

# YSD SCOOP!

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February 2024



# YSD CELEBRATES 9TH ANNIVERSARY

## Happy Anniversary



**Celebrating  
NINE YEARS  
of Serving Youth & Families  
in Palm Beach County**



On January 4, 2024, the Youth Services Department (YSD) celebrated its 9th Anniversary. The Seeds of Success Cross-Divisional Action Team hosted the anniversary and New Year's celebration at Highridge Family Center. The theme of the 9th anniversary celebration was "Growth and Change."

The event started with a welcome and New Year-styled community meeting. Dr. Shayna Ginsburg, Chief of Clinical Services Education and Training, and Tristan Seupersad, Residential Youth Counselor, were recognized for earning an upcoming Golden Palm Award.

YSD also congratulated and bid farewell to Tammy K. Fields, the Inaugural Director of the Youth Services Department, for her promotion and transition to Assistant County Administrator. Elisa Cramer, Interim Director of Youth Services, presented Tammy with a plaque for her visionary leadership and tireless service to the department over the past nine years. Ike Powell, Director of Outreach and Community Programming, Michelle Liska, Director of Finance, Contracting, and Administrative Services, and Dr. Twila Taylor, Director of Residential Treatment and Family Counseling, all shared tributes and personal reflections on behalf of each division to Tammy.

The Highridge Family Center food services team also prepared a delicious lunch for the staff. The event concluded with a reflections slideshow of Tammy, team-building games, announcement of the holiday workspace decoration contest winners, and an all-staff photo.

The winners of the holiday workspace decoration contest are as follows:

- 1st Place: Highridge Front Desk
- 2nd Place: Residential Treatment and Family Counseling Workspace
- 3rd Place: Bumble & United Holidays

Kudos to the whole YSD team for a wonderful celebration of YSD's 9th Anniversary.





# YSD CELEBRATES 9TH ANNIVERSARY





# YOUTH SERVICES HOSTS 2023 'PUMPKIN DECORATING CONTEST' FOR UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN



The Youth Services Department (YSD) held its 2023 Pumpkin Decorating Contest, benefiting United Way of Palm Beach County, on October 31, 2023. Guests had a 'spooktacular' experience being able to play 'Spooky Trivia,' guess how many candy corns in a jar, and win prizes through a 'Roll-Oreo Zone' game. Tevin Ali, Outreach and Public Information Coordinator, led the efforts in organizing and executing the event alongside a staff volunteer team.

The judges for the contest were:

- **Marcia Weber**, AFL-CIO Labor Liaison of United Way of Palm Beach County,
- **Dr. Seth Bernstein**, Executive Vice President of Community Investments of United Way of Palm Beach County and
- **Deborah Drum**, Director of PBC Environmental Resources Management

The winning pumpkins were as follows:

**1st Place Individual** - Don't be a Pumpkin Head - Read Banned Books by Tammy Fields, Assistant County Administrator

**1st Place Group** - Around the Campfire by Youth Services Department Administration Team

**2nd Place Group** - Palmetto Dorm by Youth Services Department Highridge Family Center Palmetto Dorm youth

**3rd Place Group** - Orthodontist Pumpkin by Water Utilities

Communications Department

**Honorable Mention** - Viper Venus Fly Trap Pumpkin by Youth Services Department Highridge Family Center Mangrove Dorm youth

**Honorable Mention** - Mr. Safety Pumpkin by Public Safety Department

Thank you to our judges, the contestants, and the YSD team who made this event possible.

**Palm Beach County raised a total of \$965,163 to support local services during this campaign, achieving 112% of the fundraising goal. Kudos to Team PBC on being 'A Force of Nature!'**





# YOUTH SERVICES HOSTS 2023 ‘PUMPKIN DECORATING CONTEST’ FOR UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN





# YSD TAKES HOME 1ST PLACE AT THE 9TH ANNUAL UNITED WAY PBC ALL-COUNTY TRIVIA CHALLENGE

On October 12, 2023, the Youth Services Department Won 1st Place at the 9th Annual United Way Palm Beach County Trivia Challenge! This event is part of the United Way 2023 charity campaign season and is hosted by Friends of the Palm Beach County Library.

This year's trivia challenge theme was "Rockin' Under The Sea." YSD represented with the team name "What's Up Docks."

Kudos to all our team members: Tania Shindo-Henderson, Hector Vargas, Narumi Vargas, Freddy DuBois, Blaze Green, Javona Wilson, Tammy K. Fields & Tevin Ali. Go, team YSD!



# YSD TAKES RUNNER UP WIN IN UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN OFFICE OLYMPICS CHALLENGE



On November 30, 2023, YSD won 2nd Place at the United Way Campaign "Office Olympics" hosted by the Planning, Zoning, and Building (PZB) department.

YSD represented with the team name "QuadZilla." Kudos to all the team members: Valerie Messineo, Javona Wilson, Samantha Shields, and Tamia Williams.

Go team!

# RACHELLE SOSU RECOGNIZED BY PCIT INTERNATIONAL

Rachelle Sosu, Psychologist, Psy.D., who is certified in Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), an evidence-based treatment program for young children with disruptive behaviors, is the most recent psychologist at the Education & Training Center to now be recognized by PCIT International as a certified PCIT Within-Agency Trainer.

To accomplish this, Dr. Sosu completed a year-long training process under the supervision of a Regional Trainer and supervised others in earning their certification as PCIT Therapists.

Congratulations on this milestone, Dr. Sosu! Keep making team Palm Beach County proud.





# YSD 'DIVES INTO THE FUN' AT THE 2024 SOUTH FLORIDA FAIR

This year, the Youth Services Department's booth at the South Florida Fair was once again a success! The theme for this year's fair was "Dive Into the Fun."

Large groups of families and children were eager to play 'Ocean Trivia' when they visited the table in the Expo West building. YSD's Outreach & Public Information Coordinator, Tevin Ali, set up and coordinated YSD staff at the fair from January 13-29. Visitors had the opportunity to win ocean bookmarks, fish finger puppets, and stress balls.





## TEVIN ALI HONORED BY SOUTH FLORIDA FAIR BOARD FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM GRADUATION

YSD congratulates Tevin Ali, Outreach and Public Information Coordinator of Palm Beach County Youth Services Department, and Michael Gauger, the Building Division Coordinator of Palm Beach County Planning Zoning and Building Division, who were recently recognized by Vicki Chouris, President and CEO of the South Florida Fair, Robert Weisman, Chairman of the South Florida Fair (and former County Administrator), and the South Florida Fair Board of Trustees and Directors for graduating as part of the Fair's Young Professionals Program Class of 2024. Todd Bonlarron, Assistant County Administrator, was also in attendance at the graduation held at the fairgrounds.

