

# DYS **Ohio** | Department of Youth Services VOLUNTEER NEWS BRIEF



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Director

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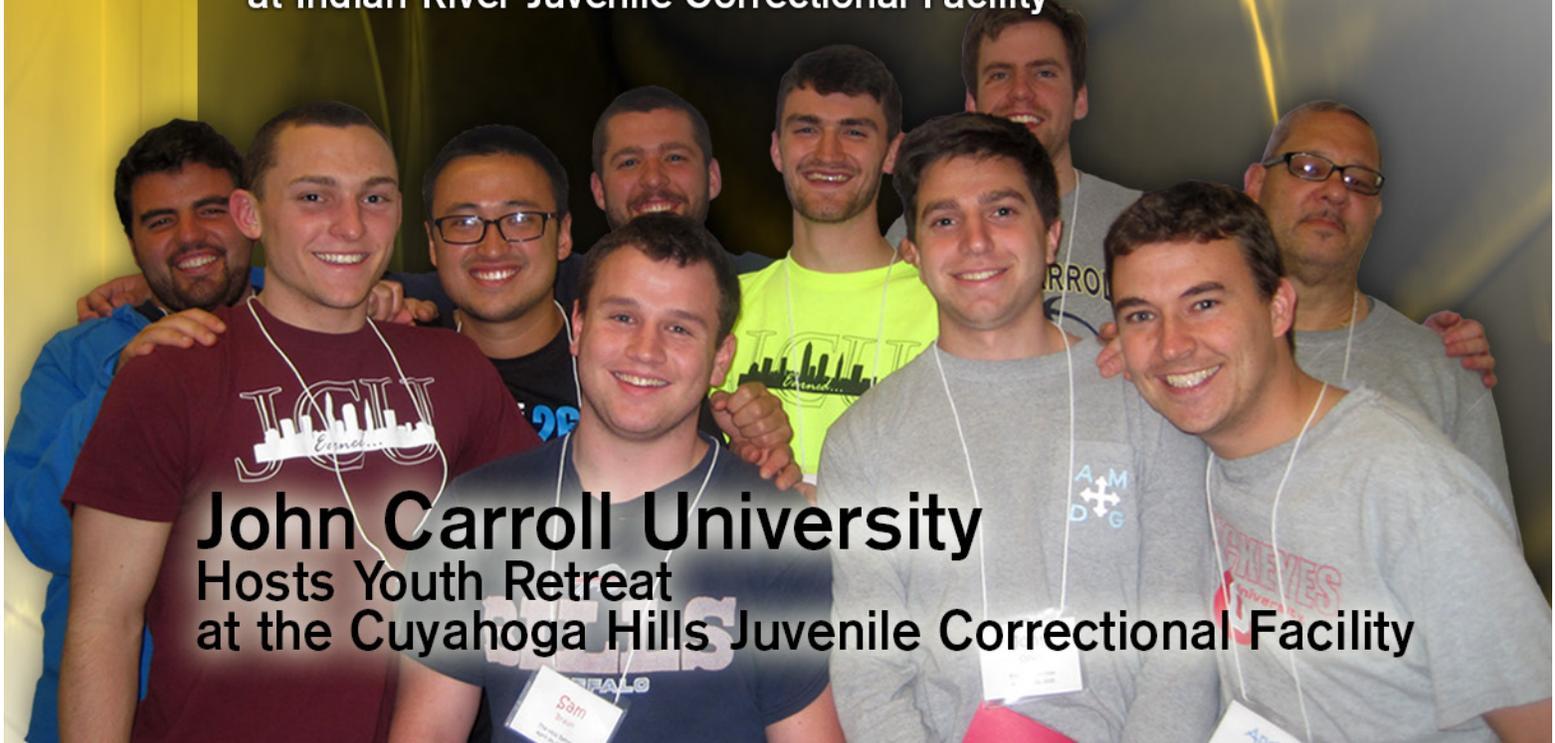
**Volunteer Groups Spark Youth Interest  
at Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility**



**Rick and Deb Clinton Launch The Great Commandment Ministry  
at Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility**



**The Share Fellowship Shares with Youth  
at Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility**



**John Carroll University  
Hosts Youth Retreat  
at the Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility**



# EPIPHANY WEEKEND 2015 produces youth leaders

Thirty-one youth participated in a three-day Epiphany weekend at Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility (CJCF). Epiphany Ministry Inc. is an ecumenical ministry whose purpose is to manifest God's love to incarcerated youth. Juvenile offenders are offered an alternative lifestyle and for three days they experience talks, skits, forgiveness, unconditional love, food, celebrations, and more! It is designed to impact facility life.

