

Inside YCS

A NEWSLETTER
BY AND FOR ALL YCS EMPLOYEES



TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	3
Welcome New Employees	4
New Employee Profiles	5
Promotions	6
Milestones	6
Work Anniversaries	7
Condolences	7
Moving On	8
Employee Awards	9
Shoutouts	9
Employee Spotlight	10-11
Intern Corner	12-13
Leading with Heart	14-15
Highlights	16-21
Innovations	22-24
Agency Updates	25-29
Upcoming Events	30-31

Cover photo: Keona Reeves, CRS



President/CEO
Tara Augustine

Editor
Janis Nicolosi-Endo

Designer
Barbara May

Inside YCS
is produced by YCS
25 East Salem Street, 3rd floor
Hackensack, NJ 07601
www.ycs.org

© 2023 YCS Inc.
All rights reserved.

Inside YCS
may not be reproduced
without the written
permission of YCS.

Contact
Janis Nicolosi-Endo
201-678-1312
or jnendo@ycs.org

President's Message

Welcome to the spring edition of *Inside YCS*. I am grateful to our communications department that works very hard sharing information with all our employees so that we can spread the word regarding the wonderful happenings at YCS. This newsletter is an opportunity to learn about what our children and adult residential programs, our schools and our community-based programs are doing to improve the lives of those we serve. It is important that our employees have ways to feel connected across so many different services.



Tara Augustine

Spring is a time to enjoy the return of warm weather. I know my mind instinctively turns towards the outdoors, getting in shape, BBQs and all the other fun activities that are associated with the season. Paradoxically for many agencies, like ours, it is also the fourth quarter of the fiscal year – a time when we are very busy wrapping up all the business for 2022-3 and setting new goals for the next fiscal year. We are being very intentional about our goals for this next fiscal year, which will include a large emphasis on employee wellness, engagement, satisfaction, and retention.

This work should not mean we have to forego the joys that the spring season brings. It is a great opportunity for all of us to re-invigorate our lives. The new wellness initiative at YCS is a wonderful place to start. I hope you check in on a Wednesday team meeting for some gentle exercise, conversation about nutrition or managing stress (p. 22 & 23). Join the prayer line Wednesdays at 7:30 or partake in your reflective consultation group which aims at creating a climate in which both you as the helper and our participant's needs are being considered so that our interventions are more successful.

Now is also the ideal time to partner with the children or older participants and take advantage of allied therapy opportunities, and community-based outings. Gardening is a great form of exercise and a wonderful way to reduce anxiety. Decorating your sites or offices with flowering plants or fragrant herbs also creates a soothing environment. You might want to set up a walking club or plan outings to a local park, botanical garden, or street fair. Many spring and summer events are free and give participants a chance to engage with their community. By factoring in meaningful enjoyment, the "business" side of your workday will be easier to accomplish.

Lastly, I hope you are inspired by the new section of our newsletter, "Leading with Heart" (p. 14-15). I am continually in awe of how deeply many of you care about the people entrusted to YCS and am happy that we can highlight some of these efforts with all of you.

With best wishes for your health and happiness,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tara". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Welcome New Employees

New Employees who have completed 90 days, January—March 2023

Brown-Miller, Ahyan Personal Assistant DDD - Cavan House	Lubintus, Todd Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Lawnridge	Settle, Terrance Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Davis	Walls, Andrew Residential Assistant DCF-PCH BHDD Estell Manor
Dorsey, Jamar Personal Assistant DDD-Hilltop	Martin, Jadae Personal Assistant DDD-Apts Supvr Buffalo	Spells, Naimah SRT Behavioral Assist SRT - N	Woodyard, Jasmine S. Clinician DCF-PCH Phoenix
Gilliens, David Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Davis	Myricks, Patryce C. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Fisher Hall	Stratton, Janay Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Coopers Crossing	Works, Cory Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Camden
Glenn, Cleopatra Residential Assistant DCF-PCH BHDD Estell Manor	Odom, Tanzanaya Personal Assistant DDD-Greenbrook	Terry, Natasia Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Sayre	Wright, Kimberly Personal Assistant DDD-Willingboro
Holmes Jr., Melvin Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Cedarbrook	Reddick, Artima Accounts Payable Supvr Accounting & Finance	Tirado, Daniel A. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Phoenix	Young, Raven M. Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Lawnridge

Bowers, Jan Intern Exec Administration	Jarvis, Rebekah Consultant DCF-RTC Holley	Peets, Xanidya Volunteer Training
Galeta, Inna Physical Therapist DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	Kamara, Madinatu Intern DCF-RTC Holley	Polizzi, Joseph Intern Treatment Home-Southern

Y C S' Pledge to You

We will make sure every employee is...

