

# YOUTH OPPORTUNITY INVESTMENTS



Volume 72 / Issue 29

*Achieving Success & Independence  
with Youth and Families*

UP CLOSE RONALD D. HUNTER



*Ronald (Ron) D. Hunter, CEO of YOI, talks about challenges.*

## *“Now is the Hour”*

I was speaking with a friend when asked my thoughts regarding the recent weather-related catastrophes not only in America but around world as well. One thought immediately came to mind: “Biblical proportions.”

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*“...unified world of peace and acceptance.”*

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When extremely unusual situations arise we as a people always seem to set aside our differences and prejudices and help each other. America and the world is crying out for help to understand who and what we are in this world!

I believe we all want and need the acceptance, love and understanding of our fellow man. Let us embrace the recent challenges and inconvenience as a lesson and habit of helping each other be all we can be in a unified world of peace and acceptance.

**God Bless**

## Kissimmee Youth Academy Responds to Hurricane Irma

By Mr. Samont Washington, Program Director

Kissimmee Youth Academy (KYA) served as the Alternative Relocation Site for the Broward Youth Treatment Center (BYTC) in the midst of Hurricane Irma. The KYA and BYTC programs were housed at Kissimmee Youth Academy throughout the duration of the storm. There were many challenges during Hurricane Irma but despite the many obstacles both programs banded together to make the best of the situation. The staff and youth enjoyed days of great conversation, delicious food, youth basketball games, and entertainment.



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### **The spirit of both programs prevailed**

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in a time of need, which in turn, created an atmosphere that was welcoming and fun for all parties.

KYA is thankful to have been a place of temporary refuge and security for various BYTC families from the South Florida region.





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## TCSI Harvey Relief Fund Established to Help Employees

By Sharon Dearman, Director of Marketing and Development, TCSI - Houston

Record rainfall and high winds during Hurricane Harvey did not prevent **The Center for Success and Independence - Houston** from continuing to serve its youth at its Pinemont location thanks to a core team of staff and therapists. The Center remained dry with power throughout the storm unlike Hurricane Ike in 2008 when the Center had to evacuate all clients and staff to another facility in College Station, TX due to loss of power.

A team of 16 staff worked 16-hour shifts, sleeping onsite - sometimes on the floors - during their off hours throughout the storm. **Martin Guzman**, the Center's chef, stayed onsite and cooked three meals a day for not only the +35 clients but also all of the employees.

With a focus on client safety and well-being, **Robert Woods**, the Center's CEO, and **Dr. Marylou Erbland**, the Center's clinical director, were onsite throughout the storm except for when Robert drove to pick up staff. Many staff could not reach the Center in their own vehicles due to the widespread flooding.

Clients participated in organized activities and continued to have their individual and group therapy sessions as soon as therapists were able to reach the Center.

Like many Houstonians, ten of the Center's +80 employees were impacted by the storm, sustaining water damage or flooding to their homes and loss of vehicles. One employee sustained 4 feet of water in her home. The Center established a fund to help these affected employees get back on their feet.

**Donations to the fund may be made at [tcsi.org](http://tcsi.org). Please designate the funds to "Harvey Relief."**

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## Building Rapport at Crestview Youth Academy

By Sumpter James, Program Director



**Crestview Youth Academy (CYA)** participated in an inaugural basketball tournament against the CYA staff. The event was established to provide CYA youth with an opportunity to participate in organized sports activities and build rapport with staff at CYA. Florida Director, **Mr. Nixon** and youth care worker **Mr. King** did their best to get the win. All youth and staff were fully engaged and had a blast. After the game, the youth were treated to grilled burgers and hotdogs. The youth have been anxiously awaiting the rematch so they can gain bragging rights for a win. Unfortunately, Mr. Nixon informed the youth the rematch will be awhile, as he needs a considerable amount of time to heal!





## The Power of Yoga and Meditation in Working with Juvenile Offenders

By Mandy Klein LCSW, RPT-S, CFMHE, CCCE, RIST, Clinical Director, CSI-Memphis

When you hear the term “Yoga” what first comes to mind? Could it be a bunch of flexible, athletic, women wearing yoga pants and tank tops? Probably not a classroom of juvenile offenders practicing the art of yoga.