"Twenty-five volunteers from Epiphany came and impacted our youth with love, fellowship, activities and the gospel of Jesus Christ," said Chaplain Torrey Kershaw. "It was a power-packed weekend that changed the life of CJCF youth!" One youth said, "I really feel the love of God!"



(left to right): Epiphany volunteer Kathy Reed, Rose McCow and far right Michael Rogers

One DYS youth reported, "The one thing I learned from this weekend was how important forgiveness is and to not hold grudges against other people. The thing I liked the most was how the volunteers were so passionate about what they were doing. They were really passionate! They showed that they really cared about us and that they wanted to do it. They filled an empty spot where other people didn't really show that they cared"

Chaplain Kershaw said, "This weekend is about teaching leadership skills. Developing leaders is one



Epiphany volunteer Janet Parcell with youth Deacons of the main outcomes of the weekend. Youth who complete the Weekend are selected as deacons and are trained to serve at the next Epiphany weekend. Currently, seven youth are training as deacons and are providing leadership in the worship services." Pictured above are six former Epiphany youth that served as deacons at this Epiphany event. Chaplain Kershaw further said, "Their service as deacons gives them a leadership role, a sense of pride, and responsibility. Their leadership is now extending to the rest of the Circleville family and staff."

An Epiphany volunteer said, "Of all the Epiphany weekends that we've been doing over the past eleven years, this is the most engaged youth have been by far, and they were most attentive! Chaplain Kershaw credits their attentiveness to understanding the importance of the moment. He said, "They knew it was more than food, fun, and fellowship."



Row 1 - Ginny Bear, Bob Warren, Rev. Donald Bean, Wayne Engle, Dan Fogt  
 Row 2 - Teresa Skinner, Kaye Marshall, Peg Warren, Raela Bear, Jayne Griffith, Betty Fogt  
 Row 3 - Mike Dennis, Rose McCoy, Rachel Devuono, Mindy Settlege, Kathy Reed, Jannen McAninch, Erica Stapleton  
 Row 4 - Chaplain Torrey Kershaw CJCF, Janet Parcell, Melissa Busick, Becky Hare

Epiphany volunteers returned a few weeks later for the Epiphany Reunion. They engaged the youth in small group discussion and activities. Youth recalled and rehearsed what they learned at the Epiphany weekend.

# Youth Grow and Give through Urban Gardening

It all starts with a seed! Life, nourishment, and substance, this is what Ababio Kwodwo has brought to Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility (CJCF) with his Urban



Garden program. Urban Garden is a program that teaches youth about gardening. Kwodwo said, "This program focuses on urban farming. The whole thing is about teaching youth self-sufficiency and restorative justice. We are teaching them the art of growing food, donating it to the community, how to make money, and how to feed themselves."

Youth learn the fundamentals about soil, food, water,



light, temperature, environment, selection and much more. They learn the basics about plant anatomy, structure, growth patterns, and sustainable practices like composting, rain barrels etc. We teach them that it starts with a seed and a sower.

Chaplain Kershaw said, "This program starts with a seed and goes through the whole process of planting, watering, pruning until it is taken from the greenhouse at the facility to a newly tilled spot in the population yard for all to see. Once the youth replant it in the garden it cooperates with God and the rain until the time of harvesting. After some classroom and video lessons, it's time to make our impact in the streets. Whether you like kale, cabbage, lettuce, or something as exotic as Chinese basil the youth at CJCF have certainly planted something you may enjoy."



Youth take food to local homeless shelters and donate produce to those in need. This is a great lesson that Urban Garden is teaching CJCF youth. The youth

learn that it's all a process. One youth said, "This program has been great. It taught me how to plant something that later ends up on your dinner table." Another youth said, "I've learned a lot and I can take this knowledge with me when I leave."