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

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

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

New Employee Profiles

DR. FRANK C. BOCKOWSKI, CFO



YCS welcomes new Chief Financial Officer Dr. Frank C. Bockowski. He brings to the YCS organization an abundance of expertise in both the private and nonprofit corporate sectors including work at the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation as their Comptroller, the Meadowlands Area YMCA as CFO, and Ernst & Young as an Investigative Accountant.

“I am excited to be a part of this new chapter at YCS and look forward to helping YCS become more financially stable,” says Dr. Bockowski. Frank, as he prefers to be called, has a Doctor of Philosophy - PhD in Accounting from The University of Sheffield, an MBA in Accounting from Baruch College, and a BS in Actuarial Science from NYU Stern School of Business. He spends his free time volunteering in the fire department with his two children. They are “explorer” members while he is a Lieutenant firefighter, captain of the

high angle rescue team, diver, and EMT. In 2021, his community honored him with the EMS Provider of the Year award and top EMT in District for his dedicated service during the pandemic.

TINA DEVICO-PRICE, SR. VP OF BUSINESS AFFAIRS

We would like to welcome Tina DeVico-Price, new Senior Vice President of Business Affairs to the YCS Family. Her responsibilities at YCS include overseeing the maintenance of facilities, purchasing, food services, building grant applications and monitoring, and management of the transportation department.

Tina has more than 20 years of experience working in the clinical and healthcare industry. Most recently, she was a Director of Partnership Operations and Regional Director of Operations at Wellpath, a Medical and Mental Healthcare agency offering a full range of services to individuals in corrections. Previously, she worked as Director of Quality Management for PerformCare in Robbinsville.



“Over the past three years, YCS has been earnestly invested in improving and enhancing the physical environments of some of our facilities. I am confident that under the able leadership of Tina, with the support of the facilities and finance departments, we will robustly continue to ensure that every residence and program meets the highest standards,” Tara Augustine.

Tina earned a Master of Arts Degree in counselor education from Kean University and Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and Bachelor of Science Degree in administration of justice from Rutgers University.

Outside of work, Tina is an active mom of two girls and her multiple pets.

Promotions

Congratulations! You inspire us all to move forward & keep working towards our goals.

Bartley-Rogers, Sherene, Program Director, DCF-PCH Phoenix

Casey, Emily, Clinician, DCF-PCH BHDD Estell Manor

Hadden, Shatina, Shift Supervisor, DCF-PCH BHDD Estell Manor

Liggins, Tanasha, Shift Supervisor, DDD-Greenbrook

Malone, LaShayna, House Manager, DDD-Pamela

Perry, Shavanka, Shift Supervisor, DDD-Walnut

Sundberg, Dina, IMS Director, Info Management Systems

Ware, Shamyra S., Shift Supervisor, DCF-CSAP Hammonton

Milestones

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Congratulations to **Denisha Givens** on earning a Master's Degree in Human Behavior and Organizational Psychology!!

Congratulations to **Yakima Daniels**, behaviorist in the Southern Region who has earned a Master's in Arts with a concentration in Special Education. She has completed her 1500 hours of supervision and will be preparing to sit for the BCBA exam. Go Yakima!!!

Congratulations to **Eddie Bonnaci**, southern region BCBA, who has been accepted into a Doctorate program in Trauma Informed Care at Liberty University.

BIRTHS



Congratulations to **Jessica Johnson** at Laurie Haven! She welcomed a baby boy, Tristan, 7 lbs 17oz, on February 25, 2023.

Moving On

IT'S HARD TO SAY GOODBYE!

Wishing our colleagues all the best as they begin their new Journeys!

For the past 20 years, **Larry Bernard** and **Earl Hogan** worked side-by-side to assist every program across the agency. Earl was known for his big smile and cheery attitude, and Larry kept everyone laughing with his wry sense of humor. But behind it all, both men had huge hearts and were frequently relied upon to do whatever was necessary to help the staff and children. If both men had one fault, it would be that they never could say no to anyone in the agency who asked for help or a special favor. We wish them good health and happiness as they begin their new journeys.

Farewell message from Earl Hogan

“Working with you all has been an honor and pleasure; you will be missed. However, I'm excited about my retirement. I want to say farewell to all of you. Thank you for the special bond you have shared with me. I will be taking special memories of our time working together as a Senior RA and being YCS Fleet Manager. YCS makes a difference in people's lives. Please keep up the excellent work. Thank you everyone.”



Laurence Bernard **Earl Hogan**

Farewell message from Laurence Bernard

“I need to say thank you as a group, as you have allowed me to get the best out of myself and I don't think there is anything better to say about the folks one works with. My appreciation for who you are as individuals is huge!! As the Grateful Dead once sang; ‘It's been a long, strange trip.’ Thank you for all our accomplishments, even during the hard times, as we were able to ‘sing, dance and tell jokes’. For that, my sincere thanks.”



