



Department of
Youth Services

Message from DYS Director Harvey Reed

Black History Month

February 1, 2012

Please join me in celebrating Black History Month during the month of February. As we honor the history and culture of African-American individuals, this is also an appropriate time to remember the importance of cultural competency at DYS.

DYS is committed to raising awareness of cultural diversity: respecting the unique beliefs, values, customs, languages and traditions of all youth and staff. For DYS, cultural competence is the ability of all staff to communicate in a culturally competent manner that results in enhanced morale, increased staff retention and a safer and more therapeutic environment for all. This is critical to sustaining our reform efforts and is necessary to encouraging positive, strength-based change in the lives of youthful offenders.

Cultural competence considers:

- The values, beliefs, traditions, customs and parenting styles of youth and families served by DYS
- The impact of a youth's separation from his or her family
- The overall coping skills and responses that the youth has developed over time
- The importance of treatment providers understanding what is important to the youth as individualized interventions are designed
- The racial, ethnic and cultural composition of the youth served by the agency

Thank you to all staff for your commitment to cultural competency.

Harvey J. Reed, Director
Department of Youth Services