The South Florida Fair's "Beyond the Fair" program is for young professionals in the South Florida area. Individuals ages 18-40 are selected to participate in the program each year through the merit of community involvement and impact in the South Florida region. Selected participants partake in "behind the scenes" activities and learn about year-round events that take place at the fairgrounds. The program gives insight into the production business model behind the special events while learning from community leaders and how the Fair supports the community throughout the year.



## YSD FILLS ITS HEART WITH SANCTUARY

In February 2024, the Sanctuary Cross Divisional Action Team led the Youth Services Department in participating in a month-long activity called 'Fill Your Heart with Sanctuary.' The sanctuary team put up hearts in YSD's various office spaces so staff could write and place notes for co-workers in the heart that highlighted how the individual has demonstrated one of the seven commitments of the Sanctuary Model of Trauma-Informed Care.

The commitments of the Sanctuary model are democracy, open communication, growth and change, nonviolence, emotional intelligence, social learning, and social responsibility. The various notes were put in each designated office space's heart display on pink, white, and red construction paper. Together, the notes helped fill the teams' hearts with sanctuary.





# YSD FILLS ITS HEART WITH SANCTUARY



Fill Your Heart

With Sanctuary



# BIRTH TO 22 HOSTS ANNUAL TASK FORCE MEETING



The Seventh Annual Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures Task Force meeting was held at the Clayton E. Hutcheson Agricultural Center on January 16, 2024. After being held virtually for several years, this in-person event hosted over 100 participants, including parents, family members,

school representatives, students, community members, and agency representatives. The meeting was split into two sessions: a review of the previous year and an interactive discussion about the Youth Master Plan 2.0 draft.

As Birth to 22 enters its 10th year as a collective impact, Tammy K. Fields, Palm Beach County Assistant County Administrator, and Lisa Williams-Taylor, CEO of the Children's Services Council (CSC) of Palm Beach County, highlighted the 2023 accomplishments as well as the major milestones achieved over the last 10 years. The task force meeting was also a transitional moment as Tammy accepted a promotional opportunity within the county. She was thanked for her contributions and passion towards Birth to 22 and introduced the new Birth to 22 Steering Committee Co-Chair, Elisa Cramer, who is Interim Director of the Youth Services Department (YSD).

The task force meeting showcased two youth-led workgroups, Future Leaders: United for Change and the Girls Voice Task Force, which have hosted community service projects, engaged youth in skill-building and leadership initiatives, and planned events throughout 2024.

The Youth Master Plan (YMP) serves as the blueprint for setting priorities and taking action to improve the lives of

children and youth in Palm Beach County. Before the Task Force meeting, the registered participants were provided a draft of the "YMP 2.0," an update of the plan based on community input and data. During the second session of the Task Force meeting, Jeannette Gordon, an independent consultant, facilitated discussions to gather feedback on the draft, including the strengths, gaps, and overall comprehensiveness of the proposed plan.

The new YMP focuses on youth transitioning to adulthood with strategic priority areas of mental health, economic access, and education while highlighting safety. Once finalized, this plan will guide the next three years of services and funding opportunities for the Birth to 22 Alliance.

Learn more about the Birth to 22 Alliance at: <http://pbcbirthto22.com/>.

To stay connected with Birth to 22 and upcoming events and initiatives, follow Birth to 22 on Facebook and Instagram @Birthto22.





# YOUTH SERVICES HOSTS CHILDREN'S HOME ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS (CHAIL)



On October 25 and 26, 2023, the Youth Services Department (YSD) hosted an executive team of four from the Children's Home Association of Illinois (CHAIL) for a Sanctuary Implementation Overview visit. The Sanctuary

Institute named the Palm Beach County Youth Services Department a model agency for implementing the model across clinical and non-clinical domains within an

organization. The purpose of the 2-day visit focused on hearing from all levels of YSD staff about implementation challenges and successes. The visit ended with the team observing a youth graduating from the Highridge Family Center residential therapeutic program, where they were able to see the Sanctuary Model in action.

The CHAIL team plans to implement the Sanctuary Model and was very thankful for YSD's time and dedication to providing a comprehensive overview by demonstrating the commitment to Open Communication, Democracy, Social Learning, and Growth and Change.

## IKE POWELL REPRESENTS YSD AT NATIONAL MENTORING SUMMIT

In January 2024, Ike Powell, Director of Outreach & Community Programming at Palm Beach County Youth Services Department, attended the National Mentor Summit in Washington, DC. The conference offered opportunities to participate in workshops about evidence-based programs, experience inspirational keynote speakers, and share about the great strides made in Palm Beach County. Mr. Powell also had a chance to meet with national leaders.



## PBC PROCLAIMS JANUARY NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

At the Board of County Commissioners meeting on January 23, 2024, Commissioner Mack Bernard presented a proclamation declaring January 2024 as Mentoring Month in Palm Beach County. This annual campaign helps to raise awareness and celebrate the powerful impact of mentoring relationships, recruit new mentors and encourage institutions to integrate quality mentoring into their policies and practices. Mentoring programs significantly impact youth academic achievement, school connectedness and engagement, and educational success, which can lead to positive outcomes such as improved attendance, grades, test scores, and classroom behavior.





# YSD HOSTS COMMUNITY BASED AGENCIES 2024 KICKOFF AND QUARTER 2 MEETING

The Youth Services Department hosted its Community Based Agencies (CBAs) FY2024 Kickoff meeting on October 17, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. at the Clayton E. Hutcheson Agricultural Services Center.

After engaging in a Sanctuary Community Meeting, JaVona Wilson, Program Coordinator of YSD's Outreach and Community Programming Division (OCP) got the group up and moving with a bingo icebreaker. The agency staff learned more about each other and other agencies while earning prizes. Valerie Messineo, Senior Program Specialist of OCP, presented agency programmatic requirements and dates to remember, and polled the group for feedback to improve the annual report/logic model processes.

Ty Hall, Financial Analyst II, of the Finance, Contracting, and Administrative Services Division, reviewed the Services and Activities Management Information System (SAMIS), including frequently asked questions and common invoice errors.

Wen Fils-Aime, Program Coordinator, and Tamia Williams, Senior Program Specialist of OCP, presented on the Summer Camp Scholarship Program. They encouraged the agencies to get involved by applying to be a summer camp, assisting their families with applications, and spreading the word about the program. Each CBA contract encourages agencies to get involved with the Birth to 22 United for Brighter Futures Alliance.

The group was provided an update about how they could get involved and the areas of support needed, and then JaVona told the group about the work of Future Leaders.



Youth Service's Outreach and Community Programming Division (OCP) hosted its FY2024 second quarterly Community Based Agencies (CBA) meeting on January 9, 2024, at 9:00 am at the Clayton E. Hutcheson Agricultural Services Center. This meeting introduced multiple free resources to the agency staff. Johnathan Brown, Director of PBC Housing and Economic Development Department, shared funding resources for the development of affordable housing.