Haley Tripoli

QAPI wants to thank our intern, **Haley Tripoli**. She started working with QAPI in September 2022 and will be finishing her internship in April. During the last 7 months, she has been an asset to our department. As a returning student, Haley has offered a unique perspective which includes personal life experience to this position. During her work with QAPI, Haley created both a Client Rights document and Grievance Procedure for developmentally disabled youth. Haley learned about and assisted with the audit process. She completed various data collection tasks. In addition, Haley worked directly in our Sewell program to provide individual and group support to the program participants. We really appreciate everything that Haley has done and wish her the best of luck as she graduates and starts a full-time position at Cooper Hospital.

Employee Awards



Rayletta Garrison, Kylen Robinson and Bianca Dumas are second place winners in the HEALTHY COMMUNITIES Category: Innovative service models integrating social determinants of health and health care, services that strengthen families, and approaches that ensure a healthy environment and other community conditions.

We would like to thank everyone who voted. Your vote counted!!!

The Social Innovations Journal (SIJ) Awards is dedicated to health and social wellness and chronicles social innovations and enterprises addressing the world's most challenging issues surrounding health and social policy, leadership, human capital, and systems. In collaboration with government, philanthropy, not-for-profits and universities, the Journal bridges formal research and real-life experience. The Innovation Awards is a way to recognize agencies and leaders doing innovative work.

ROI Influencers: Women in Business 2023

Tara Augustine YCS CEO

Congratulations are in order! Tara Augustine was recently named one of the top 40 successful New Jersey Women in Business by ROI Influencers. "Tara is a trailblazer who has demonstrated tremendous courage leading YCS, especially through the difficulty of the pandemic and its aftermath. She is proof that the state is overflowing with qualified female leaders who are ready, willing and eager to do whatever it takes to lead successfully."

Shout Outs

- **Brad Vetterly** has been nominated for National Association of Social Workers Social Worker of the Year & National Association of Social Workers Leader of the Year, by his colleagues at YCS. Winners will be announced in the spring. No matter what the outcome Brad is a valued clinician and co-worker in our eyes. Good Luck on your nomination !
- **Kaliem Brown**, KB-IRTS supervisor, is always supportive and attentive during our wellness groups. He welcomes me with kindness, and provides additional information about how the youth are doing that day, as well as updates since our last group. His care and concern for the youth is obvious and inspiring. I know it is hard work, but he does it with so much heart and compassion.
- **Chris Wallace** and **Ray Bizi**, RAs at Fisher Hall have really been wonderful support during the yoga sessions. It can be particularly challenging at times, but they bring a good attitude and help make the most of our time with the youth.
- **Zanyjah Riche** office administrator and **Mercedes Garrido**, chef, at the Holley Center offered their time and talents to make sure the Holley Bux Kick-off event was a huge success. We couldn't have done it without their support!

Employee Spotlight

IN THE FIRST PERSON

Keona Reeves, CRS at Sayre House



What is your background and how did you come to YCS?

Prior to working at YCS, I was employed in the medical profession for 18 years providing various services for individuals with developmental disabilities and autism. I started working part-time with YCS in 2015 as a SRT while working full time in the medical field as a patient care tech with Jersey Shore University Medical Center. I worked as an SRT for a couple of years and got to learn the lay of the land from working in different houses. I came across Sayre House and that became my favorite house once I worked there. I eventually moved on to become an on-call residential assistant at Sayre. then to part-time, and finally full-time position.

Can you talk about becoming a CRS?

I was told about the position as the CRS becoming available and was recommended by my peers and the previous CRS. I had no college degree so I was a bit wary on going for it, but my work spoke for itself.

Eighteen years in the medical field and 6 years with YCS. I applied and I was then promoted to CRS. It just goes to show that hard work and having a great work ethic does pay off. Sometimes it's not always about having a degree, but having the experience.

How has your experience been at Sayre House?

I have such a love for the population of Sayre House and want to be a positive influence to the troubled female youth. When starting out, I had challenges with certain clients that I couldn't reach, but over time I was able to grow and learn over the years with many of the girls about the walls they may put up and how to make a difference in their lives.

I had a situation where a client attempted to commit suicide, and that had to be the scariest time. To walk in on a situation like that, I was taken back but I had to follow protocol and do what I had to make sure this child was okay. Long story short, the youth was okay, and that situation brought me and that client closer. I had a talk with her to let her know "Yes life is hard but life would have been so much harder without you in it".

