessions he had with Arbore. "It was a privilege to be part of the mural projects," says Frank. "When I paint, I feel stress relief and I can express my emotions." He is especially pleased with the frozen red plant that he painted for the solar system mural. "It makes me feel good that the younger children on the second floor can see this every day," says Frank.

On Arbore's website, Third Eye Theory, she explains, "My mission is to help transform pain into purpose and passion into action so we may live in our light and shine as cohesively as the stars in the sky." This talented artist has fulfilled her mission at GW School by creating an environment that gives joy and comfort to the students daily.

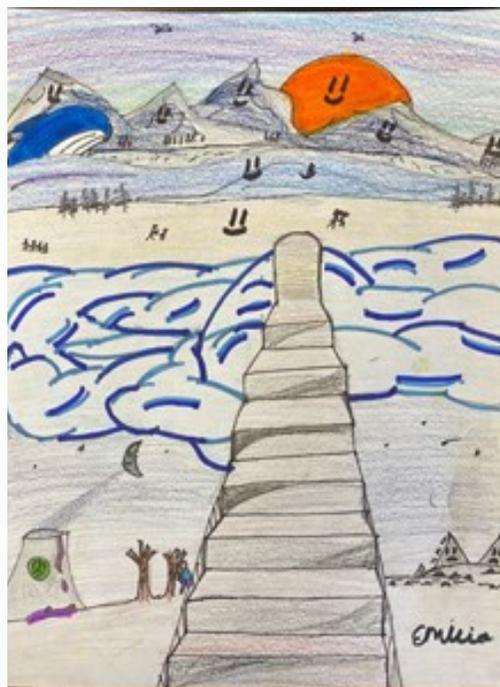
The project was made possible by many generous donors to the YCS Foundation for arts enrichment activities for children in YCS schools and residences.

# Highlights

## Spiritual Mindfulness Graduation



In 2022, the YCS Chaplain Dr. William Waller piloted Spiritual Mindfulness workshops for children in several of the YCS therapeutic group homes. The 12 week program received an overwhelming positive response from the youth. At a recent ceremony to mark the completion of the workshops for 35 youths at the Davis House, Holley Center, Sayre House and Kilbarchan Campus, many of the youths expressed their dismay that the workshops had to end. Mr. Bill, as he is affectionately known by the children, reminded them that he was just a phone call away if they needed to talk to him and that they could continue to do some of the exercise themselves by visiting the spiritual mindfulness library on the YCS website. When asked by YCS President Tara Augustine what other topics the children wanted to discuss, they replied, “self- esteem,” “trust,” and “self-love.”



**YCS Blossoms Art Exhibition  
& Awards Show**

***The World of  
Pure Imagination***

**May 20, 2024**

**6-8pm**

Awards Show begins at 6:30 pm

**Sandy Bennett Gallery  
bergenPAC**

30 North Van Brunt Street  
Englewood, NJ



Enriching All We Possess

# Innovations

## LGBTQ+ Support Group

The Southern Region has been holding LGBTQ+ support groups for clients! Participants come from different programs twice per month to share, support, and socialize! These groups have been absolutely incredible in the way that they continuously help provide a safe space for clients to share struggles and offer guidance from peers. The groups are led by incredible clinicians in the region, who help guide the groups through different topics, process together in open forum, or lead different activities! Those who have been attending have voiced how much these groups have helped and they often don't want to leave at the end! This is why (by popular demand) we have increased

**ALLIES & ADVOCATES**



**PEER SUPPORT**

**Join us the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month!**

**Dinner Provided!**

the frequency of the groups from once per month, to twice! The group has continued to grow and grow, and we are so happy to be able to provide such a positive space for these participants!

