



Department of
Youth Services

TED Youth Day Sparks Conversation about Family and Futures

November 24, 2014

It's not often that youth from all three facilities can sit down and just talk about family, education goals and their plans for the future. A recent TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) Talk event made all that happen. TED is a nonprofit organization devoted to spreading ideas, from science to business to global issues — in more than 100 languages. To learn more, [click here](#).

Every year in November, the national organization hosts an event called TEDx Youth Day, allowing teenagers around the globe to share their ideas and experiences that impact the world today. In many communities across the country, local TEDx discussions are held that coincide with the national event. This was the first time DYS participated in the TEDx youth event, with 30 youth in attendance.



Youth at Cuyahoga Hills JCF gather for the TEDx Youth Day

With help from DYS' Information Technology Services (ITS), the event took place via video conferencing, allowing for communication amongst all three facilities - Cuyahoga Hills JCF (ChJCF), Indian River JCF (IRJCF) and Circleville JCF (CJCF). A total of 12 DYS youth stood before the camera during the two-hour event to share stories of their life as young boys, the

actions that led them to their commitment at DYS and what they have learned while in our custody. Several of the youth displayed their talents by playing the guitar, breakdancing and reading poetry.

A youth from ChJCF shared his experience of living in six countries and how he, his sister and mother shared a tight bond. "She never gave up," he said during the TED conference.

An IRJCF youth spoke about his desire to earn a college degree in computer science. He recently was awarded his GED and decided he wanted to further his education. Recently, he was accepted to the University of Toledo.

A CJCF youth stood up and explained that he didn't have a father figure in his life, leading him to hook up with gangs. Yet, despite his past choices, he is confident that he will "mold" himself "into a better place." A sense of pride came over the CJCF youth as he stepped closer to the camera and flipped through his portfolio of artwork.

The youth were grateful for the opportunity to participate in the TEDx Youth Day and expressed a desire to do it again next year.

Ginine Trim, Deputy Director of Facility Programs and Operations, is hopeful that DYS will participate in future TED youth conferences. "The feedback has been very positive," she said. "I would like to commend the staff members that devoted many hours to planning and preparing for this. It was a worthwhile event for our youth."

I would like to extend my appreciation to several DYS employees: Wendi Faulkner, Bureau Chief of the Office of Quality Assurance and Improvement; Cliff Smith, Volunteer Coordinator; Colleen Roberts, Quality Control Administrator, and Scott Welsh of ITS for organizing this event. A big thank you also goes out to Marion Correctional Institution for providing technical assistance.