Employee Spotlight

Expressing to these kids that they are cared for is such an important task when they have been dealt such a raw hand in life. I would always apologize in proxy to them for what has taken in place in their young lives but tell them don't allow that trauma to be a crutch. The joy I get when a child discharges is the best part of the job. It makes my heart smile. To know I have helped so many girls become better people is the true reward.

What advice do you have for new direct care staff?

What I would say to a new Residential Assistant is with hard work and dedication you can soar in this type of field. Be open-minded and don't take things personal when it comes to how the kids may respond at first. It takes time for these kids to open up right away. Just don't give up on them and always be kind to them.

To a new CRS: be confident, firm, and assertive in your position. You wouldn't have the position if you didn't know what you're doing! Be fair to all and be present for your house.

What are your future goals?

My future goals and dreams are to keep climbing the ladder at YCS, and to learn and grow more as the company evolves and grows over time.

Intern Corner

Reflections on my Internship at Sawtelle Camden By BRANDON COLLE Caldwell University Intern



My name is Brandon Colle, and I am currently a fourth-year graduate student at Caldwell University studying clinical mental health counseling with a specialization in art therapy. I have been interning at Sawtelle Camden since May 2022.

Before I began my internship with YCS, I had prior experience working alongside children with autism in an inclusive preschool setting as a paraprofessional for two years from 2017-2019. That experience made me acknowledge how the expressive arts can be utilized not only with early school-aged children but with people of all ages who are on the autism spectrum.

There are challenges that come with being an art therapy intern such as keeping the youths interested in the diverse group topics I conduct, as well as being flexible and open-minded with the youths in terms of meeting them where they are at in their individual sessions. The reason why I have a positive connection with the youths from Sawtelle Camden is that each of them is unique in his own way, and I truly do enjoy working with them in being the best support that I can be for them.

The relationship I have with the staff at Sawtelle Camden has been influential as they have accepted me and welcomed me with open arms. My on-site supervisor, Robert Schmus, has supported my growth and has given me immense advice that's been paramount in working alongside adolescents with autism. His assistance during individual and group sessions has also helped me conceptualize group dynamics and strategize an assortment of important topics to converse with the youths in relation to their general wellness and expressing themselves in a plethora of ways.

Intern Corner

This internship opportunity in particular has influenced my educational experience. I have learned how to conduct intake assessments, improve my interpersonal skills, reaffirm myself on the latest research about autism, and align with different aspects of the neurodivergent lens through the DIR model.

Robert is an autism self-advocate which is one of the main reasons that I wanted to work alongside him to learn more about his unique perspective. In terms of future goals, I want to specialize in working with autistic individuals and hopefully perform arts-based research in the future.

One of the most memorable experiences that I have had at Sawtelle Camden was exploring Adventure Aquarium with the youths as I consider these sensory-related outings an integral part of the youth's transition to adulthood.

As a whole, my experience being an intern at Sawtelle Camden has been phenomenal in adapting to a new environment like a residential setting and learning from the treatment team who has always been supportive of what I bring to the residency. I look forward to advancing my talents and skills to new possibilities and strive to advocate for the autism population in the South Jersey region.



“Our partnership with Caldwell University has been very beneficial to our Agency. Each year we place their students, who are obtaining their MAs in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with Art Therapy Specialization, into our programs. The Art Therapy component of this degree has made a big difference in the lives of our youth. Amanda Bezold, placed in Malcolm House, has brought her creative spirit and artistic skills to the program, responding wonderfully to the youth and staff. Natalia Gonzalez, placed in Lawn Ridge, has helped one young man out of his shell, displaying his artwork and that of other residents on walls throughout the home. Our Caldwell interns are an amazing asset to our organization, and we appreciate them! ~ Laurie Levin, Senior Project Manager

Leading with Heart

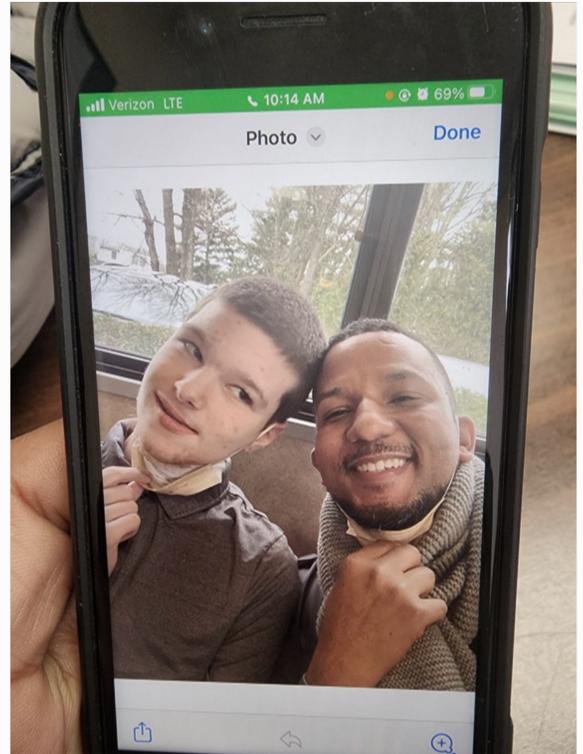
“Leading with Heart” - the theme of our 2022-23 Annual Report - was inspired by our colleagues. Their endless acts of thoughtfulness and compassion on the job are a daily occurrence that continue to happen - but are often overlooked in the rush of the day. We hope to rectify that by introducing in this issue of *Inside YCS* a new section called “Leading with Heart.” It highlights some of our co-workers' many contributions on the job.