Not only is this a group for clients, but is also an educational group training for staff. While the group is being held in one room, staff who bring the participants for the group are provided training in another. A clinician provides a training to the staff onsite on the topic of discussion during group. During the training, staff have the opportunity to ask questions, and learn about the group topic. Not only do the staff receive a guided training by the clinicians during these groups, but they also receive a small hand-out/packet that provides information on what they've learned in the training, what the youth have learned in group, "ways to support youth" following the group, any trigger warnings, and even the type of group and group note! Our goal is to create a safe environment and support for all youth and staff!

We are so proud that we were able to create such a welcoming, safe, and fun environment for our participants to express themselves in a no-judgment, supportive space! **Brad Vetterly & Pfeni Flicker**

# Innovations

## Putting Our Focus on the Positives

The Parent Satisfaction Committee has recently initiated a Family Communications Pilot Project to better inform parents of the progress their child is making while in a YCS residence. “In reviewing the results of the parent satisfaction survey, we discovered that parents often times were unaware of the positive progress their child was making and were more focused on their deficits,” said **Jacqueline Maddi**, BCBA, VP and committee member.

This pilot gives staff space to focus on the resident’s achievements by identifying specific skill areas the resident is working on. Each program has received skill charts to assist them in identifying and tracking this progress. Parents will then be informed of one or more strengths that their child has demonstrated since their last treatment plan meeting.

The programs selected for the pilot project are: Sicklerville, CSAP Winslow, Willingboro, Lawn Ridge, Holley RTC, and Greenbrook.

Dianna Chipkin, a committee member and YCS Parent Advocate, hopes the pilot will increase communication with family members and lead to more positive outcomes for their children.

**William Waller**, VP

Parent Satisfaction Committee Chair

# Program Accomplishments

## Congratulations to Staff at IDD/PCH Programs

As an agency, the number of citations for all our IDD/PCHs decreased by 42% since the last OOL inspection 2023!

Improvement	
-80%	Sawtelle Camden*
81%	Sawelle Sewell
70%	CSAP Hammonton
71%	CSAP Winslow
50%	Estell Manor
56%	Cedarbrook
0%	Sawtelle Hall
19%	Lawnridge

“Preparing for inspections can be arduous and we truly appreciate everyone's efforts. Great job!”  
Jaime Fox, LCSW, MLSP  
Chief Quality and Compliance Officer

\* Shout Out to Sawtelle Camden -  
The home has continued to have the fewest licensing violations two years in a row.

# Agency Updates

## Base Rate Pay Increase for RAs and PAs - Effective March 17th.

One major concern that stood out in the employment engagement survey was the need for parity in pay for staff who have been working for a long time at a lower rate and new employees who have been recently hired at a newer start salary.

The new hourly wage increase for all RAs, PAs, Shift Supervisors and SRT BAs will be in the range of \$18.00 - \$21 depending on the program and employee's role. Note: This pay increase will be retroactive to January 1, 2024. This rate increase only applies to employees in the above job roles. If an employee already makes more than this, their wages will not be impacted. **Steve Kessler**, Chief Human Resources Officer

### New Hourly Rates

PA - \$ 18.00

RA - \$18.50

Medically Fragile DDD and CSAP - \$19.00

IRTS (Bachelor Degree Req.) - \$ 20.00

All Shift Supervisors \$ 21.00

## IT Department Update

I am pleased to announce an important update to our security policy regarding passwords and multi-factor authentication (MFA). Effective immediately, passwords no longer expire for user accounts. This change is accompanied by the mandatory use of multi-factor authentication (MFA) for all accounts.

This update aligns with industry best practices and enhances the security of our systems by ensuring that even if a password is compromised, the additional layer of MFA will prevent unauthorized access.

Here are a few key points to note about this update:

Passwords will no longer need to be changed periodically (Office 365 credentials – SSO UKG, Oracle, Microsoft).

Multi-factor authentication (MFA) will be mandatory for accessing our systems.

Please ensure that your contact information, including your mobile number, is up to date in our system for MFA verification purposes.

We understand that security is a top priority, and these changes are designed to protect our data and systems. If you have any questions or need assistance with setting up MFA, please reach out to our IT support team at [Helpdesk@ycs.org](mailto:Helpdesk@ycs.org).