Victoire Begeansma of Jewish Family Services (JFS) discussed the benefits of Youth Mental Health First Aid training. JFS will go directly to an agency's location to provide this free training if requested. Samantha Corr of PBC Environmental Resources Management introduced the Trailblazers program for youth 11 years and older. It allows them to get outdoors, out of their comfort zone, and to try new things.

Valerie Messineo, Senior Program Specialist of OCP presented on agency programmatic requirements, dates to remember, and provided technical support focused on monthly reports. Wen Fils-Aime, Program Coordinator, and Tamia Williams, Senior Program Specialist of OCP, discussed the Summer Camp Scholarship Program and the process to submit an application, and upcoming workshops. To provide opportunities for CBAs to get involved with Birth to 22, JaVona Wilson of OCP, shared information about Future Leaders and the Girls Voice Task Force. The two workgroups are teaming up to create a hub that will meet bi-monthly at the Youth Services Department. There is a continuing need for agencies to partner with the program to ensure there are youth participants.

At the CBA kick-off meeting in October, agencies stated they wanted more support around trauma and how to support youth who share challenging personal information with staff. The Center for Child Counseling provided a free, 90-minute training after the quarterly meeting on PACE (Positive/Adverse Childhood Experiences) and incorporating activities to respond to students meaningfully and helpfully.



# 2023 GIRLS COORDINATING COUNCIL 5K

On Saturday, October 7, 2023, Youth Services represented in helping to execute the Girls Coordinating Council (GCC) of Palm Beach County's 2nd Annual 5K Run/Walk. The Girls Coordinating Council is a community collaborative focusing on reforming and strengthening the system of care for girls and increasing the availability of gender-responsive, trauma-informed, and strength-based services for girls.





# HIGHRIDGE FAMILY CENTER HONORS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

In February 2024, Highridge Family Center honored Black History Month at the youth residential therapeutic center by transforming the cafeteria into a "Black History Museum," which had the following under display:

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Wall, a current events wall, an "Inventors and their Inventions" Table, a Young Heroes Wall, a Resilience Wall, and a Justice & Equality Wall.
- As part of the celebration, youth clients were encouraged to write their own 'I Have a Dream' speeches, drawing inspiration from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s iconic speech. These speeches were then displayed, allowing everyone to share and learn from each other's dreams and aspirations. Each week, the youth and team at Highridge focused on a specific area through Psychoeducation Group sessions. Clients also watched movies that coincided with the theme or subject.
- The Memorial also depicted lives that were lost during efforts to achieve and maintain freedom for all, dating back to the "Freedom Riders" era and as recent as the Black Lives Matter movement.
- Throughout the month, their "Black History Highlights" featured motivational quotes, notable figures, and inventors/inventions of past and present-day entrepreneurs.
- 'Spirit' week was a special part of the Black History Month celebration. It was a week filled with activities designed to illustrate the lives of Black people from the days of slavery to the present. Each day had a different theme, and everyone was encouraged to dress up and participate in various activities, such as Cultural Potluck/Flag Day, to immerse themselves in American history and culture.

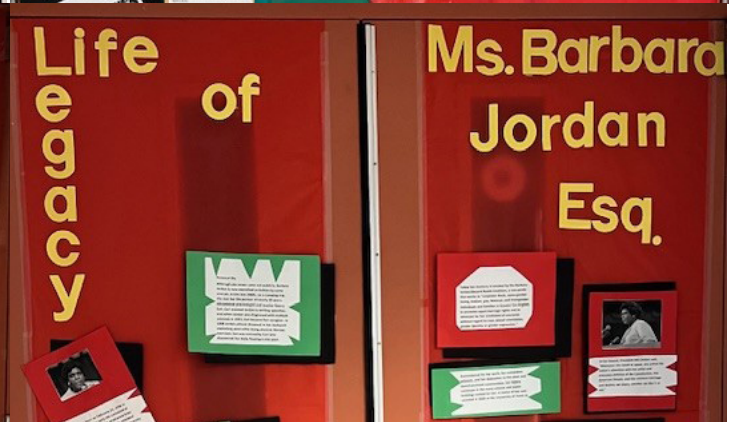
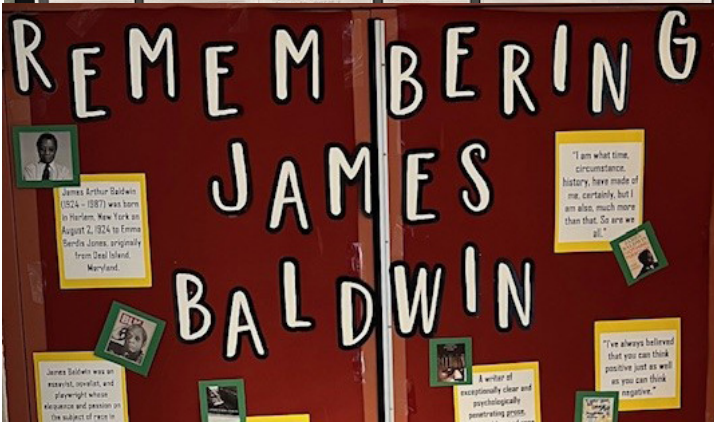
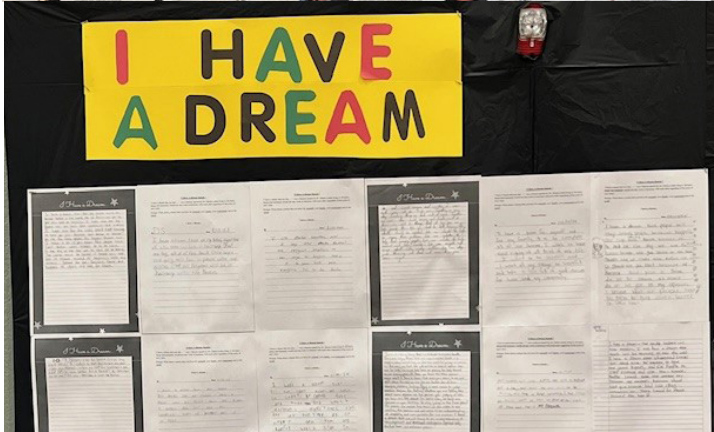
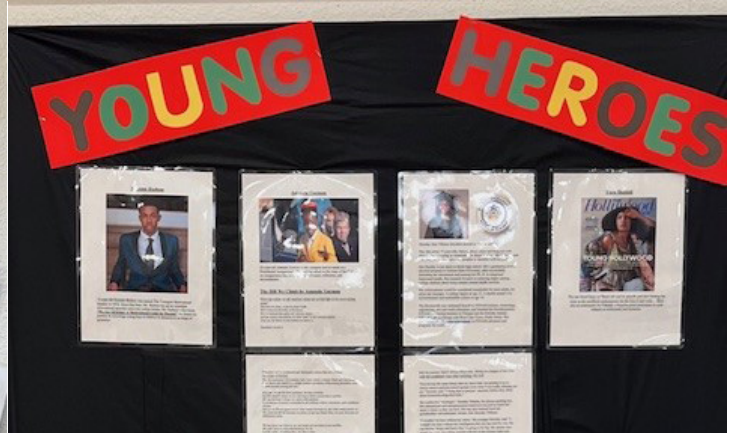
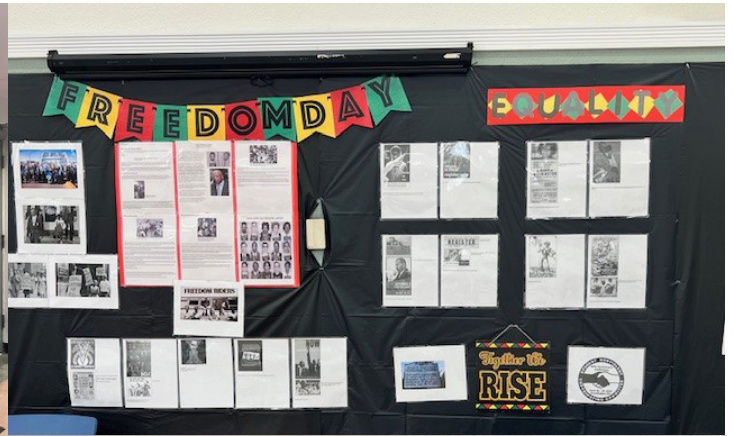
Also included in the celebration of Black History Month was: a "Dorm Door" decorating contest, highlighting heroes from past and present and their contribution to safety; inventors/notable figures tables emphasizing historical events and inventions/inventor; a "Commitments in Action Wall," which highlighted black men and women depicting their contributions to society, and a "Young Heroes Easel Display" showcasing teenagers who have positively impacted society.

