

YSD Scoop!



Volume 6 | Issue 3

Newsletter of the Palm Beach County
Youth Services Department



The Summer Food Service Program

In This Issue

Youth Services Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic

The department continues to be a reliable resource for youth and families during the pandemic. | 2

CBA Spotlight: Take Stock in Children Palm Beach County

Take Stock in Children Palm Beach County aims to passionately promote self-worth, personal responsibility and academic success for qualified, financially at-risk students throughout the county. | 12

Employee Q & A: Brenda Weathersbee

At YSD, we view our employees as one of our greatest strengths. This quarter, we're featuring Brenda Weathersbee, Residential Youth Counselor. | 18

Youth Services Earns NACo Achievement Awards



The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department has been recognized with two Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo) in the category of children and youth.

The awards honor innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents.

NACo recognized the department's Summer Camp Scholarship Program (SCSP) and Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP).

"Both of these programs are outstanding resources for youth and their families in Palm Beach County," said Tammy K. Fields, Youth Services Department director.

For more information on the programs recognized, visit pbcgov.com/youthservices.

Youth Services Continues to Meet the Needs of Youth & Families

The department continues to be a reliable resource for youth and families during the pandemic. The Youth Services Department took the following actions over the last quarter:

Outreach & Community Programming:

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

- Pre-summer feeding began the last week of April and continued through May. A total of 16,674 shelf-stable meals were distributed during a five-week period to eight sites (including seven libraries).
- The SFSP was issued multiple waivers by the USDA to allow sites to continue providing meals to eligible children while maintaining increased safety measures.
- Highridge Family Center staff were trained on the SFSP and became summer food monitors. Four of the staff members participated on the delivery team; they picked up the seven-day meal kits from the central delivery location and delivered them daily to the sites throughout the county.

Summer Camp Scholarship Program (SCSP)

- One hundred five camp choices were available for parents and campers to select from. Camp operations included in-person with additional safety protocols, virtual-only with daily education and recreation activities campers could utilize from home, and hybrid or combination camps that offered a blend of both in-person and virtual camps. While 4,000+ scholarships were awarded, only about 2,200 have been utilized. Campers who did not attend camp in 2020 or declined their scholarship did not receive penalty or future impact.

Community Based Agencies (CBA)

- The grant compliance team adjusted operations to ensure continued emphasis on communication, contract compliance, technical assistance, and contract renewals.
- Communication efforts such as reaching out to agencies to remain informed on adjustments made to continue programming and services for youth and their families while remaining safe and healthy.
- Contract compliance remained the highest priority to ensure on-going programmatic and fiscal monitoring to ensure contract deliverables are emphasized and met. The team completed phase one of a two-

phase monitoring process by completing desk audits of agency documentation, policies and procedures including governance and accountability, human resources, facility management, programmatic and service delivery.

- The team continued to provide on-going technical assistance and support by communicating and working closely with all agencies to understand their continuity of operations plan as it relates to adjustments to ensure on-going programming and service delivery while considering the safety and health of staff, youth, families and the community.
- FY 2021 contract renewals continued to be a priority. Efforts included virtual meetings and conference calls with agencies to negotiate and prepare contract documents for review and approval by county leadership and the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners.

Future Leaders United for Change

- Future Leaders meetings continue to be held virtually via Zoom at 5:30 p.m. on the last Tuesday of each month.

Residential Treatment & Family Counseling:

- Transitioned immediately to telemental health providing services initially via phone and ongoing through the videoconferencing platform Zoom.
- All therapists received training by Education and Training Center employees on the “Basics of Telemental Health” to include benefits, risks, and ethical issues.
- Clinical services include family, group and individual therapy, as well as parenting education.
- All services continued to be free to Palm Beach County residents.

Education & Training Center

- Collaborated with Palm Beach County TV Channel 20 to record mental health awareness segments.
- Transitioned all training sessions to virtual trainings.

Highridge Family Center

- Transitioned from a residential treatment program to telemental health platform that allowed core components of the program to continue until the end of the school year. The program included:

Weekly family and individual therapy

Daily group therapy sessions

Highridge trauma-informed day program

- All employees were trained on current CDC guidelines for COVID-19 pandemic infection control.
- All employees and youth actively practiced CDC recommendations for social distancing, hand-washing and wearing of facial coverings (provided).

Youth and Family Counseling

- All offices continued to provide emotional support and information to callers about resources available in the community during the pandemic.
- Services included family and individual therapy continued via telemental health.

Finance, Contracting & Administrative Services:

- Increased electronic processing and introduced a staggered work schedule to reduce footprint in the office.

Finance, Payroll and Payables

- Implemented electronic submission of receiving documents. The team setup shared folders for payroll, procurement, and contract tracking for staff access in order to pay vendor invoices timely, process employee

payroll and continue processing Community Based Agency (CBA) contract claims related to community programs funded by the county.

Contracts and Grants

- Continued contract negotiations for the upcoming fiscal year and summer programming.
- Revised and amended PPMs related to changes in protocol per CDC, state and county guidelines.

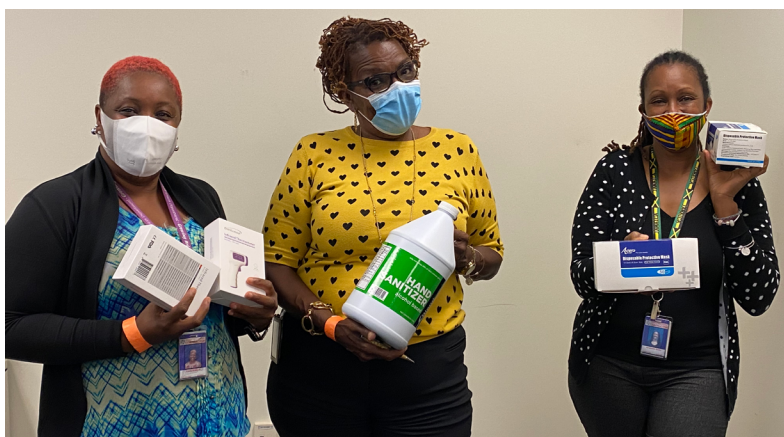
Communications

- Provided up-to-date department information and available resources through Youth Services Department’s social media platforms and developed internal and external communications.