Seeing a youth successfully transition is one of the rewards of working in residential. You miss them, but you want to see them move on and do well. That's how we all feel when our kids leave us. There are youth that challenge you as much as they tug on your heart strings, and Mikey B was one of those youth.

I want to share a photo of Mikey B. and myself during a pre-admission medical appointment. It captures everything that is good about this youth. He was so inquisitive, and a pleasure to be around. After an extensive history with YCS – Mikey had been in every unit at the Holley Center, I am happy to say that we have found a facility that will help take this youth to the next step in his developmental journey. During his stay at Muller IRTS, Mikey has taught me a lot and has made me a better clinician and a better leader. He will be missed by me, the staff, and the youth at Holley.

~ Lorenzo S. Brown, LSW Program Director, Muller IRTS at the Holley Center



Danny, a participant at Sawtelle Walnut, really likes ice cream and had been asking for some all week. SRT **Jihadah Gasque** made Danny's day with a trip to Dairy.

Leading with Heart

REQUEST TO VISIT CHURCH FULFILLED

When a young man on the Newark Campus heard that Mr. Corey was taking one of his home-mates to church, he asked if he could attend. He said he had never attended a church service and was interested in participating. Mr. Corey sensed his sincerity and welcomed him to attend. It was a special service for Black History Month - there was praise singing and prayers. Both young men enjoyed the service and expressed an interest in returning. "I could see that this young man was seriously interested," said Corey Clark, Northern Region DD Director. Mr. Clark volunteered his personal time to take the boys to his place of worship and hopes to bring them back again when time permits. "I wish more RAs would take an interest in this. The kids really appreciate it."



BLOOD DRIVE DONATION



Staff at Kilbarchan rallied to support a resident on the KB campus who was studying to be a Phlebotomy Technician at Branford Institute – healthcare vocational school in Paterson.

Ledvina Mejia, Carmen Gaston, Jessica Whaley, Garbiel Montoya, and Courtney Medina bravely volunteered on two occasions to have their blood drawn so the resident could earn her certification. Gabriel admits that they were all a little scared but were happy to see the client’s confidence grow with each visit.

Highlights

CAVAN HOUSE DEDICATION

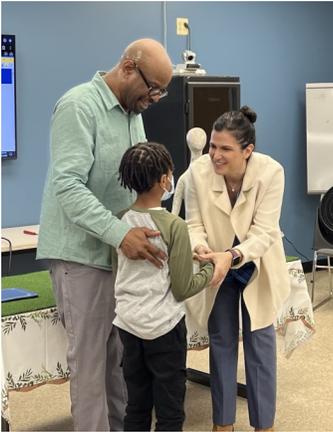
On February 10th, YCS **Cavan Home**, in Somerset New Jersey, was dedicated in memory of Wanda Cavanaugh - dear friend and colleague to many in the YCS Family for more than 20 years. As Vice President of YCS Facilities, Wanda ensured that every home was maintained, safe, and a home-like environment for the residents. Originally a temporary, emergency placement facility for individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) who were in crisis, Cavan House was recently re-designated as a permanent DD home for 4 young adult men. This project was very special to the facilities crew who had worked very closely with Wanda over the years. Their team jumped into high gear to renovate the interior of the home and with the assistance of the YCS Foundation added many personal touches that reflected Wanda's taste including two of her oil paintings that now hang in the home's living room.



Guests Participate in a Prayer Led By Rayletta Garrison to begin the Festivities.

Highlights

SPIRITUALITY MINDFULNESS GRADUATION



One by one, the participants in the second graduating class of mindfulness spirituality eagerly stepped up to receive their certificates from **Chaplain, Bill Waller and Tara Augustine**. Afterwards, the graduates relaxed and celebrated with dinner and lively conversations. At the end of the meeting, Chaplain Waller reminded all the graduates that they could use the spiritual mindfulness library on the YCS website to continue their spiritual journeys.

