

# Inside YCS

A NEWSLETTER  
BY AND FOR ALL YCS EMPLOYEES



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### **INSIDE YCS**

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Cover photo: Rachel Drayton and  
graduating mom.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>President's Message</b>	3
<b>CARF Thank You</b>	4
<b>Accolades</b>	5-6
<b>Letter of Appreciation</b>	7
<b>PPS Podcast</b>	8
<b>Welcome New Employees</b>	9-10
<b>Promotions</b>	10
<b>Shoutouts</b>	11-14
<b>Work Anniversaries</b>	15-16
<b>Leading with Heart</b>	17-19
<b>Highlights</b>	20-25
<b>Clinical Rounds</b>	26
<b>Agency Updates</b>	27



# President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

We did it!

Following a review against more than 1,000 CARF standards, YCS received only 11 recommendations—an exceptional outcome and a testament to the dedication, professionalism, and teamwork demonstrated across our organization. Congratulations to our QAPI team and the hundreds of employees throughout our residential programs who worked tirelessly to make our tri-annual CARF accreditation survey such a success.



Tara Augustine

This achievement affirms the very best of who we are: a team committed to continuous learning, meaningful improvement, and the delivery of exceptional services to the children, adults, and families who rely on us each day. It is a moment of well-earned pride for all of us.

There is even more to celebrate this month. Congratulations to the YCS Institute team on earning a remarkable 10-year reaccreditation from the American Psychological Association—the longest accreditation period awarded. The review highlighted the outstanding work our clinicians, supervisors, and interns are doing every day to develop the next generation of behavioral health professionals and reflects the strength and quality of our training program.

We are also honored to share that YCS has been selected as a 2026 Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute Angels in Adoption® Honoree for New Jersey by Senator Cory Booker. While recognition from accrediting bodies and national organizations is meaningful, some of the most powerful reminders of our impact come directly from the individuals and families we serve. In this month's newsletter, you'll also read a heartfelt letter from a woman whose brother will soon be moving into the Sawtelle Hilltop home—a reminder of the trust families place in us and the difference our work makes every day.

As we approach the close of another fiscal year, many of you are working diligently to complete performance reviews. These conversations are an important opportunity to reflect on accomplishments, identify areas for growth, and create a path toward continued professional development and fulfillment in the year ahead.

June is also a special time across YCS as we celebrate milestones and achievements with the individuals we serve. I am especially looking forward to our YCS school graduation ceremonies on June 12th, where we will recognize the hard work, perseverance, and accomplishments of our students. Graduation is always a powerful reminder of why we do this work and of the life-changing impact our staff have every day.

As summer approaches, I hope you find time to recharge, enjoy the longer days, and spend meaningful moments with family and friends.

Thank you for all that you do. I am deeply grateful for your commitment and incredibly proud to serve alongside you.

With sincere appreciation and admiration,

*Tara*

Tara Augustine, LCSW  
President & CEO  
YCS

# CARF Thank You

From May 27–29, eight CARF surveyors visited YCS to review all of our Residential Programs.

Thank you to everyone whose hard work made this a highly successful survey. While the official report will be issued in approximately six weeks, the feedback received to date indicates that we performed exceptionally well.

We extend our appreciation to:

- Program teams and staff who prepared Participant Records and the homes
- Staff and participants who met with and spoke to the surveyors
- Lissa Captain, Korey Clark, Matthew Hopkins, Aja Wallace, Jenna Howley, Brad Vetterly, Nicole Ciencin, Andrew Beckford, Dawn Jones, and Sherene Bartley-Butler for accompanying the surveyors
- Ray and Tara along with Steve, Hing, Frank and Dr. Mason-Bell for supporting the Administrative Survey at the West Orange office.
- Carlene for coordinating all West Orange logistics and hospitality.

Preliminarily, we have received 11 CARF “recommendations,” a significant improvement from 26 in 2022. This reflects meaningful progress across our programs. Additional details will be shared in upcoming newsletters.

The surveyors also shared very positive feedback about YCS. They were particularly impressed by:

- The Blossoms Event
- The longevity and commitment of our staff
- Our internship program, including the number of staff who began as YCS interns
- The welcoming, personalized environments in our homes
- The strength of our Treatment Home Program
- The successful integration of staff who joined YCS in November as part of the transition of seven new programs

Overall, the feedback highlights the dedication, quality, and growth across our organization. Thank you again to everyone who contributed to this achievement.