I was expecting this to be a light newsletter due to the pandemic, but it definitely isn't. It is truly amazing how the Youth Services Department has adjusted and continued to provide the highest level of services to youth and their families in Palm Beach County.

-Director Tammy K. Fields

CARES Act Aids in PPE Supplies



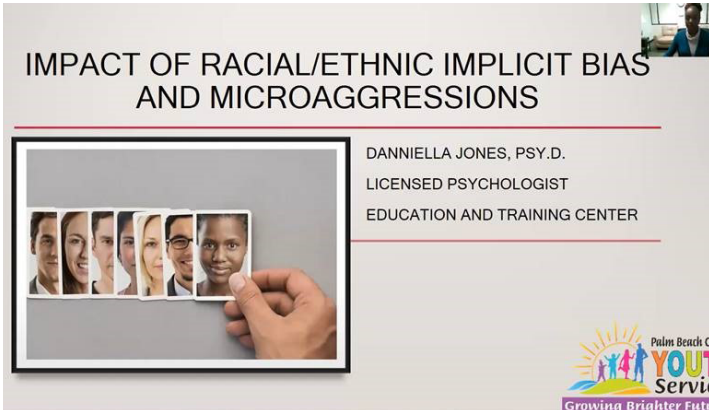
Summer Programming saw many changes in 2020 including an increased need for sanitation and PPE supplies for Summer Camp and Summer Food providers. Many sites assigned a designated staff member to regularly clean their facility; requiring the additional materials in addition to wages specifically for “sanitation staff.” The department requested assistance from the CARES Act Fund to support our providers with this new added cost.

The CARES Act provides assistance to governments through

the Coronavirus Relief Fund. This contribution allowed the county to purchase thousands of PPEs including masks, gloves, disinfectant spray, rags, thermal thermometers, and over 1,100 gallons of hand sanitizer.

These items were then distributed to over 50 of our Summer Camp Scholarship providers offering in-person services to our campers, as well as 50 of our Summer Food Service Program meal distribution sites.

Implicit Bias & Microaggressions Trainings



Over the quarter, the Youth Services Department's Education & Training Center's Danniella Jones, Psy.D. presented "Impact of Racial/Ethnic Bias and Microaggressions," for staff and mental health providers in the community on multiple dates to accommodate the overwhelming requests to receive more information and training surrounding the topic.

The presentation defined racial and ethnic microaggressions and implicit bias, described the impact of implicit bias and microaggressions on persons of color, and developed strategies to increase awareness of bias and mitigate negative consequences of those who are impacted.

Dr. Jones also collaborated with Palm Beach County TV Channel 20, to prerecord a segment to offer insight to the public on how implicit bias plays a major role in our daily lives while providing strategies such as self-reflection to better understand our own biases and how to mitigate negative reactions.

The Education and Training Center has scheduled additional training dates and is producing prerecorded segments on implicit bias and providing strategies to mitigate impacts to persons of color in Spanish and in Creole.

Click [here](#) for more information or to request a training.

The Microaggressions presented by Dr. Jones is the best presentation I have ever seen about racism and next steps to move forward as a more peaceful and inclusive person, organization, and society.

Dr. Jones was spectacular teaching and talking about this much needed yet extremely emotional topic of racial injustice embedded in our society. So timely.

Future Leaders Attend Black Town Hall



On June 15, Future Leaders United for Change took part in a youth-led Black town hall hosted by MENTOR, the national mentoring partnership. The virtual town hall aimed to bring together youth and to gather a collective response to the recent tragic events that have taken place, to share space, and to heal.

Youth Mentoring Action Network and MENTOR hosted a panel of five youth to discuss recent events, with two discussants. During the event, young people shared their pain, their insights, and their plans for the future.

Click [here](#) to view the complete webinar.

County Gets Its Green on for Mental Health Awareness



Tammy K. Fields



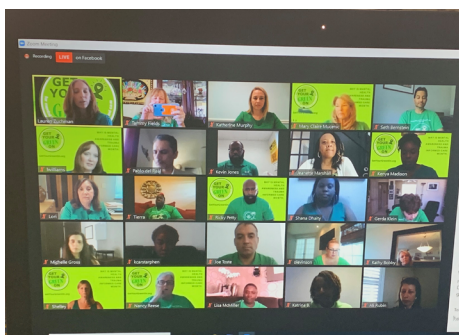
Dorritt M. Miller



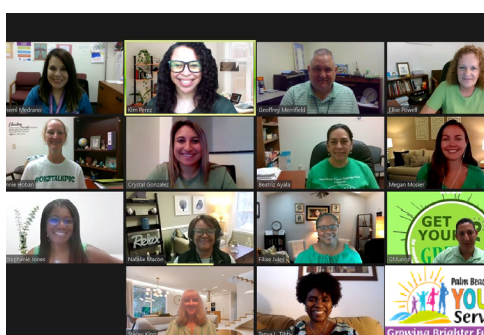
Erin & Emerson Baker



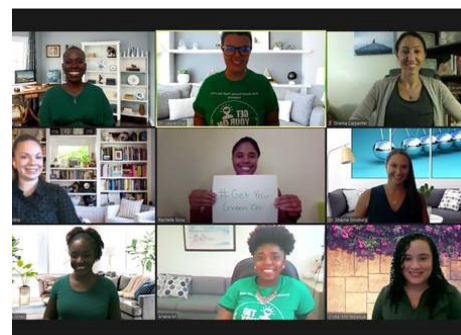
Gregg K. Weiss



GYGO Facebook Live Kick-off



Youth & Family Counseling & FVIP



Education & Training Center



John Harre



Brian Thornton



Heli Pandini



Dalton Greene

Palm Beach County Youth Services Department, in partnership with National Alliance on Mental Illness Palm Beach County (NAMI PBC), BeWell PBC and Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures, continued their efforts in celebration of the fifth annual Get Your Green On campaign.