The spiritual mindfulness library is available for everyone on the main website : <https://www.ycs.org/index.php/spirituality-library/>

LAURIE HAVEN SUPERBOWL PARTY



LAURIE HAVEN RELAXATION STATION



Highlights



Jamal "Charlie" McNeill, TA, cheered each student on backstage to calm their nerves and boost their confidence as they waited to perform.

GW TALENT SHOW



Christajah Lighty, SRT/TA, taught a dance routine and performed with students.



For the first time since the pandemic, the GW School auditorium was packed with guests ready to cheer on the students at the "GW School Talent Show"

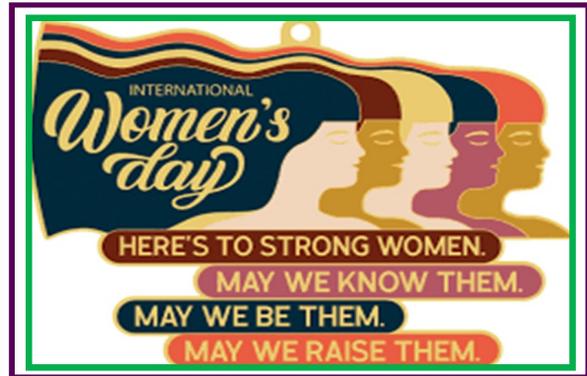


Joe Segro, music teacher and mastermind behind the talent show, worked with the students individually so they could perform a song of their choice.

Highlights

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY DISCUSSION AT SAYRE

It was one of the most inspiring and moving groups I've experienced at Sayre. Our case manager, **Monika Skora** gave insight into the history of Women's Day and it's being celebrated in Europe. She shared about being Polish and this being celebrated in her family. The youth then shared / presented on different women who inspire them in their life. Some shared about family, but most inspiring was that many of them shared about one another. The group was meant to be about 45 minutes to an hour, but ended up lasting 3 hours. The youth and staff all shared ways in which they inspire each other, and how we can inspire ourselves. Some youth shared about how staff members were like family to them, while others shared about looking up to their peers for being authentic and being true to themselves. **Pfeni Flicker**



NRDD STAFF APPRECIATION



Nurtured Heart trainers, **Yvonne Montemurro** and **Jennifer Stratton**, organized a rejuvenating day of insightful fun activities for the Northern Region DD staff. The next Nurtured Heart event will be in May for the Southern Region DD staff, in Somerdale.

Highlights

RESIDENTS AT YCS SAWTELLE SEWELL CELEBRATING NATIONAL PANCAKE DAY (2/28/23) AND DR. SEUSS BIRTHDAY (3/2/23)



For National pancake day all the youth went to IHOP and ordered a meal.



On Dr. Seuss' birthday, the youth took turns reading *Green Eggs and Ham* book with the staff and clinician. They also enjoyed a green eggs and ham inspired dinner.

PET THERAPY EXTENDED TO DAVIS HOUSE



Highlights

NR FACILITIES CREW APPRECIATION LUNCHEON



The Northern Region Facilities Crew celebrated the completion of renovations at Cavan House and the Phoenix and Bright Start programs with an “Appreciation and Thank You Luncheon” hosted by Tara and the Foundation. The crew under the leadership of Luis Mangual did an amazing job transforming the residences into bright comfortable homelike domiciles for the participants. - A place where they can relax and concentrate on recovery.

Crew members

Joe Gayle, Santos Escobar, Federick Gayle, Dennis Johnson, Richard Gutierres, Andres Hernandez, Erick Delmonte, Rafael Hernandez, Larry Ashford, James Albright

DD VALENTINE’S DAY PARTIES



Southern Region



Northern Region

Innovations



Taking Care of Ourselves, Together.

**PRACTICE ON TEAMS EVERY WEEK
WEDNESDAYS FROM 12:00-12:15 PM**

1st Week of the Month - Spinal Health

2nd Week of the Month - Joint Health

3rd Week of the Month - Lung & Heart Health

4th Week of the Month - Guided Meditation

5th Week of the Month - Silent Meditation

HOSTED BY CAITLYN YERVES
AVP WELLNESS ENGAGEMENT & MARKETING
YOGA AND MEDITATION TEACHER

Wellness Wednesdays

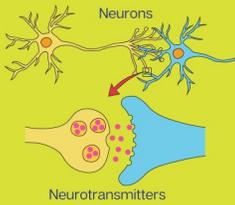
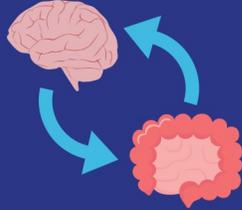
PRACTICES & DISCUSSIONS FOR
EMPLOYEE HEALTH & WELLBEING