Jaime Fox, LCSW, MLSP  
Chief Quality and Compliance Officer

## **YCS Chosen as a 2026 Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute Angels in Adoption Honoree**

YCS has been selected as a 2026 Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute Angels in Adoption® Honoree from New Jersey with Senator Cory Booker. For the past 28 years, the CCAI's Angels in Adoption® Leadership Program has been acknowledging the heartfelt efforts of individuals, couples, and organizations who are making extraordinary contributions to adoption, foster care, permanency, and child welfare. YCS is honored to be recognized among those working to provide safe, nurturing foster homes across the nation. The awards ceremony will take place in Washington D.C., on September 29.

Congratulations to the YCS Treatment Homes Team!





## **APA Accreditation Renewal for the YCS Institute's Psychology Internship Program**

YCS has officially received reaffirmation of APA accreditation for our psychology internship program, with the next accreditation review scheduled for 2035 — representing a full 10-year accreditation cycle.

This is a major accomplishment and reflects the exceptional quality of training, supervision, clinical leadership, and program development occurring across our outpatient and affiliated training sites.

In its report, the Commission on Accreditation specifically highlighted the program as:

- welcoming, supportive, and growth-oriented,
- grounded in a strong practitioner-scholar model,
- committed to reflective practice and continuous improvement,
- and led by invested, qualified supervisors and leadership.

The review also recognized the strength of the program's evaluation processes, training environment, and organizational commitment to developing future psychologists serving children and families with complex needs.

While there are several follow-up documentation and evaluation alignment items to address over the next year, the overall outcome is extremely strong and represents meaningful recognition of the quality of work happening throughout our clinical programs.

Please join me in congratulating Samantha Spencer, Leslie Lester and Christina Colon, and the entire clinic and training team for this tremendous accomplishment and for representing YCS with excellence.

Tara Augustine President/CEO

# Letter of Appreciation

Dear Korey,

In just a few days, my brother Byron will be moving into the YCS Princeton house. As you can imagine, we are both excited to partner with YCS as Byron's provider, though we naturally feel a bit of apprehension about such a big transition.

Yesterday, I brought Byron for one final visit to the home before Monday's move, and I wanted to share how much comfort your team has given us. Any worries I have are lessened every time I interact with the YCS staff. From Tuesday's Zoom meeting—where eight team members showed up to ask thoughtful questions about Byron's needs—to our visit yesterday with Deanna and Mike, their professionalism, empathy, and care are always on full display. It is entirely because of your staff that I feel confident this is the right move for Byron.

I thought you'd like to know just how wonderful your team is at helping a new family feel genuinely supported and valued during an emotional time.

Kind regards,  
Wendy

# PPS Podcast



## The First Episode of the Promising Pathways to Success Podcast is Live!



YCS is excited to launch the first episode of the Promising Pathways to Success Podcast, hosted by Lorenzo Brown, YCS Clinical Training Director. In the first episode, guest Cleo Chance, Holley Center Residential Assistant, brings both lived experience and professional insight to the conversation. With honesty, wisdom, and remarkable resilience, Cleo shares her journey growing up in out-of-home care, reflects on what she needed most as a young person, and discusses how those experiences now shape her work supporting youth at the Holley Center. During this powerful discussion Cleo and Lorenzo explore healing, growth, and ways to infuse trauma-informed, compassionate care when working with a child in crisis.

Rather than didactic Promising Pathways to Success training, the aim of this podcast centers on authentic conversations with YCS employees. It creates space for shared learning, reflection, and collaboration among YCS professionals dedicated to reducing the use of seclusion and restraint in residential childcare.

We hope you'll join us for this meaningful conversation and stay tuned for future episodes featuring voices from across the agency.