The Get Your Green On campaign aims to raise awareness by creating visible support and fostering safe spaces to talk openly about mental health and trauma. The campaign invited Palm Beach County to wear green on May 21. Vice Mayor Robert S. Weinroth presented the proclamation on May 1, declaring May 2020 Mental Health Awareness and

Trauma Informed Care Month in Palm Beach County.

The Youth Services Department’s Education and Training Center held five virtual Lunch & Learn sessions and Dr. Shayna Ginsburg and Dr. Laura Cruz wrote articles about parenting tips to use during social isolation, distance learning and managing your mental health during the Coronavirus pandemic.

During the Get Your Green On Kick-off, more than 1,200 individuals joined Facebook live to show their support for mental health and trauma informed care!

Click [here](#) for more information about GYGO.

“There is no health without mental health.”

- David Satcher

Mental Health and Trauma Informed Lunch & Learns



During the month of May, the Youth Services Department’s Education and Training Center presented five virtual Lunch & Learn trainings in support of Mental Health and Trauma Informed Care Month. Each training was open to county employees and also available to the public.

- May 4, Laura Cruz, Ph.D., presented “Tapping Into Your Parent Super Powers: Strategies for Getting Young Children to Behave.”
- May 14, Derma Carpenter, M.S., Doctoral Intern, presented “Healthy Partner Communication.”
- May 18, Courtney Molina, M.A., Doctoral Intern, presented “Anxiety & Depression: Steps for Managing Your Mental Health.”
- May 21, Postdoctoral Resident, Rachelle Sosu, Psy.D., presented “Managing Emotions During a Pandemic.”

- May 28, Danniella Jones, Psy.D., presented “Let’s Talk about Race/Ethnicity: The Impact of Implicit Bias and Microaggressions.”



You are amazing!! Wao! No words to express my gratitude for sharing such important and fundamental information. I was so impressed in the way that you shared the information. Love this approach.

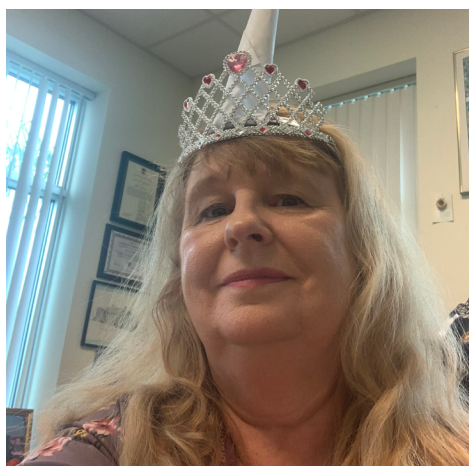
- Wanda Figueroa Rivera, MSW, Director of Family Engagement, Early Learning Coalition



National Unicorn Day



Stephanie Jones, Tiffany Phillips, Stacey King



Tammy K. Fields



Dr. Shayna Ginsburg and Family

For National Unicorn Day, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department employees created their own unicorn horns in support of Unicorn Children’s Foundation. The Unicorn Children’s Foundation leads the Special Needs Advisory Council in Palm Beach County. The Foundation provided a resource kit which included DIY tutorials to create the horns and requested the hashtag #GetCaughtBeingKind was used to recognize participation throughout the day.

Virtual Youth Summit QuaranTeen Summer Bash



On June 20, a virtual adaptation of the 10th annual Youth Summit took place. This year the youth-led summit, QuaranTeen Summer Bash, included 90 students, who represented and engaged in interactive games and trivia on Kahoot!, a virtual learning-based platform, a Tik Tok contest, and viewed PSAs that addressed gang and crime prevention, cause and effect of drugs and vaping, census and voting awareness.

The summit concluded with messages of hope from

elected officials and a call to action for young people to stay inspired and connected. Attendees left the virtual summit with the notion that anything is possible.

The department's Future Leaders United for Change also played a special role in the planning and hosting of this year's virtual event. Futures Leaders developed a PSA on safety precautions for those interested in participating in protests.

YSD & Community Partners Launch Summer BreakSpot FUN



The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department, in collaboration with United Way of Palm Beach County, Prime Time Palm Beach County, Inc., the Palm Beach County School District, FLIPANY and other community partners launched Summer BreakSpot FUN, a comprehensive online enrichment summer program.

The eight-week program is designed to accompany the free meals provided at Summer BreakSpot meal sites. Through this program, children built better relationships with the

community through educational and emotional support.

Sessions were held Monday through Friday at 2 p.m. and consisted of the following programming:

- Monday - Reading is FUN!

Reading of a children's book led by local leaders in Palm Beach County accompanied by an activity associated with the book.

- Tuesday - Exercise is FUN!

Physical fitness activities such as dance or kids yoga.

- Wednesday - Water Safety is FUN!

Water safety classes offered by the YMCA of South Palm Beach County.

- Thursday - Healthy Habits are FUN!

Activities associated with developing healthy habits such as nutrition education, dental hygiene and mental health activities provided by Palm Beach County Youth Services Department.

- Friday - Friends are FUN!

Activities such as art classes and meeting a Zoologist offered by Prime Time Palm Beach County, Inc. partners.

Highridge Family Center Trauma-Informed Day Program



On June 8, Highridge Family Center began its new four-day-per-week trauma-informed program for youth ages 11-16, who experienced problems at home, school, with friends, and in the community.

In addition to licensed therapists, Highridge employees offered supervision of recreational and creative activities throughout the day. Students who had not been successful with distance learning had an opportunity to recover credits if possible.