Well done to the Highridge Family Center on a wonderful month-long celebration honoring Black History Month!





# HIGHRIDGE FAMILY CENTER HONORS BLACK HISTORY MONTH





# PALM BEACH COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COALITION YOUTH SUMMIT

On Saturday, October 14, 2023, the Youth Services Department participated in the Palm Beach County Behavioral Health Youth Summit called 'Ride The WAVE (Wellness, Awareness, Visualization, Empathy).' Youth learned about leadership, drug prevention, and coping skills, and participated in art expression. Tammy K. Fields, Assistant County Administrator, and Lourdes Perez, Administrative Assistant I, shared about resources the Youth Services Department offers to youth and families.

Approximately 90 students from across the county representing over 40 schools participated in networking activities, breakout sessions and a service project. Each student who attended the summit at the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County in Boynton Beach received a swag bag with trinkets, resources, a water bottle, and earned 6 hours of community service.

The Youth Services Department provided therapists for two breakout sessions at the event and Birth to 22's Future Leaders United for Change provided water bottles, a Zumba instructor, and Feverish Frozen Treats (Italian Ice).

## Coping Skills 101

Therapists Marlene Aboytes, MSW, and Angela Heras, LCSW, led the youth in a group session focused on exploring coping skills and creating a Coping/Self Care Plan. The opening activity, Positive Self Talk, prompted each youth to write a positive affirmation on a piece of paper, which was later shared among the group. The youth were provided insight into the power of positive self-talk and encouraged to engage in this technique daily. Afterward, the clinicians led the group in an open discussion to explore the importance of coping skills, discuss the difference between healthy and unhealthy coping skills, and provide psychoeducation on two additional techniques (breathing and grounding techniques).

The latter portion of this group activity focused on the youth identifying their own personal coping skills and

creating a safe care plan. Each youth was provided with a coping card to document their coping skills and a healthy coping skills pamphlet of examples. The youth took turns sharing one of their coping skills with the group.

## Empathy Circle

Therapists Marlene Aboytes, MSW, and Angela Heras, LCSW, led the youth in an empathy circle activity, which highlighted various topics such as bullying, drugs, and discrimination. Confidentiality and the exceptions were reviewed during the icebreaker activity. The youth all sat in a circle and were prompted to raise their hand if the sentence read applied to them. Questions asked included the following: Have you ever been bullied; Have you ever been discriminated against; Have you ever felt pressured to use drugs; Do you feel uncertain about the future?

Clinicians used reflections to facilitate conversations, and youth were encouraged to share personal experiences. A safe environment was provided for youth to ask additional questions. Toward the end of the group, the clinicians referenced various hands raised for each question to highlight the importance of bringing these topics into the conversation and to remind the youth that they are not alone. The clinicians discussed the therapy services available through Youth Services.

## Agencies involved:

- Palm Beach County Behavioral Health Coalition •Palm Beach County Youth Services Department •Hanley Foundation •Coral Shores Behavioral Health •Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County •Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network •Teen Coalition in Action •FAU Collegiate Recovery Centers •BeWellPBC •Choice to Change •Talented Teen Club •PBSO Homeless Outreach Officers •MADD •Say What Enterprise LLC •Planned Parenthood •211 •Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies •Florida National Guard – Counter Drug Force •American Heart Association •New Season Treatment Center •Crazy Games •Feverish Frozen Treats





## YSD REMEMBERS PALM TRAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CLINTON FORBES



On Friday, November 3rd, 2023, Palm Beach County was saddened to learn of the unexpected passing of Palm Tran's Executive Director, Clinton Forbes.

Upon the passing of Mr. Forbes, the Youth Services Department reached out to offer support to the Palm Tran team during this difficult time. Tammy K. Fields,

Assistant County Administrator, along with Dr. Twila Taylor, Director of Residential Treatment and Family Counseling, responded within hours to the Palm Tran 4-Points location to offer supportive therapy services to employees in person or via phone as needed.

Katia Cavalie, Chief of Community Based Clinical Services, LCSW, and Brittany Grimshaw Houghtlin, MS Clinical Psychology Doctoral Intern, assisted Dr. Taylor. YFC therapist Marlene Aboytes, MSW, also assisted Palm Tran employees in their West County offices.

Palm Beach County Youth Services' direct behavioral health services are free for Palm Beach County residents; more information can be found [here](#).

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH OPENING CEREMONY

The 2023 Domestic Violence Awareness Month kicked off with an opening ceremony at the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO) Training Center on October 4, 2023. CBS News' Luli Ortiz was Mistress of Ceremonies of the "Palm Beach County Cares" themed event. Sixteen community leaders spoke of the coordinated efforts in the county, including Tammy K. Fields, Assistant County Administrator. Ms. Fields spoke of the effects domestic violence has on children and the services available for youth and families.

"We need to break the cycle of domestic violence and promote resilience in our children so they will enter adulthood healthy, strong and equipped to handle life's challenges," said Fields.

The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department also wore purple in observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.





## JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT CAREER EXPLORATION FAIR



On December 5, 2023, JaVona Wilson and Wen Fils-Aime, Program Coordinators of Youth Services, served as guest speakers for the Junior Achievement Career Exploration Fair at Greenacres Elementary School.