You can view the podcast on our YouTube Channel: Youth Consultation Service

# Welcome New Employees

## New Employees and Interns who completed 90 days by May 18, 2026

Antoine, Sarah S. Certified Teacher DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	Clotey, Benjamin C. Personal Assistant DDD-Burning Bush	James, Marcus Residential Assistant DCF-CSAP Hammonton	Paige-Brown, Tajuana SRT Behavioral Assist SRT - N	Simmons, Tremaine Teacher Aide DOE-George Washington
Atkinson, Tamyshia Residential Assistant DCF-RTC Holley	Cooper, Tremaine Residential Assistant DCF-SPEC Pinewood Valley	Jean Claude, Kevin Residential Assistant DCF-SPEC Townsbury	Proctor, Aniya Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Coopers Crossing	Toussaint, Kelleens Residential Assistant DCF-CSAP Hammonton
Baldwin, Araya Case Manager DCF-PCH Vineland	Doughty, Whitney Intern - UnPaid DCF-PCH IDD Cedarbrook	Land Jr., Anthony Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Camden	Racine, Kervins J. Teacher Aide DOE-Sawtelle Learning Ctr	Vermeulen, Jennifer Intern - UnPaid DCF-SPEC Meadow Ridge
Bell, Tanisha Personal Assistant DDD - Davinchi	Hawkins, Omar Residential Assistant DCF-SPEC Pinewood Valley	Muhammad, Jalilah Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Bright Start	Rollins, Arabicasia Teacher Aide DOE-George Washington	Weber, Jamie M. Clinician Fee for Svc SRT - N
Blue, Catisha Residential Assistant DCF-PCH Coopers Crossing	Horton, Briana M. Nurse RN Home Visitor CBP-NFP Essex	Nelson, Karen L. Intern - UnPaid DCF-PCH IDD Cedarbrook	Russell, TeJuan Residential Assistant DCF-PCH IDD Sewell	Williams, Peter SRT Behavioral Assist SRT - S
Brown, Seanna SRT Behavioral Assist SRT - S	Jabbie, Amadu Personal Assistant DDD-Hilltop	Owens, Dashanaye N. Personal Assistant DDD-Apts Supvr Buffalo	Sargenti, Teresa Speech CorrectLang SPC DOE-George Washington	Zapata, Aranxa C. Clinician DCF-IRTS Kilbarchan

# Welcome



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

# Welcome Aboard

**Meghan Branca**  
Chief Information Officer

With over a decade of experience leading Electronic Health Record (EHR) strategy, combined with a 20+ year foundation in behavioral health and human services, Meghan brings a unique blend of technical expertise and mission-driven leadership that aligns with YCS's commitment to high-quality, community-based care.



# Promotions

*Congratulations!!!  
Your dedication and hard work have truly paid off.  
Wishing you all the best in this new chapter of your career at YCS.*



**Robinson, Karon**, Shift Supervisor, DCF-PCH Coopers Crossing



# Shoutouts

*To All Our Amazing Employees!*

- ✦ **Alfred Smith** (Sawtelle Hall) for providing consistent hands-on daily care to the youth and being present and supportive even during inclement weather
- ✦ **April Wright** has been an amazing leader at Pinewood and has done a great job helping to shape a more positive culture at the home.
- ✦ **Bianca Dumas**, AVP of Southern Region DD Programs, for being a great asset to the Region as a trainer and mentor to new Managers. She is driven by policies and procedures and strives for excellence.
- ✦ **Brandon James** for providing consistent support for the KB youth, being able to remain calm and speaking with the youth respectfully.
- ✦ **Brittany Works** has been working tirelessly at Woodhaven to put the program in a really good place. She has been doing amazing work.
- ✦ **Christajah Lighty** for being proactive in promoting social behaviors by planning events for the residents to engage in.
- ✦ **Deanna Erves**, Sawtelle Hilltop House Manager and **Michael Wood**, assistant HM. for executing a successful intake and gaining the trust of a concerned family member. Thank you for your compassion and professionalism in supporting the family.
- ✦ **Etta Sample** and **Tracey Ridley** for having an interactive staff meeting that involved sharing PC data and having a thoughtful conversation on how we bring down the numbers.
- ✦ **Gay Williams** for the outstanding job she does managing her unit and consistently stepping in wherever help is needed. She is calm, composed, and openly shares her contagious smile. She positively impacts both staff and youth
- ✦ **Harry Hyman**, newest addition to room 118, is doing a great job learning how the room operates. #HumbleHarry
- ✦ **Ila Kessler** for always going above and beyond to support staff.
- ✦ **Ilyssa Ernstein**, clinician at Holley RTC, for doing great with time management, and meeting her overall deliverables.