The program was free of charge for Palm Beach County

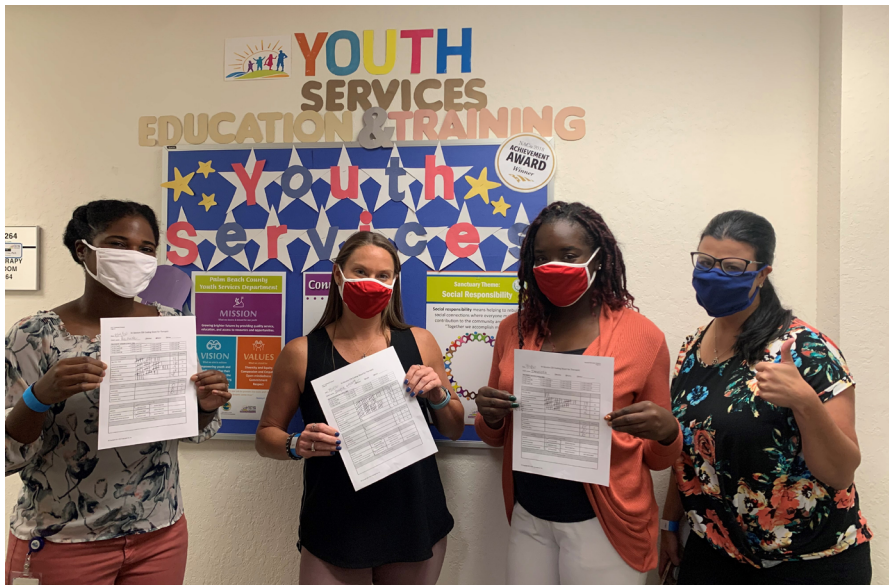
residents. Family therapy and group therapy were required components of the program. Family therapy sessions were facilitated by therapists via telemental health.

Daily sessions were held through July 23 from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and included the following schedule of activities:

- Breakfast (provided)
- Distance learning with Palm Beach County Public Schools
- Lunch (provided)
- Structured recreational activity
- Therapeutic group
- Art /movie activity
- Pick-up

Highridge Family Center adopted new policies to adhere to CDC guidelines including physically distancing, hand-washing and face coverings (provided).

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy Certification



Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is an evidenced-based intervention that has been identified as a well-supported intervention to provide enhanced support to children and families.

The Youth Service Department's Education & Training Center is in the process of all staff members becoming

certified in PCIT. Currently, Dr. Cruz is a certified PCIT therapist, and in the process of obtaining her certification as a PCIT trainer. Dr. Ginsburg, Dr. Jones, and Dr. Sosu have completed 20 preliminary hours of training provided by Dr. Cruz, and will begin to see clients for PCIT services, as part of the PCIT certification process.

Youth Services Honors Palm Beach County Graduates

The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department collaborated with Achieve Palm Beach County to take part in their Palm Beach County Commencement Week campaign. Commencement Week publicly honored the achievement and success of high school graduates throughout the county with a commemorative campaign that demonstrates the pride Palm Beach County has for the students who have completed their educational goals.

As part of this effort, Youth Services celebrated the 29 Future Leaders youth council members who were graduating seniors by writing congratulatory letters and wishing them the best in their future endeavors.

Additionally, Youth Services Director Tammy K. Fields provided the Class of 2020 with a mini-commencement address video. The video features a special message from her to the graduates.

The Palm Beach County Commencement Week campaign, in partnership with the School District of Palm Beach County, took place May 25–29.



May 26, 2020

Dear Graduate:

Youth Services Department
50 South Military Trail, Suite 203
West Palm Beach, FL 33415
(561) 242-5700
FAX: (561) 242-5708
www.pbcbgov.com/youthservices



**Palm Beach County
Board of County
Commissioners**
Dave Kerner, Mayor
Robert S. Weinstein, Vice Mayor
Hal R. Valche
Gegg K. Weiss
Mary Lou Berger
Melissa McInlay
Mack Bernard

County Administrator
Verdenia C. Baker

"An Equal Opportunity
Affirmative Action Employer"
Official Electronic Letterhead

Congratulations on your graduation from high school. I am sure you will be missing the walk across the stage, the congratulatory handshakes and receiving that diploma with family and friends watching. The Class of 2020 is experiencing challenges like no other class. We, at the Youth Services Department, are very proud of all of your achievements and are grateful for your participation in Future Leaders United for Change.

Graduation is the culmination of 12 years of hard work. It may feel like an end, and it is to this part of your journey. It is also a beginning – an entry to adulthood. No matter the path you have chosen, I know that you have many more accomplishments and adventures ahead. There are challenges ahead and sometimes they are scary. Remember – you are the Class of 2020 – you have faced challenge and succeeded. Keep succeeding.

I can't ask you to move your tassel to the other side, but I can ask you to now change your title from Future Leader to Leader. We need you to lead with the drive and determination you have exhibited already. We have faith and confidence in you.

With my sincerest congratulations,

Tammy K. Fields | Director
Palm Beach County Youth Services Department
50 S. Military Trail, Suite 203
West Palm Beach, FL 33415
Office: (561) 242-5700
Fax: (561) 242-5708
www.pbcbgov.com/youthservices



“
From the bottom of my heart, thank you. Birth to 22 and Future Leaders have afforded me great memories and opportunities.
- Lillian Khanna

“
Thank you for your support!
- Marc Charlecine

Growing Brighter Futures

The Growing Brighter Futures cross-divisional action team continued to provide mindfulness trainings, strategies, and offered other tips to the community by utilizing the Youth Services Department’s existing social media platforms.

Therapists, Nohemi Medrano and Megan Mosier shared the STOP method, a technique that allows individuals to regulate their response to stress or anxiety.

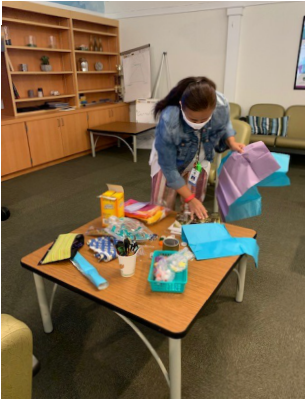
John Harre, Admission Counselor at Highridge Family Center provided examples of healthy coping skills as a way to cope with feelings of stress, anxiety or loneliness. The

team also put together a social media campaign to feature Youth Services Department’s staff members whose son, daughter or other relative was a graduating seniors as part of a “senior spotlight” highlighting their accomplishments and post-secondary opportunities.