JaVona and Wen educated students on various careers in addition to the inspiring work of Youth Services. They also led games to help students identify their interests about different careers in a fun way while learning.

## 13TH ANNUAL COMPASSION PROJECT

On November 18, 2023, Youth Services participated in the 13th Annual Compassion Project hosted by Gang Alternative Inc., Marlene Aboytes, Therapist, shared resources about the department with families at the community resource fair held at the event.

[Gang Alternative, Inc.](#) was founded in 2005 on the premise of servant leadership and has been “Building Character that Lasts” in youth and families ever since. They are a community-based organization grounded in faith with the continuing purpose of preventing violence while promoting self-sufficiency.



## ERM TOUR OF LOXAHATCHEE SLOUGH



On December 1, 2023, Tevin Ali, Outreach and Public Information Coordinator, joined Deborah Drum, Director of the Environmental Resources Management (ERM) department, Michael A. Barnett, Palm Beach County Commissioner, District 3, and ERM staff for a tour of Loxahatchee Slough. Approximately 1/12 of the nearly 13,000 square acres preserve north of PGA near Beeline. This is Palm Beach County's largest natural preserve operated by ERM. ERM staff took the team on a swamp buggy through wetlands, dry areas, and locations that will be prepared for controlled burns to prevent wildfires. This area remains mostly untouched, as it existed nearly 5,000 years ago.



Fun fact: In 2017, the Department of Environmental Resources Management, along with Youth Services Department, began a summer internship program called the “Green Futures Internship Program” for youth ages 17 to 22. The goal of the program is to inspire and mentor young adults by giving them first-hand experiences doing “green” jobs that preserve and protect Palm Beach County's land and water resources. For more information contact Samantha Corr with Palm Beach County ERM at [scorr@pbcgov.org](mailto:scorr@pbcgov.org).



# CROSS-DIVISIONAL ACTION TEAM (CDAT) KICKOFF MEETING FY 2024

The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department's Cross Divisional Action Teams (CDAT) delivered virtual presentations to the department on October 16, 2023, through Zoom.

The presentations provided a chance for the teams to gain feedback and guidance to move the strategic plans forward for FY 2024. The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Sanctuary, and Seeds of Success teams each successfully presented a recap of the wonderful work conducted over the year in addition to their goals, metrics, and strategies.

## 2023-2024 YSD Cross-Divisional KICKOFF



**Date:** Monday, October 16, 2022  
**Time:** 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm  
**Zoom links:** <https://pbcgov.zoom.us/j/8542422767>  
**Meeting ID:** 854 2422 2767

### AGENDA

**Facilitator:** Tammy Fields, Donna Goodwin, Tania Shindo

Item	Presenter	Time
I. Opening Remarks	Tammy Fields	2:00 - 2:10 pm

## RIPPEL FOUNDATION PODCAST

Tammy K. Fields, Assistant County Administrator, was recently a guest on The Rippel Foundation's Unsung Stewards podcast where she discussed the Youth Services Department and Birth to 22's work with youth. The conversation explored how trauma-informed services, centering youth voices, and encouraging individualism and creativity are ways to build resilience and belonging.

The podcast also highlighted how critical it is for young people to be included in the process of designing solutions to end youth homelessness. The podcast was truly a youth and young adults discussion including Northwest Youth Services. The podcast starting streaming on December 7, 2023. Stream the episode here: <https://rippel.org/podcasts/> [rippel.org]

### Season Three EPISODE 3

**Tammy Fields**  
Palm Beach County Youth Services Department

**Jason McGill,  
Cyrrus Sego-Smith,  
and Othello C.**  
Northwest Youth Services

**Hosted by Becky Payne**  
President and CEO, Rippel

## 2024 PBC EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY 5K

On Saturday, January 20, 2024, the Youth Services Department and family members participated in the Annual PBC Employee & Family 5K Walk/Run at John Prince Park.

Employees, families, and friends joined to kick off a healthy start to the new year.

Great work, YSD!





# BIRTH TO 22: FUTURE LEADERS AND GIRLS COORDINATING COUNCIL SEASON TO GIVE

Birth to 22: Future Leaders and Girls Coordinating Council (GCC) kicked off the holiday season by collecting over 100 donated gifts in partnership with Digital Vibez and their annual Jingle Jamz, where Digital Vibez distributes gifts to youth in underserved communities within Palm Beach County. In addition, the team collected over \$150 in gift cards to distribute to underprivileged teens in Palm Beach County; these gift cards are to teen-friendly stores such as Five Below, Target, Amazon, and more. Teens are sometimes overlooked when it comes to toy drives, so this made way for GCC and Future Leaders to give back to all youth in Palm Beach County.

On December 8, 2023, Future Leaders gathered at Youth Services to wrap the gifts donated while enjoying a hot cocoa bar and holiday tunes provided by Digital Vibez. The

youth who participated received community service work hours to report to their schools. Future Leaders is a youth council in Palm Beach County that provides a platform for the voice of the youth of Palm Beach County, creating leaders through self-motivation, determination, and education.

As the group focuses on high school students to age 22, they provide a place and a space for these young adults to connect, engage, and inspire bi-monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 50 S. Military Trail, West Palm Beach, FL 33415.

Stay connected with Future Leaders on Instagram @futureleadersunited for meeting updates and community service opportunities. For more information, please contact JaVona Wilson at 561-242-5705 or [jwilson@pbcgov.org](mailto:jwilson@pbcgov.org).





# 2024 SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM REGISTRATION PORTAL IS OPEN

Did you know that more than 3,000 Palm Beach County children received scholarships to attend camp last summer? Do you have a child or do you know a child who would benefit from summer camp? Now is the time to apply for summer camp scholarships that cover ALL costs at select camps throughout Palm Beach County!

On January 29, 2024, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department opened parent applications for summer camp scholarships. Parents can apply for Summer Camp Scholarships for their child through April 12, 2024.

The Summer Camp Scholarship Program offers eligible children, ages 5-17, a full scholarship to day camp for the entire summer. It allows parents to work with the knowledge that their children are safe and receiving educational and recreational growth opportunities. The Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners and Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County fund the scholarships.

The scholarship includes all tuition and fees for children residing in families with income at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines. Parents may choose from participating camps in Palm Beach County.

The 2024 Summer Camp Scholarship Program is scheduled to begin on June 3.

Youth Services will offer extended hours to assist with parent applications on Tuesdays and Thursdays, by appointment only, until 7 p.m. throughout the application

period. Youth Services Department has held three of four outreach events.

Outreach Events:

- Hagen Ranch Road Library Branch on Saturday, February 3, 2024.
- Gardens Library Branch on Saturday, February 10, 2024.
- Belle Glade Library Branch on Saturday, February 24, 2024.
- Main Library Branch (3650 Summit Boulevard, West Palm Beach, FL 33406) on Saturday, April 6, 2024.