Innovations

ROWAN NUTRITIONAL PROGRAM

THE GUT-BRAIN AXIS

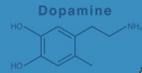
How Your Brain and Second Brain Interact



The cells in your brain and throughout your nervous system are called neurons. Neurons release signaling molecules called neurotransmitters that play a key role in the body performing tasks such as receiving external sensory inputs (touch, smell, pain, etc) and sending motor commands to your muscles. Most neurotransmitters are produced in your gut

Neurotransmitters produced in your gut:

- Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid (GABA) - Primarily responsible for providing calming effects, controlling anxiety, stress, and depression.
- Serotonin- Often referred to as the body's "feel good" chemical. Low levels are associated with depression
- Dopamine- Allows you to feel satisfaction and pleasure



Feelings such as stress and anxiety along with other mental health related conditions can be detrimental to your gut health. If these feelings persist, gut functionality can be disrupted which can lead to symptoms like constipation and stomach pain.

In order to promote a healthy brain-gut connection, try foods that are rich in:

- Omega-3 Fatty Acids- Increase diversity of healthy gut bacteria and decrease inflammation in the gut.
- Fermented Foods- Rich in probiotic which adds good bacteria to your gut and improves digestive health
- High Fiber Foods- Fiber cleans out your colon and also cleans out bacteria and other buildup in your intestines
- Polyphenol-Rich Foods- Considered a "prebiotic" which strengthens gut health, some polyphenols also have antioxidant properties that can aid in fighting against inflammation in the gut
- Tryptophan-Rich Foods- Tryptophan is a precursor to the neurotransmitter serotonin

Foods That Are Great Sources of:



A big part of our physical and mental wellbeing is connected to our diet, according to **Caitlyn Yerves**, AVP of Wellness Engagement - that is why she was excited to sign YCS up for an 8-month series of online activities that includes such topics as "Rethink Your Drink," "Hypertension: Know Your Numbers," and "Food & Sensory ASD Tips for Caregivers." Currently, YCS DD house managers in the north are participating in this nutrition-focused research study related by the Center on Nutrition and Disability and Rowan University's Nutrition Program.

The project follows and utilizes information shared via a social media campaign, created by the Center on Nutrition and Disability and Rowan University's Nutrition Program. "We are excited to be able to share their resources around nutrition and health that includes cooking demonstration videos, blog posts and infographics," says Caitlyn.

Read what your colleagues say about the project.

"I personally agreed to participate in the study to learn more about nutrition. I'm able to implement what I have learned so far within my programs as well as my personal life," LaShayna Malone, Sawtelle Greenbrook and Pamela houses.

"I got involved because I thought it will definitely help my program, since all my females are on special diets. It has been helpful to my program. I'm actually using the recipes they shared on social media for my females." Tamascha Thomas, Sawtelle Pearl House.

This project is funded by the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities' Community Innovation Projects, and you can access more of the information here:

Interested in Learning More? Visit: <https://nutritionanddisability.org/new-jersey-council-on-developmental-disabilities-community-innovation-project-new/>

Innovations

BODY POSITIVITY GROUP BEGINS AT HOLLEY IRTS



Keyahfa E. Brown

The purpose of the Body Positivity group I created was to bring awareness to the youth, help them embrace their differences, and to boost their self-esteem. Being a teenager in this new day and age is tough. Kids aren't trying to be kids, they've been conditioned by the media to grow up quick, to look a certain way, and spend their time copying what's trendy. I wanted the youth to understand that it's okay to go through changes, it's human, and there's ways to embrace those changes in the way you treat your body. The youth responded well to the group, the dialogue was refreshing, and they wanted to know when the next one was taking place.

~ **Brown, Keyahfa E., RA**

Agency Updates

THE CLINICAL ROUNDS SESSION IN JANUARY FEATURED GUEST SPEAKER MICHELE PERKINS. IF YOU MISSED THE MEETING HERE IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF MICHELE'S PRESENTATION

Through a Sensory Lens: Emotional Expression of Body Based Experiences

January 11, 10-11:30am

Meeting ID: 947 8028 0524

Passcode: hkh=!n98

In Michele Parkins MS, OTR presentation on January 11th “Through a Sensory Lens: Emotional Expression of Body Based Experiences”, she shared the sensory motor foundations to commonly experienced challenges in social emotional development, such as inattention, hyperactivity, anxiety, defiance and emotion dysregulation and present the main Sensori-Emotional personality types highlighted in her model.



The intricate connections between mind and body; sensation and emotion; movement and emotion; and sensation, movement and behavior and relationships brings an opportunity for collaboration between mental health practitioners and occupational therapists. The work being done by Ms. Parkins expands on this research by connecting differences in sensory motor capacities to specific challenges in social emotional development.