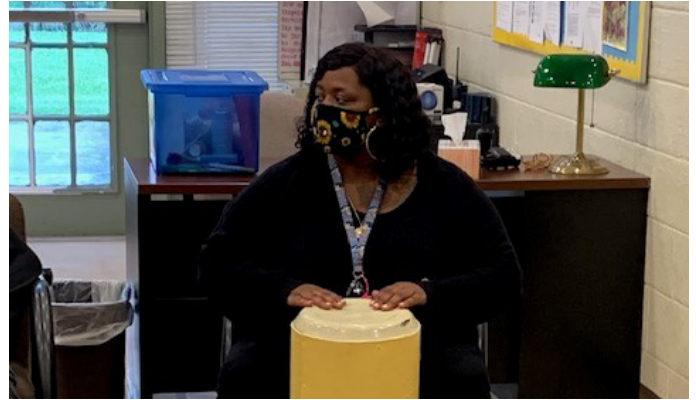
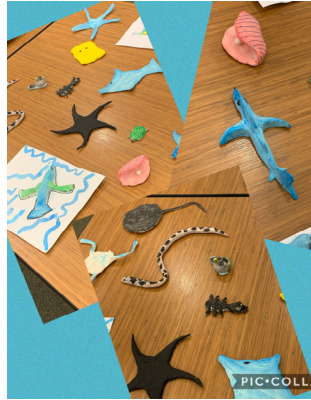
For more information regarding these efforts, follow us at:

- Facebook: [pbcyouthservices](https://www.facebook.com/pbcyouthservices)
- Twitter: [PBCYSD](https://twitter.com/PBCYSD)
- Instagram: [PBCYSD](https://www.instagram.com/PBCYSD)

Highridge Family Center Highlights



Norton Museum of Art art supplies



Staff joining in during a drum circle



Staff joining in during a drum circle



HRFC celebrates Juneteenth



- Youth Services Department’s Highridge Family Center collaborated with the Norton Museum of Art and their Afterschool Arts Outreach Program (formerly PACE). Norton, provides art kits for Highridge residents throughout the summer.
- Highridge Family Center residents and staff demonstrated support and solidarity by wearing black shirts to celebrate Juneteenth. Residents also chose a Black historical figure and colored pictures of respective figures.

REAL TALK: Support group for Palm Beach County Teens

On June 17, the Palm Beach County Youth Services Department’s Youth and Family Counseling program began hosting REAL TALK, a virtual support group for Palm Beach County teens ages 13-18 via Zoom.

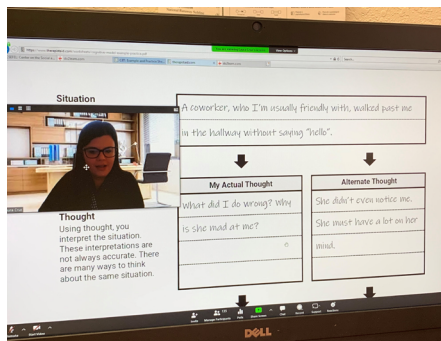
The six-week support group is designed to be a safe space where participants can learn to recognize and manage their emotions, develop self-awareness, practice mindfulness, and support other participants.



“If you are not willing to risk the usual, you will have to settle for the ordinary.”

- Jim Rohn

Education & Training Remote Trainings



This quarter, the Youth Services Department's Education and Training Center held several remote didactic trainings for staff, mental health professionals and community partners.

- Shayna Ginsburg, Psy.D., Laura Cruz, Ph.D., and Danielle Jones, Psy.D. co-presented "Basics of Telemental Health." The training covered the efficacy of telemental health, ethics, and strategies for improving rapport and increasing engagement.
- Laura Cruz, Ph.D. presented "Promoting Emotional Regulation in Children: Evidence-Based Practices," which defined emotional regulation, the importance of promoting emotional regulation in children, and identified evidenced-based practices to promote emotional regulation in children.
- Rachelle Sosu, Psy.D. presented "The Impact of Parental Incarceration on Children & Families" twice during the quarter, including to students and supervisors at Nova Southeastern University's School-related Psychological Assessments and Clinical Interventions clinic. Dr. Sosu identified the social and emotional impact of parental incarceration on youth and families and described key elements in evidence-based interventions for serving families during parental incarceration and after incarceration.
- Danniella Jones, Psy.D. presented "Child Sexual Abuse." Topics covered included child sexual abuse and common misconceptions, the impact of child sexual abuse on children and families, and identifying interventions for youth and families effected by childhood sexual abuse.
- Courtney Molina, M.A. presented "What happened to you? The Impact of Familial Substance Abuse." Courtney covered familial substance misuse and who it impacts, how familial/parental substance misuse affects family systems, parent-child dynamics, and child mental health, and useful mental health and psychotherapy interventions.
- Ariana Mitchell, M.S. and Courtney Molina, M.A. presented "Anxiety & Depression: Steps for Managing Your Mental Health." This training defined mental health and mental illness, explained factors related to depression and anxiety, and highlighted coping skills and treatment approaches. The training was available to all county employees and opened up to the community.
- Lawrence Siegel, M.A., CSA of the Sage Institute for Family Development presented "Normal Expressions of Sexuality in Children." The training explained the impact of culture and sexual conditioning on healthy sexual development, distinguished between developmentally appropriate sexual expression and potentially problematic sexual behaviors in children, and identified the importance of sexuality education as part of effective sexual abuse prevention.
- Stephanie Larsen, Psy.D. of Palm Beach Behavioral Health and Wellness presented "Unfriended: Impacts of Social Media." The training identified popular forms and positive aspects of social media, explained how social media effects mental health, described the prevalence of cyberbullying on social media, and listed potential prevention measures to decrease negative effects on mental health.
- Rachelle Sosu, Psy.D. provided the training, "Diagnosis and Treatment of Social Anxiety and Selective Mutism in Children and Adolescents." The presentation described the etiology and presentation of social anxiety and selective mutism in youth of diverse backgrounds, identified evidence-based measures for assessing anxiety disorders and explained cognitive behavioral interventions for anxiety.

CBA Spotlight: Take Stock in Children Palm Beach County



* These pictures were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. What is your mission?