Thank you for your attention to this important update. **Hing Shung-Chan**, Chief Technology & Security Officer

# Agency Updates

## Clinical Rounds Schedule

### **Introduction to Psychodrama**

**Wednesday, May 8 | 10:00-11:30am (Virtual)**

This training will introduce psychodrama interventions for clinical applications. Psychodrama is an effective treatment for complex grief, trauma, and relational issues. Clinicians will learn how to utilize this expressive therapy approach that offers corrective emotional experiences for people in clinical groups or individual treatment.

### **SuperPersona: Empowering Your Clients with Psychodrama, Sara Butler, LCSW CP, PAT—The Otter Group**

**Thursday, June 13 | 10:00am-12:00pm in East Orange**

In this training, clinicians will explore and create their superhero or superheroine selves by identifying aspects of their Power, Vulnerability, and Alter Ego. This workshop utilizes warmup exercises, action, and sharing to help explore different role aspects and cultural conserves related to identity. Participants will learn how creativity can be used to help empower and promote personal growth.

Training will be followed by lunch and a restorative session from 12:00-2:00pm.

### **Abridged Ethics and Documentation for YCS Clinicians, Kristine Bersch, LCSW & Jaime Fox**

**Wednesday, July 10 | 10:00-11:30am (Virtual)**

This training will provide an overview of professional ethics for social work and counseling professionals. An additional presentation with the YCS Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Team will prepare clinicians for licensing visits by providing an overview of essential documentation and best practices for clinical

### **Reminder - Mark your calendars**

**Monthly Clinical CARE Rounds are on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 10am-2pm.**

**The Intern Roundtable and Intern Supervisors meetings are on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 12-1 and 1-2, respectively.**

# Agency Updates

## Congratulations to Safety Officers receiving bonuses for the first quarter of 2024

Program	Safety Officer
Holley Center	Kayla Billips
Fisher Hall	Ebenezer Abuchi
Muller IRTS	Aaron Ruiz
Kilbarchan	James Magazine
Kilbarchan IRTS	Lissa Captain
Kilbarchan PAU	James Magazine
CSAP Hammonton	Gregory Allen-Jackson
CSAP Winslow	David Lofland
Phoenix	Angela Newman
Davis House	Jakim Jackson
Estell Manor	Shatina Hadden
Haddon Heights	Tia Smith
Laurie Haven	Delroy Reid
Malcolm House	Tiajhana Garrett
Sayre House	Jason Rogers
Sicklerville	Ayana Fields
Vineland	Malcolm Rease
Cooper's Crossing	Jade Birts

Program	Safety Officer
Sawtelle Absecon	Amanda Thomas
Sawtelle Blackwood	Cassandra Smith
Sawtelle Buena Vista	Lisa Smith
Sawtelle Buffalo	Sharon McKay
Sawtelle Echohill	Latasha Peoples
Sawtelle Forest	Richard Lawrence
Sawtelle Greenbrook	Tanasha Liggins
Sawtelle Haledon	Quinice Anthony
Sawtelle Morris	Leidy Gomez
Sawtelle Pamela	Oloruntosin Adetunji
Sawtelle Pearl	Biyonce Woodard
Sawtelle Toledo	Marilyn Bragg
Sawtelle Walnut	Uzoamaka Njoku
Sawtelle Willingboro	Anetra Riddick
Sawtelle Camden	Driss Ouhdu
Sawtelle Cedarbrook	Danelle Cordy
Sawtelle Lawn Ridge	Edison Gordon
Sawtelle Sewell	Chanae Maynard

## Thank you Superusers!

Thank you to all of the ECR Superusers who have been providing ECR training for new hires and ongoing training to YCS Staff. We appreciate your taking on this crucial role in addition to your current job duties.

**Dina Sundberg, MA**  
IMS Director



*Embracing All the Possibilities®*