To access the program's parent application, please click [here](https://discover.pbcgov.org/youthservices/Pages/Summer_Camp.aspx). [https://discover.pbcgov.org/youthservices/Pages/Summer\\_Camp.aspx](https://discover.pbcgov.org/youthservices/Pages/Summer_Camp.aspx)

For more information, please email YSD-SummerCamp@pbcbgov.org or call 561-242-5713.

For more information on the Federal Poverty Levels (FPL) please click [here](https://discover.pbcgov.org/youthservices/PDF/Federal_Poverty_Guideline.pdf). [https://discover.pbcgov.org/youthservices/PDF/Federal\\_Poverty\\_Guideline.pdf](https://discover.pbcgov.org/youthservices/PDF/Federal_Poverty_Guideline.pdf)

Check out the information video about the program made by the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County [here](#).





# CENTER FOR CHILD COUNSELING (CCC) GRATITUDE GATHERING

The Center for Child Counseling hosted its Gratitude Gathering on November 30, 2023, in West Palm Beach.

- Top photo, left to right: Center for Child Counseling CEO Renée Layman, Chief Juvenile Administrative Judge Kathleen Kroll, and YSD Interim Director Elisa Cramer.
- Bottom photo, left to right: YSD Interim Director Elisa Cramer, Assistant County Administrator Tammy K. Fields, United Way Executive Vice President of Community Investments Dr. Seth Bernstein, and Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County CEO Dr. Lisa Williams-Taylor.

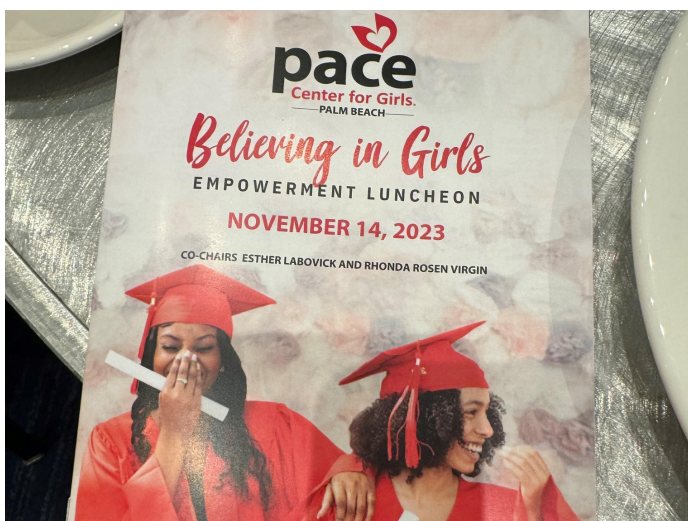
The Center for Child Counseling is a YSD Community-Based Agency, funded by the Board of County Commissioners. The Center for Child Counseling provides the Childhood Trauma Response Program and the Childcare and Community Social Emotional Wellness Program (CCSEW).

All organizations/entities represented in the pictures are Birth to 22 leaders.



## PACE 'BELIEVING IN GIRLS' LUNCHEON

YSD attended the Pace Believing in Girls Empowerment Luncheon on November 14, 2023. The Pace Center for Girls, Inc. is a YSD Community-Based Agency, funded by the Board of County Commissioners. Its Healthy Youth Transitions program provides research-based, culturally sensitive, trauma-informed caregiver education services and support to address the intergenerational cycle of trauma in families and the community. Services include trauma-focused intervention, early intervention and targeted treatment for children at high-risk of social-emotional concerns due to interrelated risk factors.



'BELIEVING IN GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT LUNCHEON



## PBC COMMUNITY SERVICES HOMELESS SUMMIT

On Thursday, November 9, 2023, the Leading the Way Home: Summit on Homelessness was held at the United Methodist Church in West Palm Beach. This summit discussed the cost of living in Palm Beach County, the progress made in the last 10 years, and the reasons for the re-examination of the "Leading the Way Home" plan with a goal to end homelessness in our county. There was also an opportunity to divide into groups and discuss a variety of factors that affect homelessness, such as systems and services, housing, healthcare, and more.

Keynote Speaker Joey Nieves, Director of Outreach for The Lord's Place and Certified Recovery Specialist, discussed his experience as a homeless individual in Cleveland, Ohio, overcoming other challenges, and how he found his calling in his daily work.

Commissioners Gregg Weiss and Mack Bernard, and County Administrator Verdenia Baker provided remarks.

Dr. James Green, Director of Palm Beach County Community Services; Taruna Malhotra, Deputy Director of Palm Beach County Community Services; and Wendy Tippet, Director of Human Services and Community Action at Palm Beach County Community Services, provided important information on the state of homelessness in Palm Beach County.

Tammy Fields, Assistant County Administrator, and Elisa Cramer, Interim Director of Youth Services, participated with a focus on the needs of unsheltered children and families and older teens transitioning to adulthood.



## POINT IN TIME COUNT

YSD participated in the Point in Time Count, stationed at Vita Nova. During the evening, Assistant County Administrator Tammy Fields and Youth Services Department Interim Director Elisa Cramer helped organize Vita Nova's clothing closet, which provides donated attire at no cost to teens and young adults served by Vita Nova. They also engaged in conversations with young adults who shared their personal experiences of housing insecurity and suggestions for capturing accurate counts of youth and young adults who are unsheltered.

The count occurred on Thursday, January 25, 2024, from 12 pm-12 am and Friday, January 26, 2024, from 4 am-12 pm.



## READ FOR THE RECORD

On October 24, 2023, Tammy K. Fields, Assistant County Administrator, participated in the Annual 'Read for the Record' literary campaign. Ms. Fields read Jenny Torres Sanchez' wonderful story titled "With Lots of Love."

Read for the Record inspires adults to read with children, spurs policymakers and organizations to take action toward transformative change in early education. In Palm Beach County and throughout the county, this literary campaign puts books in the hands of more children.





## TEEN ZOMBIE SURVIVAL CAMP PRESENTATION

On Sunday, October 15, 2023, YSD joined Palm Beach County Library at their 'Zombie Survival Camp' event to share the different programs and volunteer opportunities the county offers to teens in the community.

Sarah Barr & Amber Snedden, Doctoral Interns with YSD's Education and Training Center, gave a presentation on Mindfulness. Tania Shindo-Henderson, Program Evaluator, and Tevin Ali, Outreach and Public Information Coordinator, shared the resources YSD offers teens and their families.



## RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE TRAINING

This past quarter, Vanessa Steelman, Palm Beach County Manager of Fair Employment Programs, conducted two workshop training sessions at Youth Services titled 'Respectful Workplace.'

The workshop goals were to create a shared understanding of the culture Palm Beach County seeks to foster in the department workspaces, provide a heightened awareness of the issues arising from uncivil and unlawful workplace conduct, and provide tangible methods for addressing problematic workplace behavior.



## MERIT RULE TRAINING

This past quarter, the Palm Beach County Human Resources Department gave a merit rule presentation to Youth Services at Highridge Family Center about Palm Beach County Merit Rule updates for 2023. These updates are revisions from the 2007 Merit Rules.