# Shoutouts

*To All Our Amazing Employees!*

- ✦ **Jackie Perez** for your willingness to keep trying, to support the students and to do your best each day does not go unnoticed.
- ✦ **Jada Carter** for going above and beyond at Buena Vista. She is also helping out at Coopers and Pinewood.
- ✦ **Jakim Jackson** and **Seanta Cherry**, at Davis House, for being praised by an individual's parents for being great communicators and working hard to ensure a client's needs were being met.
- ✦ **Jannah Mangar**, RA Supervisor, for being a great support to the Estell Manor team. She is very flexible with her schedule and always willing to work extra hours to ensure the safety and well-being of the youth.
- ✦ **Jolina Pascal** for always being upbeat and creative when working with students. You float into any room and create positive vibes.
- ✦ **Juan Cruz** for going above and beyond with helping to provide coverage and assisting in coordinating schedule staff at Meadow Ridge.
- ✦ **Katherine Gutierrez** for being a team player at Bright Start! She always shows up, never complains and has a good rapport with the youth. Ms. Kat, we appreciate you!!!
- ✦ **Kenneth Ford** and **John Tillman** for coming up with a detailed plan for supervision on their overnight shift at KB SPEC.
- ✦ **Kilbarchan Nursing team** for the wonderful job they are doing in managing one of our youth's major health concerns. Their dedication in providing care beyond the scheduled hours truly reflects their commitment, compassion, and advocacy for the youth.
- ✦ **Leighton Granston** for going the extra mile on Friday during the 3–11pm shift by taking the youth out on community outings.
- ✦ **Leona Fortson**, RA, for helping the clients prepare for the Blossoms Art Show. Leona helped the clients with their artwork for the show.

# Shoutouts

*To All Our Amazing Employees!*

- ✦ **Linda DeRobertis** for displaying lightheartedness. We appreciate you lots.
- ✦ **Lisa Ellerbee** provides ongoing support to the youth in KB2. She continues to keep them engaged in various activities to bring cultural awareness while allowing each youth to acknowledge their own rights as a female.
- ✦ **Lisa (Sue) Nicholas** for being the backbone of SLC. #SelflessSue
- ✦ **Malcolm-Ronda Knighton** for communicating with supervisors about challenges, seeking support to resolve them, and keeping professionalism at front of mind.
- ✦ **Maria Boom** is always willing to jump in and do anything and treats the youth kindly.
- ✦ **Marjorie Daley, PA**, for picking up extra hours. She is a mentor to her coworkers at Buena Vista and very knowledgeable concerning the medical care and responsibilities of the participants.
- ✦ **Marsha Armstrong** for making sure the team and youth at Whispering Mills are well taken care of. Thank you for always going above and beyond for your program. Your hard work and dedication do not go unnoticed!
- ✦ **Michelle Williamson, Jennesis Quintana, and Roberta LaBarbera** for attending a KB IRTS residents school performance in support of the youth.
- ✦ **Monica Campbell** for staying to support the youth in the morning, making sure they get off to school safely, and even stepping in to coordinate with the bus company when drivers don't show up.
- ✦ **Roberto Zapata** has been an excellent leader at Sicklerville, building rapport with clients and building a safe and trustworthy environment.
- ✦ **Roy Espada** for consistently demonstrating professionalism, flexibility, and commitment to the youth at KB. During groups, Roy actively encourages engagement by setting a positive example. He participates in discussions, shares relevant real-life examples, and helps youth connect group topics to their own experiences.

# Shoutouts

*To All Our Amazing Employees!*

- ✦ **Shanika Navarro** for always working well with all the students and staff. You are a team player and always remain upbeat.
- ✦ **Shenika Miles** for all that you do for the youth at Whispering Mills and Sayre House. Both programs are so lucky to have you on their team.
- ✦ **Shirleece Roberts Jackson** for always taking care of the youth at Ironcrest and making sure they have everything they need as they prepare for independent living. From helping the youth fill out applications, obtain legal documents, and enroll in school, you do it all to prepare them. We appreciate you!
- ✦ **Tyler Roberson** for helping the nurse who had a flat tire on her car, 1:00am in the morning, at Laurie Haven.
- ✦ **Vanessa Exavier** and **Ronda Knighton** for picking up shifts at Malcolm House.
- ✦ **Will Heins** for being consistently positive day to day at SLC. You are super resourceful and willing. #WillingWill

# Work Anniversaries

Congratulations!