Through their hard work and dedication, CJCF youth harvested and donated sixty pounds of cabbage to the Mid-Ohio Food Bank in Grove City, Ohio. Ababio

Kwodwo said, "I'd like to see this program become part of the reentry initiative in the department. In Columbus, Ohio, there are over 1700 vacant lots in the Linden area alone. Youth, upon their return to the community, could take the gardening skills that they learned in the facility and engage urban farming as a viable career. They could make a huge contribution to the agriculture industry and economy. Instead of re-offending, they would have a viable income. This is entrepreneurship. They can involve themselves in urban farming and at the same time create a job for themselves and others."



## Youth learn about making wholesome healthy choices through CELEBRATE RECOVERY

Volunteers from Celebrate Recovery started an eight-week session called Life's Healing Choices at Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility (CJCF). Every Saturday, 15 youth participated in small group sessions that provided information to help them make better choices and to heal from some of their life's mistakes.

Chaplain Kershaw said, "This program was very impactful and successful. It will return in August with a youth led component. So be on the lookout in the near future."



(left to right) are volunteers: Jack Neal, Denny Osborn (Celebrate Recovery State Representative) and Jason Partlow

When the program returns in the fall, volunteers from Celebrate Recovery will partner with the graduates from the previous program and mentor them while the youth graduates lead the next class. "This is a great model of leadership development. It has a positive impact on the life of the facility" said Chaplain Kershaw.

Nine youth completed the program and received their Celebrate Recovery Bible and Certificate. The eight-week series concluded with a graduation and pizza party.



A youth receiving his Certificate of Completion and Celebrate Recovery Bible



## Volunteer Groups Spark Youth Interest

The growth occurring in Chapel Service and the re-emergence of the Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility (CJCF) Choir has created quite a buzz and excitement at the CJCF. The increase in volunteer programs is one reason why this growth is occurring.

Volunteer groups such as Celebrate Recovery and Faith Ministries of Columbus Ohio are engaging and encouraging youth to make positive choices. This supports their growth and development. Chaplain Kershaw said, "Youth are eager to attend and have learned the lesson about seizing the moment!"



Miceles Gover "Sal" talks about why he volunteers.

Miceles Gover, affectionately known as Brother Sal, Nakesha Moody, and Shamia Hobbs from Faith Ministries Church provide volunteer service to youth at CJCF regularly. Sal, a former offender

and 12 year volunteer with DYS said, "My main object in volunteering is to show the youth that there is more positive than negative. I want them to know that their life can go very far. I encourage youth to leave DYS with something as opposed to sitting in here and leaving with nothing." Nakesha Moody, a Columbus, Ohio resident and five year volunteer said, "I strive to teach the youth that God wants to help them change their character. You can keep your personality and remain a Christian. I don't fit the traditional look of a church person. I hope to provoke some type of change in the youth

and show them that there are other alternatives to life than just being in the streets. That they can be a positive influence and be young and be cool, and still be all about God.” Nakesha and her sister Shamia use gospel rap as a tool reach the youth.



Lakesha Moody and Shamia Hobbs engage youth with Gospel rap.

New volunteers from the Praise Temple Church of God in Christ in Columbus, Ohio came to CJCF to discover possible ways to engage in ministry with DYS youth that worship on Sundays with Chaplain Kershaw. “Thoroughly impressed,” stated one volunteer from Praise Temple. Chaplain Kershaw allowed room for each guest to speak words of hope and encouragement to the youth at the facility. One youth, at the close of the evening, thanked the guests and said, “I am grateful for them coming and for their outpouring of love. They really seemed real”

Evangelist Stacie Daniels-Rogers said, “This was a very rewarding experience. We enjoyed seeing the enthusiasm and response of youth and that they were receptive of us during our visit. They were



Pastor Mira Daniels and his wife Mrs. Guessella Daniels spoke to the youth about God loving them and that they had purpose and destiny.

so attentive! We were blessed that the youth seemed blessed. The young men were very engaged. We discovered that some of the young men just wanted someone to talk to and give them an ear. They wanted to get advice about how to handle life’s misfortunes and the things that they have gone through in the past, mistakes they made. We found out that they have a real need for encouragement and that they needed someone to teach them about how to handle life.”