The mission of Take Stock in Children Palm Beach County is to passionately promote self-worth, personal responsibility and academic success for qualified, financially at-risk students throughout Palm Beach County by providing a unique set of resources which includes one-on-one mentoring services, college readiness coaching, college advising, post-secondary retention services, and a guaranteed post-secondary full-tuition college scholarship.

2. What does your organization do?

Take Stock in Children celebrates 25 years of breaking the cycle of poverty for low-income, academically qualified students through education. In Palm Beach County, the program accomplishes its 98% program success rate through its evidence-based multi-year model that provides wraparound services to underserved youth, with no drop-off of services after high school completion. Services begin in the 9th grade and continue through post-secondary completion. Take Stock in Children Palm Beach has directly impacted the lives of over 2,000 students throughout 30 Palm Beach County schools by providing students with both a guaranteed college scholarship and academic and social-emotional support services that instill hope for a better life. This leads to opportunities that gear students toward obtaining a post-secondary credential and entering the workforce with confidence. Take Stock in Children is the single-largest nonproft purchaser of Florida Prepaid College Foundation Scholarships with assets totaling more than \$230M, with over \$17M awarded to Palm Beach County students.

Take Stock in Children promotes community culture and intimate relationships. Public schools throughout Palm Beach County nominate financially qualifying students for our program. After a careful selection process students and parents become involved in the program in accordance with a “contract” they sign

pledging to remain crime and drug free, maintain good grades and meet weekly with their assigned mentor. Each student is matched with a volunteer mentor that meets with them once per week during school lunch to provide emotional support. They are also assigned a college readiness coach responsible for coaching the student toward academic achievement. Upon successful program completion, students are awarded a two-year full-tuition college scholarship, along with ongoing college retention services to ensure post-secondary success. It’s that long-term commitment and intimate relationship with our students that makes Take Stock in Children work.

3. What key programs does your organization offer?

The Take Stock in Children program model is recognized as a “flagship mentoring program” by the Florida Legislature for providing an evidence-based approach throughout Florida. We offer underserved youth a proven method to succeed, while ensuring equity for youth facing systemic barriers. During the school year student participating in the program receive:

- Regular one-on-one academic focused meetings with an assigned college readiness coach (delivered by our AmeriCorps members);
- SAT/ACT prep and custom academic success plans catered to each student’s personal needs, as well as SAT/ACT training workshops to all 12th grade students;
- Monthly parent engagement workshops and trainings;
- One-on-one weekly youth mentoring via an assigned volunteer mentor;
- Continuous social-emotional support services provided by program staff;
- Systematic text messages to all students and parents delivering educational resources & links using our messaging platform;

- Monthly student workshops focusing on overcoming system barriers, financial literacy, personal development and career planning;
- Afterschool club meetings: students participate in monthly afterschool club meetings hosted by our staff that focus on building their My Career Shines and Florida Ready to Work educational portfolios.
- College bus tours: students explore various university campuses throughout Florida;
- College access and transition services during the student's 12th grade year;
- A guaranteed two-year Florida Prepaid college scholarship awarded upon high school graduation; and
- One-on-one post-secondary advising and retention services throughout the student's post-secondary enrollment.

It's the complete package, with no drop off of services after high school graduation! Students and their families receive direct support services from middle school through their post-secondary completion.

4. How does your agency benefit the community?

Take Stock in Children is the only college attainment focused mentoring program of its kind in Florida. We recruit students in 9th grade; pair them with a volunteer mentor to provide a positive role model & guidance; deliver ongoing academically oriented intervention service throughout their high school transition; award a full tuition prepaid college scholarship upon high school graduation; and provide ongoing college retention services throughout their post-secondary schooling.

By focusing on early intervention, we can work with

the students longer to help achieve the crucial skills for success. Students in the program receive the services of trained College Readiness Coaches throughout middle and high school and then a College Retention Coach throughout postsecondary schooling who offer intervention and prevention methods in addition to a myriad of support services to unlock students' intellectual, emotional, and social barriers.

Take Stock in Children has been recognized by the Office of Public Policy and Government Affairs (OPPAGA) as a "flagship mentoring program," outperforming its peers in all seven categories measured: chronic absences, discipline incidents, proficiency in FCAT reading & math, matriculation, high school graduation, and higher education enrollment.

5. What is your agency's focus for 2020?

Our program is dedicated to ensuring that where a child starts in life does not determine how far he or she will climb. Take Stock in Children's goal is to help our community close the education gap between socioeconomic groups, and ensure all children have the mentoring and academic supports they need to grow, thrive, and succeed.

6. How do the funds received from Palm Beach County enhance the services your agency provides?

Youth Services funding is used to provide underserved youth with a positive adult role model, social/emotional support services, college readiness coaching, college transaction and matriculation coaching, and aid parents with navigating the school system.

For more information about, please visit takestockpalmbeach.org.

Meet Vanessa



The summer between middle school and high school was rough for Vanessa and her family. What was supposed to be a relaxing family vacation in Colombia resulted in her parents returning to the US with plans for a divorce. Every aspect of her life changed afterwards. She no longer had a trustworthy relationship with

her parents and felt she lost control and stability in life. Her father lost his job and used up her college savings to pay the household bills. Vanessa knew she had to stay college focused, but the road to college was hazy for her. When she gained knowledge that she was nominated for the Take Stock in Children scholarship program Vanessa started to feel validated as a student and valued as a person. After months of instability, she started to feel a sense of hope for the future.

The following three years of high school she focused on school and extracurricular activities. Vanessa refers to her TSIC mentor, Mrs. Su, as one of the most influential women in her life. Having her mentor's continued support through high school made a positive impact on both Vanessa's personal and academic life. She received educational support services from TSIC College Readiness Coaches which met regularly with her to evaluate her grades, conduct, and create customized success plans.

Take Stock in Children named Vanessa this year's "Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholar." Vanessa will be attending Florida Atlantic University's Harriet Wilkes Honors College in the fall, pursuing a major in developmental psychology. Upon completion, she plans to inspire and give back while maintaining that, "your education is an investment of immeasurable value."