YEARS	Name	YEARS	Name
44	Sample, Etta	5	Kessler, Steven
31	Vogt, Mary	5	Bartley-Butler, Sherene
28	Askew, Mary Jane	5	Howard, Geraldine
23	Fields, Jami	4	Santos, Karla D.
22	Garrison, Darick E.	4	DeBlock, Gertrudys D.
21	Bueno, Claudio	4	Kallon, Omaru
21	George, Seby	4	Rollins, Faquaya
20	Nicholas, Lisa M.	4	Rose, Lovett
18	Walton, Faheemah	4	Shell, Nikita
17	Raymond, Anthony C.	4	Ottey, Melissa
16	Fulgencio, Yesenia	4	Pettiford, Brandi
15	Rima, Roshard	3	Lee, James
14	Stella, Valerie	3	Abdul-Hamid, Mujahid
12	Young, Tamika L.	3	Phillips, Ayesha
12	Espada, Roy	3	Searles, Darneil
12	Green, Octavia E.	3	Harrington, Ireona A.
11	Yancey Sr., Lamar	3	Vaughan, Hakeema
10	Ciencin, Nicole	3	Franceschini Jr., Frank
9	Burns, Casey	3	Randall, Aquita
8	Bermeo Paredes, Estefania	2	Leary, Bianca Q.
7	Grimes, Bashir	2	Still, Troy E.
7	Smith, Cheri	2	Martin, Dawn C.
6	Taylor, Lamika	2	Smith, Jordan Q.
6	Glenn, Elijah	2	Kimbrough, Risa



# Work Anniversaries



*Congratulations!*

YEARS	Name	YEARS	Name
2	McGovern-Valencia, Gianna	1	Wilson, Phillis
2	Vandervort, Adaiza	1	Baker, Erykah R.
2	Alexander, Shani M.	1	Landers, Melonie
2	Claiborne, Chakor	1	Lighty, Ortisha M.
2	King, Ashia	1	Lomax, Aqiera L.
2	Shabazz Winston, Izhane	1	DeLaCruz, Ivette
2	Brisson I, Marven C.	1	Caldwell, Latrica
2	Bustamante, Brielle R.	1	Okpara, Chidi F.
2	Hunter, Yamil	1	Klein, Danielle
2	Johnson, Soyini		
2	Counts, Shaylah		
1	Hall, Nitketa		
1	Jackson, Jesseia		
1	Kohut, Christine		
1	Mcneil Jr., Davis		
1	Pierre, Donly		
1	Auriemma, Janine		
1	Kaptan, Sama		
1	O'Bryant, Christopher		
1	Dootay, Justin E.		
1	Mayo, Nakima		
1	Medorzil, Miss-Eve		
1	Mickey, Terista		
1	Tierney, Ericka		
1	Wade, Kimora		

# Leading with Heart

## Interview with dance therapist Anthony Cav Harris – YCS Allied partner

In preparation for the Blossoms Awards show, Anthony worked with youths from four residences. Their performances were one of the evening's highlights.



**How did you decide on the different dance routines? Were the kids part of the process?**

Every group had its own personality, energy, and way of communicating, so I never believed in forcing the same routine. I spent the first part of the process observing how each group naturally moved, interacted with music, and what made them feel confident. Some groups responded better to high-energy Jersey Club movement; others connected more with groove, storytelling, line dancing, or repetition-based choreography that made them feel successful.

The children were absolutely part of the process. I always believe people become more invested when they feel seen and heard. I would let them freestyle, suggest moves, react to songs, and even help shape transitions. Sometimes the best moments in the routines came directly from something a student naturally did in class. My job was to organize their energy into something structured while still allowing them to feel ownership over it.

**You rehearsed with each group for about 4 months how did you keep the children motivated?**

Motivation came from making the environment feel safe, exciting, and purposeful. A lot of young people, especially children with different abilities or personal struggles, can immediately sense when someone is trying to "control" them instead of connect with them. I focused on relationship-building first.