Thell Robinson, a new volunteer and author of the book, “A Thug is a Dud”, spoke to youth from his experience while incarcerated. He currently has a non-profit

designed to divert youth from gang involvement and offers solutions for violence prevention and anger management. Mr. Robinson currently volunteers at Marion Correctional Institution.



(left to right): Elder Michael Graves, Rev. Donald Bean, Administrator, Thell Robinson, Chaplain Torrey Kershaw, Mrs. Guissella Daniels, Pastor Mira Daniels, Sibyl Graves, Stacie Daniels-Rodgers



Evangelist Stacie Daniels-Rodgers met over that past several months with Donald Bean, Community Partnership Administrator, exploring the development of a formal partnership between Ohio Central East Church of God In Christ and DYS. Evangelist Daniels, serving as Youth President of Ohio Central East Jurisdiction for Church of God in Christ, represents 53 congregations throughout



Ohio. She has a vision for the providing mentoring and tutoring, and support of the bible study and worship services that are already offered by the chaplains in the agency.

Chaplain Kershaw and Donald Bean conducted a workshop during the Ohio Central East Youth Conference on doing ministry to incarcerated youth. The agency had a booth set up daily and provided information to the conference attendees to get them connected to volunteer opportunities. Some youth and adults who attended the workshop made a commitment to serve DYS youth. Chaplain Kershaw trained seven of their volunteers.

As a follow up, a delegation from two Church of God In Christ congregations provided ministry to youth at Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility. Evangelist Daniels preached and a praise and worship team accompanied, providing support for the youth.



## John Carroll University Hosts Youth Retreat

DYS volunteers from John Carroll University (JCU) hosted a Manresa Youth Retreat at Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility (CHJCF). The group known as The Carroll Ballers started volunteering at CHJCF in 2014. Michael Gong, one of the team leaders, said, "The Carroll Ballers was the vehicle we used for mentoring. We started at the Cuyahoga County Detention Center and then started coming to "The Hills" once a week on Monday nights from 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm. We felt like we wanted to do more than play basketball. Two of our students previously led this retreat at JCU and felt it was applicable to the youth at CHJCF. We initially met with Mr. Dobrzynski. He felt it would work and he referred us to the Chaplain. We immediately began planning for a retreat in the spring to get it going."

"The Manresa Retreat was what they called it at JCU. At CHJCF we called it "The Hills Retreat," reports Gong. Manresa is a city in Spain where St. Ignatius of Loyola spent a lot of time reflecting and writing. It is where he had his big enlightenment moments and where he got his inspiration for writing the principals which are the basis for the retreat."



One volunteer said, "The greatest impact was seeing youth from different backgrounds engaged and becoming aware and reflecting on scripture, purpose, and healing that was needed in their lives."

Chaplain Ogbuji said, "The volunteers from John Carroll gave DYS youth hope. They taught the youth that just because they were young didn't mean that they could not impact society in a positive way. They led the youth in self-reflective exercises that help youth identify their skills and talents. The youth learned that just because they are incarcerated does not mean that they don't have skills or talents. By looking within, they

discovered that they do have skills and when used in a positive way they can achieve their purpose.”

Chaplain Ogbuji further said, “I initially didn’t know how the retreat would work because it was different. It was not high energy but was quiet and reflective. I didn’t know how youth would respond to it. We found that when you give youth something different they respond differently. We can’t be afraid to challenge them to grow. It may look different from what was done in the past, but this retreat proves that if you bring in quality programs that upholds a higher standard, the youth will rise to the standard.”

One youth reported, “I learned that there is more to people than I expected,” speaking about both youth and JCU volunteers. “I wasn’t into religious retreats but this one got me thinking that reflecting on God and ourselves helps me grow.”

Another youth reported, “I learned how to develop better relationships with people who are different from me. I grew to learn how to spot God in the quiet time and not just in the big things.”