In her Sensori-Emotional Engagement Model she outlined these connections and presented a play based intervention framework to enhance both sensory motor and social emotional capacities in early childhood. Lastly, an assessment tool that is in development was shared that can be used to help determine the presence of body based underpinnings to common social emotional challenges.

Agency Updates

 **Clinical CARE Rounds**

Designed to enhance professional development



May 10 10-11:30am Zoom *	Presentation: The Importance of Supporting Systems when Working with LGBTQ+ Clients Jennifer Faasse, LPC Montclair State University-CAECMH
June 14 10am-2pm E. Orange	Didactic: TBD Case Presentation: Boundary and Role Review Amanda Garrett MSM, LSW and Michelle Robbins, LCSW

*** Zoom meeting ID: 838 0325 7344**
Password: k5nG*U=#

Internship Roundtable

This meeting is at 12PM
on the 4th Wednesday of each month,
and is required for interns to attend.

Microsoft Teams Meeting
Meeting ID: 286 038 578 628
Passcode: mWysJe

Agency Updates

EMPLOYEE REFERRAL BONUS PROGRAM FOR CLINICIANS



Many of you have taken advantage of the Employee Referral Bonus Program which provides \$500 for the referral of a candidate, the details of which are below. Thank you for your referrals.

Now, if you refer a clinician candidate who is hired you will receive a **\$2000 referral bonus** subject to the terms of the Program. Open roles can be viewed at <https://recruiting.ultipro.com/YOU1000YOUTH>.

Please reach out to your connections and recommend that they apply for open positions at YCS.

If you have any questions about the Employee Referral Bonus Program or have any other recruiting questions, please contact the Talent Acquisition Team at TalentAcquisition@ycs.org.

Thank you for all your help!

Program details: When your referral finds a position they are interested in, have them fill out the online application noting they found out about the role from you. Also, please complete the attached referral form and send it to Talent Acquisition. A YCS recruiter will reach out to the referral about the position to which they applied. You will receive the referral bonus, subject to tax and other standard withholdings if your referral is hired and works for YCS for at least 90 days. Employees will not be eligible for a referral bonus if they are involved in any way in the hiring process for the referral.

Steven Kessler, Chief Human Resources Officer

Agency Updates

COVID VACCINATION AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS RESCINDED

On April 3, 2023, Governor Murphy signed an executive order rescinding the COVID vaccination and testing requirements for congregate care settings.

Accordingly, going forward new hires do not need to provide proof of vaccination and unvaccinated employees do not need to provide weekly test results. Also, current employees do not need to receive any additional vaccinations.

SAFETY MONTH CONTEST WINNERS

In December QAPI asked that Program Directors and House Managers facilitate their programs participation in Safety Month by conducting an activity to reinforce the topic of safety. They were asked to submit their activity for a little friendly competition.

The results are in and the three programs that were found to have displayed the most effort in their presentation and creativity are the following:

1st Place - Sewell

Submission: Safety and sanitation in the kitchen by preparing a charcuterie board together.

2nd Place - Sayre

Submission: Safety "stations" where clients moved through multiple activities that discussed various situations involving safety.

3rd Place - Kilbarchan Campus

Submission: Stress management and the use of art as a tool to manage stress .

There is a little surprise coming your way.

Thanks,
Haley Tripoli
MSW Candidate, 2023 - Rutgers University
QAPI - Quality Assurance Intern



Carmen Gaston

Agency Updates

It's time to start planning for the 2nd Annual Green Thumb Competition!



Spring is in the air & nature has begun to gift us with her beauty

We've got 44 homes with lots of garden space to transform into flower, herb and vegetable gardens.

This is a great Allied Therapy activity and a way to enjoy the outdoors, get some exercise, create tranquil gardens & experience the joy of eating what you have grown.

The time to get started is now!

Check your e mails for garden tips or share your garden secrets with us.

At the end of the summer, we will announce 4 winners.

More details to follow!!!



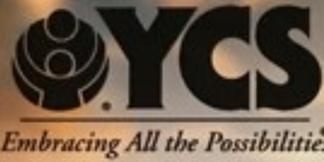
Upcoming Events

Save the Date

*Annual
Charity
Golf Classic*



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2023
EDGEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB



Charity Golf Classic
Monday, September 18, 2023
EDGEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB



YCS BLOSSOMS ART EXHIBIT MAY 1-30TH



AWARDS SHOW MAY 15, 6-8PM



16th Annual

YCS BLOSSOMS

Art Exhibition



Unlocking the world of our children's imagination

May 1–30, 2023

Sandy Bennett Art Gallery



LEADING
With
HEART



Embracing All the Possibilities®