I kept the classes engaging by breaking rehearsals into small victories. Instead of overwhelming them with an entire routine, I celebrated progress in pieces. One clean eight-count could become a huge confidence boost. I also used music strategically. Tempo changes, familiar songs, call-and-response exercises, freestyle circles, and leadership opportunities helped keep their attention and energy alive.

# ***Leading with Heart***

## **Interview with dance therapist Anthony Cav Harris – YCS Allied partner**

Different groups needed different approaches. Some needed structure and repetition. Others needed freedom and creativity before they could focus. Some students responded to encouragement, while others needed responsibility and leadership roles to feel empowered. The key was understanding that teaching is not one-size-fits-all. You have to meet people where they are before you can guide them somewhere new.

### **How did you help the children overcome personal barriers?**

The first thing I tried to do was create trust. A child is not going to fully express themselves if they feel judged, embarrassed, or unsafe. I constantly reminded them that mistakes were part of growth and that dance was a space where they could release emotions instead of hiding them.

For students struggling with confidence, I focused on giving them moments to succeed publicly. Sometimes that meant simplifying choreography so they could execute it cleanly and feel proud of themselves. Sometimes it meant putting them in leadership moments they never thought they could handle.

For students dealing with anger or emotional frustration, movement became an outlet. Dance gave them a productive way to channel energy, emotion, and tension. Instead of punishing emotions, we redirected them into creativity and discipline.

Fear of performing is very common, so we normalize nervousness. I would explain that even professionals get nervous. We practiced eye contact, breathing, group support, and positive reinforcement. Over time, they stopped focusing on fear and started focusing on the feeling of accomplishing something together.

### **How did you see the children start to grow as a result of participating in the dance sessions?**

One of the biggest transformations I witnessed was confidence. Some students who barely wanted to participate in the beginning eventually became the loudest supporters in the room. I watched children who avoided attention suddenly volunteer to stand in front, lead choreography, or help others.

# ***Leading with Heart***

## **Interview with dance therapist Anthony Cav Harris – YCS Allied partner**

I also saw growth in emotional control and teamwork. Students who struggled with frustration learned patience through repetition and group accountability. They began encouraging each other instead of competing against each other.

One moment that always stands out to me is seeing students who once refused to perform walk confidently onto the stage and complete an entire routine in front of a crowd. Another powerful moment is when parents or staff members tell me they are seeing changes outside of dance, more confidence at school, more communication, more willingness to socialize, or better emotional regulation. Those moments remind me that this work is bigger than choreography.

### **As their dance instructor, what have you learned that you'll be able to apply in the future?**

Every experience reinforces the idea that connection comes before instruction. Technique matters, but relationships matter more. Young people learn best when they feel respected, understood, and empowered.

This experience also deepened my understanding that movement can be therapeutic. Dance is not just performance, it can improve confidence, communication, emotional expression, discipline, and social interaction. I learned even more about patience, adaptability, and how important it is to teach the individual instead of only teaching the routine.

It also reminded me that many children are carrying invisible battles outside the classroom. Sometimes the dance space becomes the one place where they feel successful, supported, and free. That responsibility is something I take very seriously.

### **What were you most proud of when you saw each group perform? Did you get any feedback from the children after the performance?**