Staff learned about changes in recruitment and selection, probationary period, pay administration, rules of conduct, leave benefits, outside employment, performance reviews, and more.

Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners

2023 Merit Rule Revisions  
(from 2007 Merit Rules)

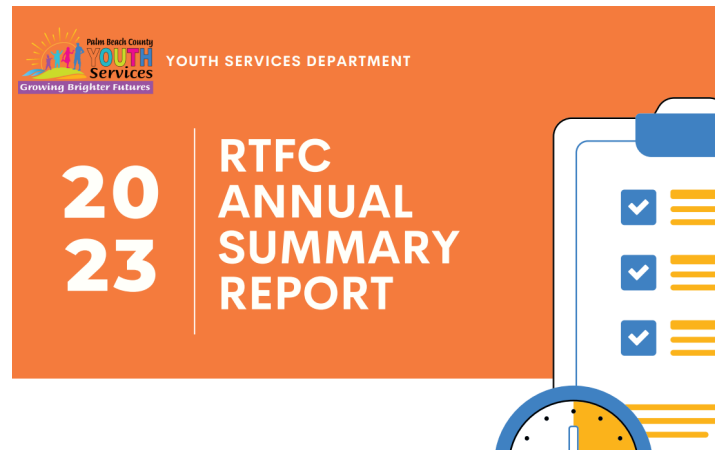


Human Resources



# RTFC QUARTER 1 SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Youth Services conducts quarterly assessments to gain feedback from youth and families who use our therapeutic services. Our Residential Treatment and Family Counseling (RTFC) Division has four programs, including the Education Center, Highridge Family Center, Youth and Family Counseling (YFC), and Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP). Improving services and maintaining client satisfaction is important to our mission of providing free, accessible and professional trauma-informed mental health services and educational programs within Palm Beach County. The following highlights include a summary of RTFC's combined 2023 annual results and the first quarter program results for fiscal year 2023/2024.



**96%**

of all Youth & Parents/Guardians strongly agree or agree that they are satisfied with the **behavioral/mental health** services according to client satisfaction survey data.

*RTFC All Locations*

**94%**

of all Youth & Parents/Guardians strongly agree or agree that they believe the services helped them **express their feelings** in a better way.

*RTFC All Locations*

**92%**

of all Youth & Parents/Guardians report **resiliency factors** related to Safety, Emotions, Loss and Future (**SELF**) as part of the Sanctuary Model Trauma-informed approach.

*RTFC All Locations*

**87%**

of all Youth & Parents/Guardians strongly agree or agree that they believe their family **gets along better** because of what they learned at Youth Services.

*RTFC All Locations*

## FY 24 Quarter 1: Highlights Summary

**100%**

of Parents/Guardians strongly agree or agree that they are satisfied with the **services at Youth Services**.

*Education & Training Center*

**100%**

of all Youth & Parents/Guardians strongly agree or agree that they feel respected by the Youth & Family Counseling staff.

*Youth and Family Counseling*

**92.5%**

of all Youth & Parents/Guardians agree or strongly agree that mediation conferences were helpful in identifying their family problem.

*Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP)*

**100%**

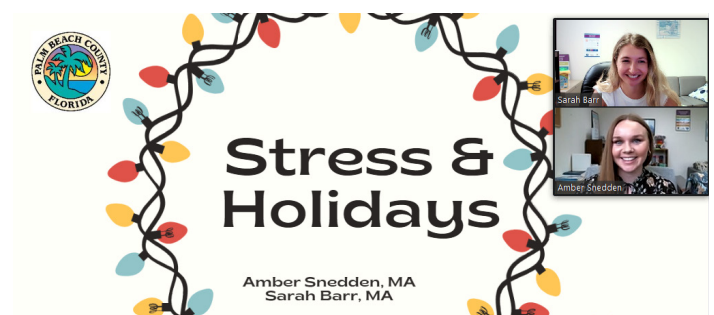
of all Youth & Parents/Guardians strongly agree or agree that Highridge Family Center helped them express their feelings in a better way.

*Highridge Residential Treatment Center*

## STRESS AND THE HOLIDAYS TIPS VIDEO

Doctoral Interns at the Education & Training Center, Amber Snedden, MA, and Sarah Barr, MA, provided outreach during the holiday season.

In December 2023, they developed a social media video-post to share tips for children and parents on managing stress during the holidays. Check out the video [here](#).





# YOUTH SERVICES HOLIDAY SMILES

The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department divisions and programs brought their holiday game and smiles to the many offices this past holiday season. Best wishes in 2024 to all.







## CBA Q&A: DIGITAL VIBEZ

**Q What is your mission?**

**A** Our mission is to empower youth in diverse and underserved communities through dance fitness, technology, and the arts.

**Q What does your organization do?**

**A** We are a local non-profit 501(c)(3) providing innovative programs and community/family night events to youth throughout Palm Beach County. Our mobile programs are focused on inspiring and empowering youth ages 5 – 18 through Dance Fitness, Technology and the Arts. Youth gain insight and learn how to use their creativity and talents to develop healthier habits, enhance team building skills, foster positive self-expression, and have fun through our engaging activities.

**Q What key programs does your organization offer?**

**A** The key programs we provide are: **Fitness Jamz** provides youth with eight fun and engaging sessions where youth foster a love of fitness by incorporating physical activity and healthy behaviors into their everyday lives.

**Wellness Workshop** provides youth with a series of sessions focused on health, nutrition, wellness, dance, and overall fitness. Delivered by trained

instructors, Wellness Workshops engage youth in physical activity while promoting health and wellness.

**Digital Expressions®** provides youth with a series of mentoring sessions geared toward empowering them to be proactive in their journey to positive self-expression through audio production, art of dance, photo/video production, and literacy through lyrics.

**Q How does your agency benefit the community?**

**A** We provide our communities with various family engagement events hosted in collaboration with Schools and Community Based Organizations looking for a safe and exciting way to gain parent engagement, quality family time and a method to build a bridge between resources and providers in our communities. Many of our community engagement activities focus on dance fitness, which inspires communities to prioritize their health and wellness and that of their families.

**Q What is your agency's focus for 2024?**

**A** Our focus this year is to increase the awareness of overall wellness. If we can get our communities moving, active,

and taking charge of their lives in a healthier way, it will help improve mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Our goal is to start by increasing our efforts to really push our Let's Move Palm Beach County Commit to Change Challenge in partnership with the Palm Health Foundation. Last year, Palm Beach County residents collectively reached an all-time high of 103,000,000 minutes of physical activity! Our Let's Move PBC Challenge begins March 1 and ends March 31; we encourage everyone to register their teams, get active, and count those minutes on [LetsMovePBC.org](https://letsmovepbc.org).

**Q How do the funds received from Palm Beach County enhance the services your agency provides?**

**A** Through the funding we receive from Palm Beach County, we are able to provide more mobile programs to youth in more areas and communities in need.