“The Manresa Retreat teaches contemplative prayer, reflection, and shows youth how to feed the inner self. It really focuses on developing an individual sense of spirituality, whatever that may be. It helps stretch their faith a bit.” During the retreat, youth were given bracelets as a symbol to remember the weekend and a reminder to think about the things they got from the weekend. It is a symbol to remind them that they are all created from love, that they are of love, and they were designed for love.



This was the major theme of the weekend.

Curtis Hill, affectionately called “Skip” said, “Youth loved it. They were wondering when we would be able to do it again. The JCU

volunteers were close in age to the youth at CHJCF. They could be “living examples” for youth on how to achieve and an example of success. John Carroll is great at serving this population. If we can just get the youth there, they will help them with tutoring, job training, interviewing skills, you name it they will do it. The thing I like most about these brothers is that they didn’t portray themselves as being better than the DYS youth but more equal to them and the kids could relate to them because of that.”

Skip, a former offender in the adult state and federal systems, and a bit older than the JCU volunteers, described his experience in the penal system. He said, “I did 17 years in Terre Haute, Indiana and I made it stark and real, not to scare them, but to help them understand the reality of what they are dealing with. I told them, comparatively that they are now like baby prisoners versus an adult prisoner. I told them how much more they would have to deal with if they keep going down the path they are on. I helped them understand that their family was suffering. The youth took that to heart and it made them think about what they were doing. Most of the youth are responding to peer pressure, so they are



not really being true to themselves. I help them to learn how to be true to themselves and how to respect others if they want to be respected." Skip said, I told them crime does pay, it just doesn't pay you. It pays everyone else but you. When we converse like this it gives them a wakeup call."

Alex Myers, another JCU volunteer said, "Youth were in different small groups over the course of the weekend. This offered time to get to know individuals in the room. A lot of good sharing happened in the smaller group settings, rather than with the large group. Small groups are where you get to know people and their real

issues. It was here that youth got in touch with their feelings and inner self. As a result, youth were asking us to keep in touch with them and wanted to know when we were going to do this again. It was such a phenomenal response! We were not expecting this. I spent two semesters playing basketball with them. This helped to build relationships first because otherwise coming in here could be intimidating for first timers. We learned that there is not much difference between the guys volunteering and those incarcerated.

Twenty-three youth participated in the weekend led by eleven JCU volunteers and two DYS staff members. Another youth reported, "The retreat made me get together a group to do Bible study together." This youth admitted he had been given a purpose after having some time to reflect.



## Rick and Deb Clinton put faith into Action

Rick and Deb Clinton, volunteers at Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility (CHJCF), have launched a new ministry called The Great Commandment Ministry. The mission of this ministry is to train children and young adults to live a Christ-centered life while becoming productive parts of society. By committing to a Christ-centered lifestyle, they can be beacons of light in a dark world.

The Clintons said, "The youth we are training will be active participants in edifying the body of Christ through discipleship of others thus fulfilling the great commandment to love God and love others by reaching out and sharing the faith."

Rick and Deb Clinton are advocates who volunteer twice a week at CHJCF with a put their 'faith into action' concept. GCM's main focus is to take the discipleship training of youth selected from DYS and move that training into action.

Chaplain Ogbuji said, "They are teaching youth to be accountable and committed. They are supportive of the work of the chaplain and the volunteers through prayer. They pray for us regularly and make donations. For example, for our family engagement day, they provided drinks, snacks, and cookies so

families did not have to pay for them. They also have provided clothes for youth when they transitioned home.”

Rick and Deb wanted to work as a husband and wife team to provide a great example for the youth. More than anything, they wanted to disciple youth from the point of commitment and challenge them to live their faith. They taught the youth that “how good our act on the outside is not as real if you don’t practice your faith internally.”

The Great Commandment is found in Matthew 22:37-40. It says, “Jesus said to him you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with your entire mind. This is the first great commandment. The second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

The Great Commission, Christ’s final order to the apostles, was “go and make disciples.” The absolute must of the Great Commission is discipleship. Matthew 28:18-20 says, “And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, all authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all things I have commanded you.” We love non-believers by sharing the gospel with them and believers by equipping them to have a deeper relationship with the Lord.