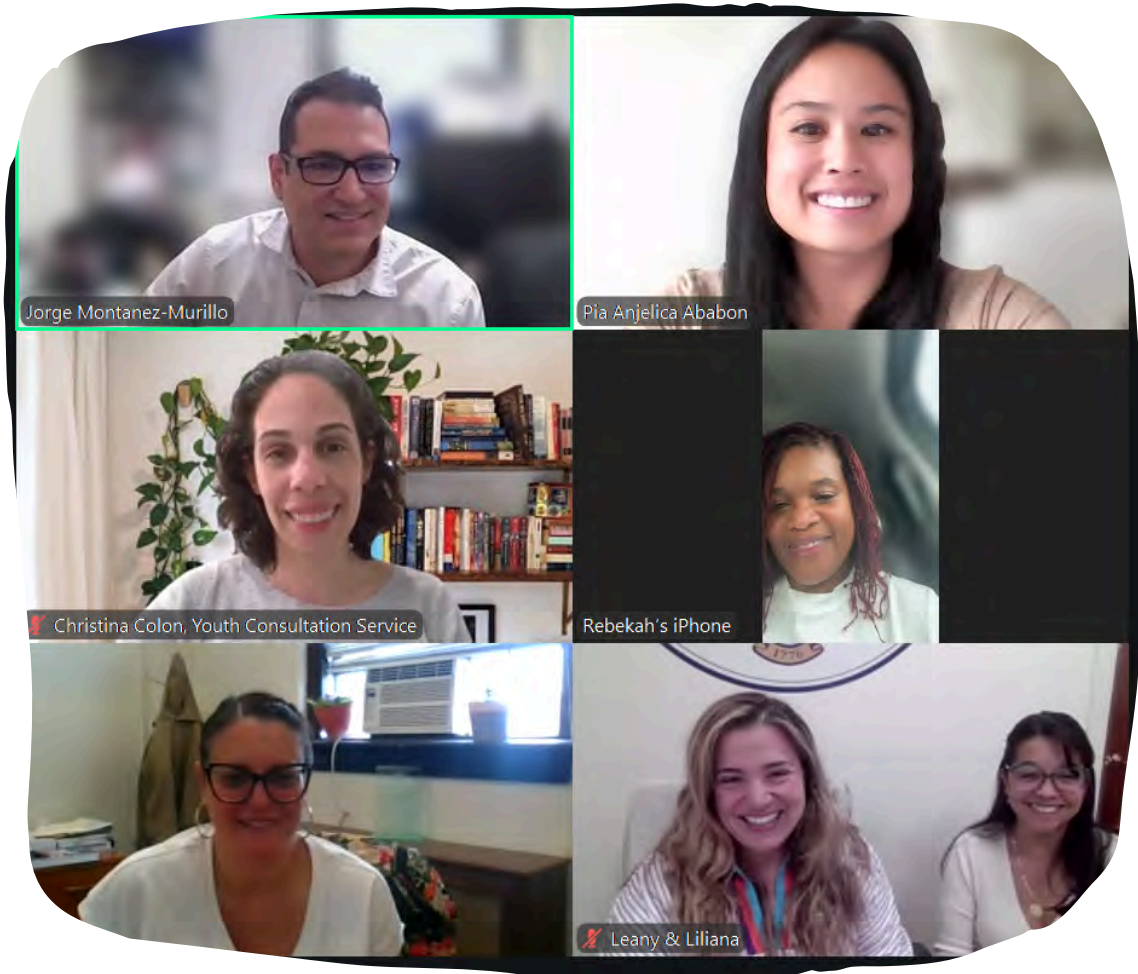
What made me most proud was not perfection, it was courage. Watching each child walk onto that stage, support one another, stay focused, and push through nerves was the real victory for me.

The performance was proof of what consistency, encouragement, and belief can create over time.

After the performance, the feedback from the children was emotional and powerful. Many of them were excited that they did it. The biggest thing I noticed was the confidence shift. They carried themselves differently after stepping off that stage, and that is the type of transformation that stays with people long after the show is over.

# Highlights

## YCS Community Programs Meet with NJ Lawmakers



**Jorge A. Montanez-Murillo**, IECMH-E®, Coordinator of Early Childhood & Community Programming/NFP & PAT Program Administrator, reached out to all the NJ State Senators & Assembly persons in districts served by YCS Home Visiting programs to inform them of written testimony that he shared with the NJ Legislature budget hearings to support a 5% COLA for Home Visitors. Assembly Woman Eliana Pintor Marin responded and set up a meeting with her Policy Director, Leany Pichardo to learn more about YCS HV services in their district. **Christina Colon, Pia Ababon, Rebekah Roberts**, and Jorge attended the virtual meeting and were encouraged by the assemblywoman's positive response.

# Highlights

## Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) Graduation



Congratulations to all the moms and dads who graduated from the of the YCS Nurse Family Practice (NFP) programs in Essex and Morris counties! The families and their nurses gathered today to commemorate their 2-year journey of care together at Turtleback Zoo. Every family received a certificate and a gift bag. Many thanks to all the NFP nurses and best wishes to all the families.



## Todd Ouida Conference

"Play as Possibility" was the theme at the 14th Annual Todd Ouida Children's Foundation Conference at Montclair State University. The importance and meaning of play for children's mental health was explored through presentation and practical play. Staff from YCS in-home visitor programs, Helen May Strauss Clinic and Passaic County Service Coordination Unit, were in attendance. Since the conference's inception in 2012, YCS has been an ardent supporter.