Many of the youth at **Center for Success & Independence – Memphis (CSI-Memphis)** come from extremely stressful environments and have been exposed to more than one traumatic event. They have limited coping and problem-solving skills, which are basically “survival skills.”

Learning yoga helps to assist youth with learning to quiet the mind. Yoga sessions begin with breathing techniques that teach focus on slow inhales and exhales. Later the residents perform a series of sun salutations or a vinyasa flow for about

thirty minutes. The finish consists of sav asanas or “corpse pose” where youth enter a meditative state which includes their favorite part of the activity: a cold, wet lavender cloth on their head. At this time, they are asked to set their intentions for the day. The intention could be to not use profanity all day, to not receive any negative consequences or sanctions, or sometimes it is so personal, they choose not to share with the group.

Each resident has a meditation and relaxation journal they are encouraged to write in to reflect upon their day. They can identify three things that went well that day, three things that they are thankful for, or something they may like to change.

Many of the residents report a decrease in symptoms after regular participation. Yoga teaches the residents self-awareness and mindfulness. Since the implementation of this program three months ago there have been many positive results, including better sleeping habits, an increase



increase in positive attitudes, self-confidence, and a greater knowledge and ability to self-regulate emotions, giving the residents a feeling of empowerment.

**Mandy Klein** is a Yoga Instructor Trainee - Sumit Yoga Memphis, TN. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Arkansas and Tennessee and holds several other professional certifications. She has been a practicing clinician for twenty years. She is a married mother of 5 children. Her oldest son recently graduated USMC – San Diego. She has four school-aged children, one of whom is autistic and one adopted daughter.



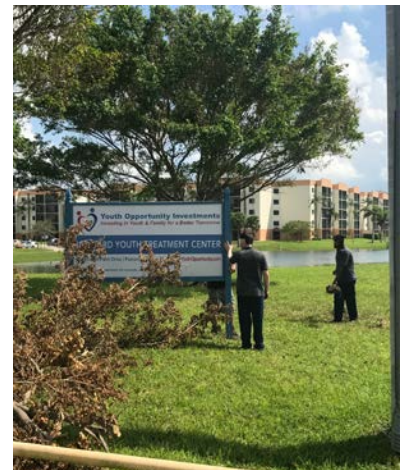
## Broward Youth Treatment Center **Thanks** Kissimmee Youth Academy

By Latoya Singletary

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Kissimmee Youth Academy (KYA) went the extra mile to make Broward Youth Treatment Center (BYTC) youth and staff feel welcome. No one could have imagined that it would have been an 8-day voyage! With the unforeseen time circumstances both facilities and staff were able to manage. Ensuring that our home facility was safe was everyone's main priority. BYTC made accommodations to activity schedule changes, nightly incentives and special events such as BYTC vs. KYA football and basketball games. The BYTC staff also hosted staff game nights, such as Battle of the Sexes, Taboo, Name that Song (DJ night) and staff vs. youth basketball games. BYTC's administration would not only like to send a special thank you to the KYA team for their hospitality but to our 15 BYTC staff as well who handled being away from their families and homes with professionalism and grace.



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## DCJDC Provides Relief to Hurricane Harvey Victims

By Adrian Cartledge MBA, MACR, Facility Director

Davidson County Juvenile Detention Center (DCJDC) partnered with Judge Calloway and several local churches to provide supplies for residents in Houston, TX who were impacted by the recent devastating hurricane. DCJDC staff donated over twenty cases of water and toiletry supplies. Pastor Derrick Moore of Hopewell Church of Nashville, TN traveled to Houston on September 25th to deliver the supplies.





## Keys to Success

By: J. Wing, Assistant Director of Operations, MRYH

I recently spoke with one of our long-term clients who will be released in December. Now 20 years old, he came to the facility at the age of 13. He offered the following keys to success to clients and staff. The biggest thing he learned here is to think before he acts, be responsible, use self-control and be a leader. His advice to clients: focus on yourself, complete your treatment and work to get home, and show respect to everyone. His advice to new staff: give respect to get it.



He believes the best part of the program is it gives people a second chance for those who want it. The treatment and rehabilitation he received, combined with the progressive level and privilege system, worked very well for him. This client is most appreciative of the support he received from MRYH along with his education, having earned his high school diploma and a soon to be Associates Degree in Culinary Arts. He has been working on campus in the kitchen for almost a year where he learned strong work ethic and many skills he can use to help him gain employment. Finally, he is looking forward to the life ahead of him and is ready to get started. We wish you the best and lifelong success!