Vanessa thanks the Take Stock in Children program and her mentor for investing in her future.

Scholarship Recipients Announced During Virtual Ceremony



Friends of Youth Services and Palm Beach County, Inc. announced this year’s Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship recipients. The scholarship provides \$1,000 per year, distributed over two semesters to each recipient and is renewable for up to four years, depending on degree or certificate program.

The application process included 55 reviewable applications. Following an online application process, finalists were selected based on application submission, letters of recommendation and written essay. Scholarship eligibility was limited to residents of Palm Beach County.

During a virtual award ceremony held on April 30, recipients received formal recognition of the scholarship in front of family and friends. Those who attended the virtual ceremony had the opportunity to celebrate this year’s recipients by providing words of encouragement.

Congratulations to the 2020 Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson

Scholarship recipients:

Beatrice Mattison-Santos who graduated in the spring from Palm Beach Gardens High School pre-med academy. She plans to attend Palm Beach State College majoring in biological science, and aspires to have a career in medical research. Beatrice is a mentor, tutor and has taken leadership roles in community organizations. Belief in herself includes a belief in giving to others.

Katia Mejia-Lagos, a graduate of John I. Leonard High School, is currently enrolled at Palm Beach Atlantic University, pursuing a bachelor of science in nursing. Katia is also an active member of Future Leaders United for Change.

Katia has been a reading mentor for second and third graders, tutored middle school students, and painted houses in neighborhoods in need. At the Nicklaus Children’s Hospital where Katia volunteers, it was said that she “provided patients with unexpected joy during their hospital stay.”

The scholarship is in memory of Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson. Alyssa was committed to living a self-sufficient life and discovering her passions. Her determination to pursue education, earning undergraduate and graduate degrees, enabled her to live consistent with those commitments. She hoped others could have support to achieve their goals. The Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship is dedicated to those who need a little extra financial assistance in achieving education goals.

Summer Food Service Program

Palm Beach County Youth Services Department’s Summer Food Service Program transitioned from pre-summer feeding at eight locations to the full Summer Food Service Program feeding schedule on June 1. The program operated 70 sites throughout the county, including 17 Palm Beach County Library locations, averaging about 14,000 meals served per week.

The Summer Food Service Program provides meals and snacks to eligible children age 18 and under during the summer months (June through August) and in times of emergency. Meals and snacks are also available to persons with disabilities, over age 18, who participate in school programs for people who are mentally or physically disabled.

Youth Services administers and monitors this program,



funded by USDA and the Department of Education. Sites are located throughout Palm Beach County in low-income neighborhoods.

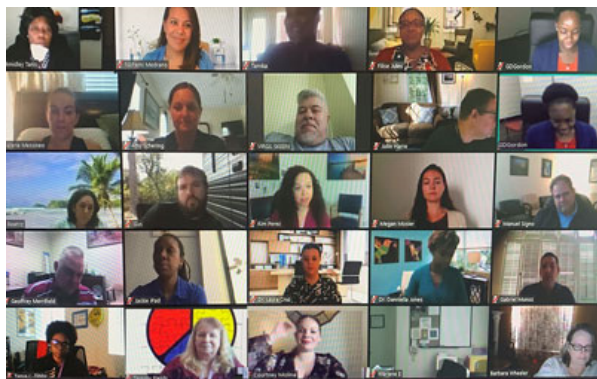
Youth Services Recognizes Juneteenth



Youth Services Department employees chose to wear black in solidarity in commemoration of Juneteenth. Juneteenth is rooted in the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas, over two-years after the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. While commemoration is appropriate,

we reflect on our past with knowledge that this celebration should never have become necessary as slavery should never have occurred. The struggle to end racism continues and requires the efforts of all to ensure equity and justice.

Youth Services Department Holds Virtual Meeting



Youth Services Department held a department-wide virtual meeting via Zoom in an effort to show support, share ideas, and stay connected during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The meeting opened with employees taking turns asking one another three questions: How are you feeling today? What is your goal for today? Who can you ask for help?

Youth Services Director Tammy K. Fields shared a quote from author Amit Ray: “The greatest compassion is the prevention of human suffering through patience, alertness, courage and kindness.”

Fields then led a discussion on COVID-19 updates, continuing operations during the pandemic including the Summer Food Service Program’s pre-summer feeding, Residential Treatment and Family Counseling’s telemental health services, and updates on the annual employee retreat.

Employees had an open discussion about how the Youth Services Department can remain a reliable resource for youth and families within Palm Beach County. The virtual meeting concluded as employees held up gratitude signs sharing what they were each thankful for.

“If you want to lift yourself up, life up someone else.”

- Booker T. Washington

Show of Appreciation for the Emergency Information Center

Palm Beach County Youth Services Department employees worked in the Emergency Information Center (EIC) for over three-months as call takers. The EIC team answered nearly 4,700 calls coming from the community regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to providing health

related questions, EIC call takers also informed the public of business operations throughout the county.

Click [here](#) for up-to-date information and continuing operations.



Thanks for your hard work and dedication to Palm Beach County. We appreciate all of you who have worked in the EIC!! Thank you.

- Nicole Bishop, Director Justice and Victim Services, Public Safety



Thank you all for your flexibility and your ability to decipher Federal, State, and Local orders, answer questions no one could even think of, and most of all your willingness to assist our community. It is the true spirit of serving our community during these times.

- Twila Taylor, Director Residential Treatment and Family Counseling, Youth Services

YSD would like to recognize the following staff for their efforts in the EIC:

*Twila Taylor
Jeff Sinclair
Marjorie Auguste
Andrea Morales
Stephanie Jones*

*Tiffany Phillips
Filise Jules
Sherron King
Elise Powell
Manny Signo*

*Derrick Young
Paul Madeus
Margaret Aikhionbare
Natalie Macon
Heli Pandini*

GreenDot Event



On June 16, the Youth Services Department and the Palm Beach County Library System partnered with Palm Beach County Victim Services and Green Dot Palm Beach County to educate families about Palm Beach County safety during our Summer Food Service Program meal distribution. Families received giveaways and met Captain Green Dot.