# Highlights

## Camden Home for Children Donation



**Keri Diamond**, director of development at the YCS Foundation, was honored to attend the 161st Annual Dinner hosted by the Camden Home for Children & Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. "We are incredibly grateful for their generous support toward restoring the outdoor deck at one of our South Jersey residential homes. This project will help create a safer, more welcoming space for the youth we serve," said Keri adding "Thank you to everyone who continues to invest in healing, stability, and brighter futures for young people across our communities." Photo Keri Diamond with Ken Wozniak

## SLC faculty wear purple in support of lupus awareness and in honor of their colleague.



"Wearing purple is a simple but meaningful way to show solidarity, spread awareness, and remind those affected that they are not alone. It is also an opportunity to encourage understanding, compassion, and support within our community. To our colleague and everyone impacted by lupus — we stand with you today and every day. Your strength inspires us, and we are proud to wear purple in recognition of your journey.

#lupusAwareness #WearPurple #StrongerTogether

Danielle DePeri

# Highlights

## Woodhaven Staff Appreciation



**WOODHAVEN staff** appreciation/one year anniversary. The WOODHAVEN staff and treatment team members went out bowling to celebrate WOODHAVEN on Saturday, May 16. I just want to give a huge shout out to the WOODHAVEN team for the care and hard work they provide ensuring our clients get the treatment they need. I want to extend my gratitude and appreciate the staff welcoming me as their new PD. I am grateful for the hard work they put forward. WOODHAVEN did not have an easy year, however, the staff remained consistent throughout everything .

I also want to say thank you to **Brad, Pfeni** and **Amiee** for being an amazing support system since my transition. I really appreciate them and the positive support they continue to show.

**Brittany Works, PD**

# Highlights

## YCS Leadership attended the ChildWIN Gala



YCS leadership was proud to attend the ChildWIN Gala and celebrate its amazing work to support allied services for our youth. One of this year's honorees is especially close to our hearts. Jody Joseph Bongiovi was honored for the amazing impact of her organization, Heartstrings. In attendance was Heartstrings music therapist, Donly Pierre, who has been bringing the joy of music to YCS programs.

## YCS at the Bergen PAC Spring Luncheon



In gratitude for the Bergen PAC's kindness and generosity in supporting the arts at YCS, **Keri Diamond** and **Andrew Beckford** represented YCS at the Bergen PAC Spring Luncheon, "Celebrating Women in the Arts."

# Highlights

## Color Wars Day during SLC Spirit Week



Justin E., a youth at the Townsbury Home, enjoys getting a cooking lesson from, **Chantal Beauvil, RA.**



# Clinical Rounds

## Clinical Case Presentations

June 4 | In person

11 AM - 2 PM

DCF Training Facility

New Brunswick, NJ

This presentation highlights real-world clinical challenges and evidence-informed approaches. Presenting for the southern region are clinicians **Isabella Festa** and **Frank Franceschini**. Northern region presenters will be determined.

## Gordan Family Trust Employee Scholarship

YCS is accepting applications for the next round of scholarships.

[To apply for a scholarship, click here.](#)



**Gordan Family Trust Employee Scholarship**

Education should never be out of reach! Our Scholarship Program is designed to support bright and ambitious employees like you!

**Invest in Your Future!**

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Simple application process  
A stepping stone to your dream career

# Agency Updates

## Keys to a Culture of Caring: #4 Trust, Pride & Camaraderie

The foundation of an emotionally and psychologically healthy work environment hinges on the quality of three interconnected critical relationships: trust, pride and camaraderie.

**Trust** - The direct and indirect relationship between employees and leadership.

**Pride** - The relationship between employees and their work.

**Camaraderie** – The relationship between employees and their team.

By being aware and making a concerted effort to cultivate these attributes in our work relationships, we can boost morale, motivation, and performance in any team.

### May HIPAA Tip



Communication among staff is essential to the work we do, and that communication often occurs through conversation. Use your caution and judgement to prevent such conversation from reaching the wrong ears. When discussing private health information, do it in a way that other participants and visitors cannot overhear what you are saying.



*Embracing All the Possibilities®*