## “Licensing on Wheels” Event

By Mr. Samont Washington, Program Director

Kissimmee Youth Academy (KYA) organized a Florida licensing on wheels event in conjunction with the Department of Motor vehicles. The event enabled 41 youth to secure a Florida state ID cards and birth certificates.



KYA’s goal is to ensure that all youth be granted the opportunity for success by providing them with adequate education, skill development, on site job training, and the appropriate standard ID documentation.

This is a major milestone for KYA and we will continue to provide these opportunities for our youth as they prepare to transition back into their respective communities! Special thanks to Ms. Buchanan, Ms. Clay and Ms. Garvin for spearheading this event.





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### Youth Opportunity Executive Team Pitches In

By Kristina O’Neil, Executive Coordinator

Thanks to the YOI Executive Team for supporting the monetary collection efforts of **The Center for Success & Independence – Houston’s Harvey Relief Fund**. The group was called to action when they heard of the devastation in Houston and provided a combined total of \$2,500 to the fund!

## Celebrating YOU: October Birthdays & Anniversaries

### Birthdays

- 10/01 Margaret Cowan (CSI-Memphis)
- 10/02 Jo-Anne Bliss-Maccariello (BYTC)
- 10/02 Latoya Jackson-Singletary (BYTC)
- 10/04 Marcus Jackson (KYA)
- 10/04 Brian McKinney (BYTC)
- 10/05 Sharmen Hill-Smith (BYTC)
- 10/06 Melissa McBride (Corp)
- 10/06 Tashia Raymond-Stackhouse (BYTC)
- 10/06 Alberta Webb (DCJDC)
- 10/09 Laletrice Brown-Hodges (BYTC)
- 10/09 Robert Robinson (KYA)
- 10/10 Mario Vilorio (KYA)
- 10/11 Ryan Haynes (MRYH)
- 10/12 Dawn Buchanan (KYA)
- 10/12 Niesha Smith (BYTC)
- 10/13 Kristina O’Neil (Corp)
- 10/13 Milissa Torres (MRYH)
- 10/14 Destiny Bourgeois (TCSI)
- 10/14 Ronald D. Hunter (Corp)
- 10/14 Patricia Lewis (TCSI)



- 10/14 Jerry Siler, Sr. (CYA)
- 10/14 Donny Wade (CSI-Memphis)
- 10/16 Brodrick Parker (TCSI)
- 10/17 Jermaine Jamison (CSI-Memphis)
- 10/17 Ariel Miles (TCSI)
- 10/17 Lacey Ryan (MRYH)
- 10/18 Jenna Gardner (MRYH)
- 10/18 Francoise McGriff (KYA)
- 10/18 Barbara Rhodes (TCSI)
- 10/19 Kenard Brown (BYTC)
- 10/19 Edna Drake (DCJDC)
- 10/19 Kayla Epperson (MRYH)
- 10/20 Joel Casey (CSI-Memphis)
- 10/20 Sameko Davis (TCSI)
- 10/21 Lavon Green (KYA)
- 10/26 Jewel Murray (TCSI)
- 10/27 Dawn Kruithoff (MRYH)
- 10/27 Jamaal Nixon (KYA)
- 10/27 Jacqueline Smith (CSI-Memphis)
- 10/29 Damon Davis (TCSI)



### Work Anniversaries

- 11 years:** Christa Bondie (MRYH)
- 3 years:** Garry Brower (MRYH)
- 2 years:** Iesha Hunter (DCJDC)
- 2 years:** Matthew Lorenz (MRYH)

- 1 year:** Destiny Bourgeois (TCSI)
- 1 year:** Tiffiney Cooper (MRYH)
- 1 year:** Pope DeMarcus (TCSI)
- 1 year:** Shalinda Gordon (DCJDC)

- 1 year:** Courtney Johnson (MRYH)
- 1 year:** Jewell Montague (DCJDC)
- 1 year:** Athisha Robinson (DCJDC)
- 1 year:** Casey Vandyke (MRYH)
- 1 year:** Alexander Wyman (MRYH)