



Department of
Youth Services

Message from DYS Director Harvey Reed

Supporting a Safe Environment

August 13, 2015

A safe and supportive facility environment is critical for youths' physical and emotional safety while in our custody. Our goal is to provide the kind of atmosphere where youth and staff are safe everywhere on the grounds—in the cafeteria, in school, in the restrooms, on the units, and on the recreation yard.

Over the last two years, a variety of safeguards have been put into place and strengthened thanks to recommendations from an Interagency Task Force on Sexual Misconduct. For a complete listing and description of all of our efforts, please read the Interagency Task Force Annual Report now available on the [DYS website](#). The following are among the highlights.

DYS launched a Tip Line for youth in October 2013. The Tip Line can be used to report any tips, concerns or issues that youth would like to share without having to leave their name. Tip Line voicemails are reviewed within 24 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) by the Youth Ombuds at Central Office. Youth on parole, as well as staff and family members, also have the Tip Line available toll-free at (855) 577-7714. In Fiscal Year 2015, a total of 44 calls were received and addressed.

In June 2014, DYS piloted a Youth Sexual Misconduct Curriculum at Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility (CJCF) to address instances when youth exposed themselves sexually within our facilities. The curriculum focuses on helping youth identify and express feelings appropriately, understand behaviors and consequences, increase empathy for victims, and develop new coping skills and ways of thinking. As a result, exposures at CJCF have decreased.

Earlier this year, DYS staff met with the Vera Institute of Justice and representatives from the Santa Clara County Probation Department to begin our efforts to improve our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning (LGBTIQ) sensitivity. DYS staff were trained as trainers for LGBTIQ training that is in the process of being provided to all staff to understand the critical role of acceptance in contributing to the health and well-being of all youth.

Female youth committed to DYS are served in alternative placements that include the DYS unit at the Montgomery County Center for Adolescent Services, Applewood Centers, and Pomegranate Health Systems. Like our facilities for male youth, these sites are monitored carefully. Staff receive training to help them supervise youth appropriately. Youth at these sites have the same reporting options as other DYS youth:

- Calling the Tip Line
- Telling a trusted staff person
- Filing a grievance form

- Writing to the Chief Inspector's Office
- Contacting the Legal Assistance Program or a private attorney

Thank you to all of our staff and stakeholders for your continued support in providing a safe and productive environment at DYS. I would especially like to thank our staff who work directly with youth, setting a tone of respect, positive interactions, and order that helps prevent victimization. Because of your efforts, DYS is a safer and better environment for our youth to make lasting change.