Rick and Deb said, “Today’s society is filled with young adults that have been exposed to violence, trauma, drugs, abuse, and the like, or sometimes no parents. The average youth receives no spiritual guidance, no character trait development, along with no positive experiences of life in general. GCM is dedicated to instill the base values necessary to integrate the youths we are training back into society as transformed individuals.”

Chaplain Ogbuji said, “Rick, a former U.S. Marine, overcame his struggle with drugs and alcohol. He believes his purpose is to work with boys in

## FULL THROTTLE

Reformers Unanimous launched a teen program called Full Throttle at CHJCF. Full Throttle is a dynamic, high-energy, faith-based program for young people ages 13-19 that seeks to impart the truths of the victorious Christian life in a practical and relevant way. Full Throttle meets every Friday from 6pm-8:30pm. Each meeting is divided into three sections; small group discussions, powerful Bible teaching, and journal development. The curriculum and journal development components are concluded with a time of refreshments and fellowship.

A DYS youth said, “The visual contact is very good for my understanding of the Bible. Rick and Deb Clinton are really concerned about our growth. They hold us accountable for our walk with Christ and commitment to his ways.”

Brian Billger, group leader and a former DYS youth, came to the facility wanting to do a program. He said, “I felt called to give back to the facility that saved my life. I have a wife and family now, I attribute my success to volunteers who came to the facility and served me. I just want to give back.”

Another volunteer with the program said, “ We are excited about coming into this facility and bringing hope to the youth who need hope to get through day to day.”

The Full Throttle Teen Program was developed by Tim Brennan. Tim, a CHJCF volunteer from First Baptist Streetsboro leads the group. Reformers Unanimous is a revolutionary addiction recovery program developed from over a decade of experience working with hundreds of thousands of addicts.

Another youth, reporting about Full Throttle said, “Full Throttle is fun and keeps us active.”

the facility. They partner with True North Ministry and work with youth that are sent there. It is a therapeutic environment that aids in the discipleship process.”

They stated, “Our passion is the work we do with youth and young men. They need to see other men leading them to a better place. Not keeping them where they are and talking down to them. We have to hold them accountable but love them through that process until they get love in their heads and hearts. Really get it!”

## The Share Fellowship Church shares with Youth How to Overcome

The Share Fellowship Church of Toledo, Ohio visited Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility (IRJCF) and led the evening service. Pastor Deb Heldon spoke wonderful words of encouragement and blessed the youth with a powerful message of God's grace and mercy. During the service, Dorothy Cunningham, 88 years old, spoke to the youth about dignity and respect for others and themselves as the key to a long prosperous life.

The service had a country western theme. It featured Roy Hall, a George Jones impersonator, who performed several Christian Gospel Classics, including songs such as: The Old Rugged Cross, Amazing Grace, and Blessed Assurance.

Another volunteer, Ann Hughes, shared with the youth how she battled with the law and with drug addiction as a young lady. She talked about how she overcame her addiction and now works as a youth advocate in Lucas County.

Refreshments were served after the service.



Roy Hall and Deb Heldon

## Mike Pistorino Shares story about surviving Sexual Assault

Mike Pistorino shared his story with the youth of Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility (IRJCF) about surviving and overcoming child sexual abuse, addiction, homelessness, and crime. "Mike was an awesome speaker" said one youth.

Mike confronted, challenged, and comforted the youth at IRJCF with a message of grace, mercy and hope. One staff member reported, "It's difficult to hear Mike speak and not be challenged to do some soul searching."

Mike patiently answered dozens of questions from youth who attentively listened to him. "This was a powerful and uplifting event! The youth were enlightened", said Chaplain Keith Neal. "IRJCF youth still are talking about how Mike's story has impacted their lives."

Mike volunteers at the Rape Crisis Center and is currently a motivational and inspirational speaker. His presentation is entitled "Amazing Story to Overcoming Adversity."



## ***Our Vision***

***A safer Ohio: one youth, one family and one community at a time***



# **Ohio**

**Department of  
Youth Services**

## ***Our Mission***

***Improve Ohio's future by  
habilitating youth and empowering families and communities***

## ***Core Values***

***All people can change***

***Treat everyone the way you would like to be treated***

***Every life matters***

***We strive to provide youth everything they need to succeed***

***We want the best for youth, and we believe in families***

***We believe in being good role models***