We are also able to partner with more agencies to provide more community outreaches and free public events for youth and families to enjoy.

Thanks to your funding, we have been able to break the glass ceilings, expand our larger projects, and have been able to make it to our 10th year as a non-profit impacting lives in Palm Beach County.



# CBA Q&A CONTINUED

**Q** What is your website information?

**A** [www.digitalvibez.org](http://www.digitalvibez.org)

**Q** Do you have a youth success story you would like to share?

**A** Over the summer, we had the pleasure of partnering with the Urban League of Palm Beach County to provide youth in their program with a summer internship. Through this collaboration, we were able to mentor and guide several youths during the work week at our Digital Vibez

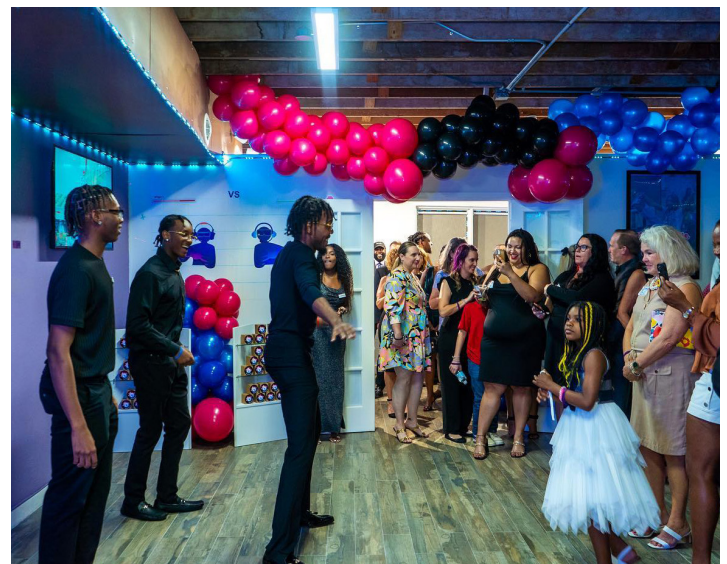
Studio located in Northwood.

During this internship, we met with a teen who had come a long way to where he was, and he had two options: Attend the summer internship in the hope of change and a better life or find himself in the streets without knowing what would happen to him next.

Through the mentorship, he gained time management, project management, leadership skills and enhanced his skills in team building, problem-solving, and communication skills.

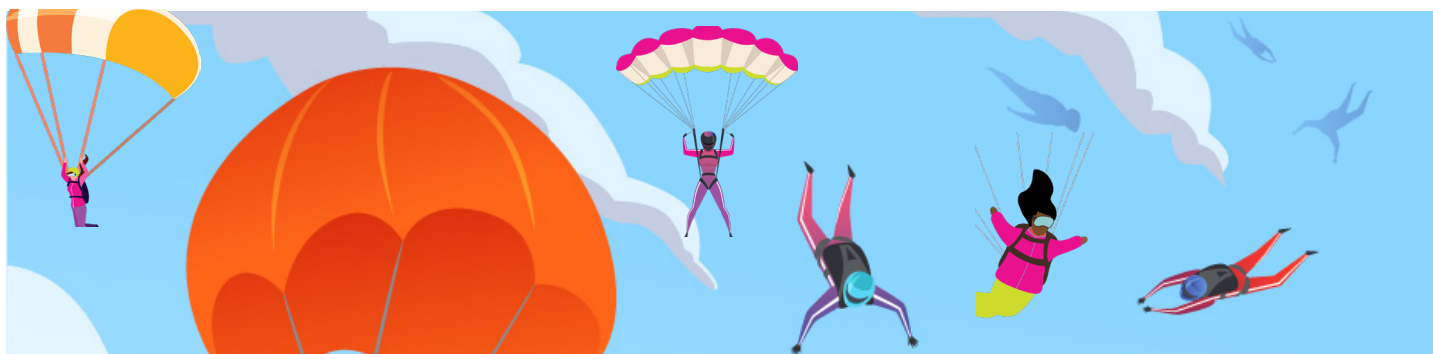
He also regained his confidence, self-respect, and the meaning of family.

He looks forward to one day working for Digital Vibez because of the impact we've had on his life and the way we provide methods for other youth also to gain support in becoming a better person and seeing that in life, there is always an option to choose another path just like him. He has since returned to school and we anticipate him to graduate soon!





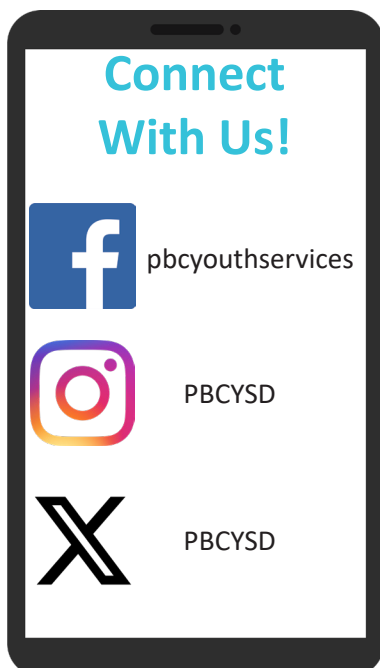
# WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES



Employee	Position	Division	Date
Chandra Cosby	Grant Compliance Specialist II	OCP	Oct. 2023
Takeba Bre Ann White-Simeon	Administrative Technician I	RTFC	Oct. 2023
Regenia Robinson	Fiscal Specialist II	FCA	Nov. 2023
Brenda Weathersbee	On Call – Paraprofessional	RTFC	Nov. 2023
Dani Greenberg	Student – Clerical	OCP	Dec. 2023
Latoya Taylor	Grant Compliance Specialist II	OCP	Jan. 2024
Varradi Eugene	FVIP Intern	RTFC	Jan. 2024
Connor Pruitt	Residential Youth Counselor	RTFC	Feb. 2024
Bronyael Reynolds	Administrative Technician III	RTFC	Feb. 2024
Caleiyah Laws	Seasonal – Paraprofessional	OCP	Feb. 2024
Brianna Thomas	Juvenile Residence Technician	RTFC	Feb. 2024





**Youth Services Department Interim Director**

Elisa Cramer

**Director of Finance, Contracting and Administrative Services**

Michelle Liska

**Director of Outreach and Community Programming**

Ike Powell

**Director of Residential Treatment and Family Counseling**

Dr. Twila Taylor

**Editor-in-Chief & Designer**

Tevin Ali

**Palm Beach County  
Board of County Commissioners**

Maria Sachs, Mayor; Maria G. Marino,  
Vice Mayor; Gregg K. Weiss, Michael A.  
Barnett, Marci Woodward, Sara Baxter,  
Mack Bernard

**County Administrator**  
Verdenia C. Baker**Assistant County Administrator**  
Tammy K. Fields