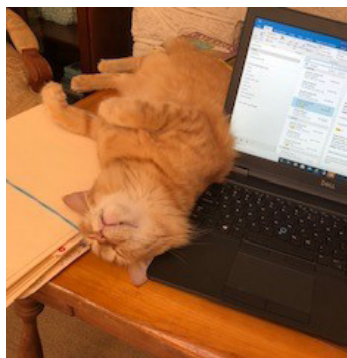
Co-worker Spotlight: Furry-friends



Strawberry and Geeta Loach-Jacobson



Jax and Gus Wessel



Jeanine Hoban's cat, Scooter



Donna Elliott's neighbor and dog, Rocky on their lunch break walks



Patty Hindle's grand-dog Apollo



Dr. Twila Taylor's cat, Zoey



Stacey King's dog Henry and cat, Charcoal



Tammy K. Fields' pups, Otto and Oona

During Youth Services Department's time staggered teleworking, employees adapted to working with their "new" co-workers. Whether dog, cat, bunny, or even taking

a lunch break walk with a neighbor and their dog, these fur-babies weren't complaining about the extra time with their humans.

Wellness and Awareness Body, Mind, and Spirit

Special to YSD Scoop!

Youth Services Department's Wellness and Awareness corner, Body, Mind, and Spirit, comes to you from the cross-divisional action team We Plant Seeds of Success that Grow. Regardless of your lifestyle, this space will feature topics related to personal wellness and awareness.

Sanctuary Commitment to Growth and Change: *restoring hope, meaning, purpose.*

Individuals or groups that have experienced trauma can become paralyzed by their experiences so that they continue to relive or repeat the past in ways that prevent healing and growth. The commitment to *Growth and Change* requires us to fully honor the losses that people have experienced by instilling, inspiring, modeling a vision of hope and possibility, and promoting change.

In this regard, self-care can be an excellent place to start. Maintaining good health and well-being allows for the

best version of ourselves to interact with the world. To get started, check out [TherapistAid.com](https://www.therapistaid.com) for a Self-Care Assessment tool and see below for some quick tips on fueling your body courtesy of the Mayo Clinic.

In the morning: Breakfast powers your day and sets the pace for success. Try eating a greek yogurt parfait with oats, flaxseed, and fresh berries.

Throughout the day: Pair fruits and nuts with lean protein or healthy fats to increase nutrient density. Snacking provides a steady flow of energy to sustain high performance. Try trail mix, nuts and seeds, hard-boiled eggs, fruits and vegetables.

Fuel up and hydrate pre-workout: Prepare for a workout with carbohydrates and water.

Refuel, rebuild and rehydrate immediately post-workout with: Carbohydrates, fluids, and protein.

Q&A with Brenda Weathersbee



At YSD, we view our employees as one of our greatest strengths. This quarter, we're featuring Brenda Weathersbee, youth counselor at Highridge Family Center. Brenda is responsible for the emotional and physical safety of our residents. She monitors their behaviors, helps facilitate groups and structured activities. "I provide trauma informed care to youth with a variety of concerns, ranging from mental health issues to minor family disruptions." says Brenda. She also stepped up to assist with the Summer Food Service Program this year.

1. Where is your hometown?

West Palm Beach, Florida

2. What was your first job?

Ironically, my very first employer was Palm Beach County. I worked with the CETA program, many years ago.

3. What are the three most important skills you need for your job?

Effective communication, being non-judgmental and having patience.

4. What is your favorite thing about your job at YSD?

Having the opportunity to help the youth and families of this community.

5. Is there a memorable moment that you would like to share in relation to your work here, at YSD?

The most memorable, are the connections I've made with my co-workers and hopefully the positive impact in lives of the residents at Highridge Family Center.

6. What hobbies and interests do you have outside of work?

I enjoy fishing, sewing and most of all spending time with my family and friends.

7. What is the most important lesson you've learned in the last year?

That I can always trust and rely on God.

8. Where would you like to go on a dream vacation?

My plan is to spend some time in Africa. I would like to fish a little in Alaska and visit New Creation Church, in Singapore.

9. What is your favorite quote?

"My youth is renewed daily." - Psalm 103:5

10. Who or what inspires you?

The word of God.

11. Is there something about you that your fellow coworkers would be surprised to know?

My age and the number of grandchildren I have.

Congratulations



This quarter we said farewell and thank you to Mary Lesson, Food Service Manager at Highridge Family Center. Mary celebrated 29 years of dedicated service to the residents of Palm Beach County. We all wish her a happy and healthy retirement.

Welcome Aboard!



Join us in welcoming our newest team members!

The following Youth Services employees were hired between April 1 and June 30.



Employee	Position	Division
Taylor Markevitch	Student Tech	ADMIN
Nyomi Hinch	Seasonal Paraprofessional	OCP
Dalia Roman	Seasonal Paraprofessional	OCP
Derricka Daugherty	Seasonal Paraprofessional	OCP



Promotions



Tamika Kramer
Grant Compliance Specialist II
OCP

Well Done



Brad Austwick, became a certified Child Advocate Manager on the Florida Certificate Board. Congratulations for your 18-years of service to the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) Program, and your continued efforts to advocate for children!

Megan Mosier, Youth and Family Counseling therapist, passed the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Exam! The exam is required to become a Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor. Congratulations, Megan!



Share Feedback and Stories!

Do you have feedback on our newsletter or have an awesome story to share? We'd love to hear from you!

Contact Youth Services
Department Communications
Specialist Erin Baker
at ebaker@pbcgov.org.

Connect with Us!

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram for more exciting updates!



pbcyouthservices



PBCYSD



PBCYSD

Youth Services Department Director

Tammy K. Fields

Director of Finance, Contracting and Administrative Services

Michelle Liska

Director of Outreach and Community Programming

Geeta Loach-Jacobson

Director of Residential Treatment and Family Counseling

Dr. Twila Taylor

Editor-in-Chief

Erin Baker



Palm Beach County
Board of County Commissioners