

# YOUTH OPPORTUNITY INVESTMENTS



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*Achieving success & independence with youth and families*

UP CLOSE RONALD D. HUNTER



*Ronald (Ron) D. Hunter, CEO of YOI, talks about Life's Trauma.*

Recently as I was enjoying a sunny afternoon on the patio and reflecting on the past events in life, I took measure of a few of the less fortunate events and associated trauma. I found at least one common denominator in each situation that resonated strongly with me.

## Healing & Forgiveness

I realized that the healing and forgiving process was not having a case of Holy Amnesia; it was knowing I would never have to live that same experience again if God's will dictated so!



*"Nothing is ever as bad as it seems -  
Nothing lasts forever"*

God Bless

## TCSI-Houston: Enriching Education through Tutoring Services

By Sharon Dearman, Director, Marketing and Development, TCSI – Houston

The Center for Success and Independence–Houston (TCSI-Houston) received a \$48,444 funding grant from the Houston Independent School District (HISD) to provide tutoring for TCSI students. Youth in the Center's residential program are eligible for the tutoring assistance.



HISD's Department of External Funding finalized the Title I allocation per facility with the Center receiving half of the available funds. The allocation was based on the total number of children/youth enrolled at the Center. This planning amount will allow Catapult Learning to provide the Center's youth with tutoring services.



### Celebrating YOU: September Birthdays & Anniversaries

#### Birthdays

- 9/01 Deandrea Sawyers (DCJDC)
- 9/02 Angie Moore (MRYH)
- 9/03 Dayna Casey (MRYH)
- 9/03 Heather Hamilton (MRYH)
- 9/05 John Girardot (MRYH)
- 9/05 Terrence Williams (CSI-Memphis)
- 9/06 Rachaud Walker (CYA)
- 9/07 Nathan Tewslet (MRYH)
- 9/09 D'Angelo Quinones (CSI-Memphis)
- 9/10 Ronney Hobbs, Jr. (KYA)
- 9/10 James Johnson (DCJDC)
- 9/11 Nicholas Bailey (DCJDC)
- 9/11 Brittany Brown (BYTC)
- 9/11 Rodney Foster (DCJDC)
- 9/11 James Palmer (CSI-Memphis)
- 9/12 Eddie Wesley (CSI-Memphis)
- 9/13 Laurie Barnes (MRYH)



#### Birthdays

- 9/13 Bryce White (BYTC)
- 9/14 Patricia Taylor (CSI-Memphis)
- 9/15 Brandon Albright (MRYH)
- 9/16 Nakia Clark (KYA)
- 9/16 Angela Perkins (BYTC)
- 9/17 Kaylon Eppinger (KYA)
- 9/20 Trina Duncan (DCJDC)
- 9/21 Genesa Hill (DCJDC)
- 9/21 Charles White (CSI-Memphis)
- 9/22 Stephanie Kilburn (CYA)
- 9/22 Lacey Vincent (MRYH)
- 9/24 John Uzelac (MRYH)
- 9/24 Shalinda Gordon (DCJDC)
- 9/25 Denise Moore (MRYH)
- 9/27 Cathie Bartolucci (MRYH)
- 9/27 Barry Gray (CSI-Memphis)

#### Work Anniversaries



**2 years:** Duncan LaShell (DCJDC)  
**2 years:** Genesa Hill (DCJDC)  
**2 years:** Cromwell Steward (DCJDC)  
**1 year:** Wanda Simpson (MRYH)



### Youth Access to High School Equivalency Improves!

**By Trish Taylor, Facility Director, Center for Success & Independence – Memphis**

At **Center for Success & Independence – Memphis**, many of the residents come in behind in their educational studies. For those who are 17 years old and in a situation of being behind one to two grade levels, getting their diploma is key to increasing their ability to be successful upon discharge. Over the past several months, the Education Department and DCS Education have been working diligently with the Department of Labor & Workforce Development to increase opportunities for our youth to have access to earning their High School Equivalency diploma. Through this cooperative effort, CSI-Memphis is now a partner with HopeWorks through the Department of Labor & Workforce Development. Several of our staff are now certified to administer the CASAS and the Official Practice Test. Thanks to **Suzanne Spence, Michele Pugmire, and Steve Ownby** for taking the time to complete this certification process! Prior to this arrangement, helping our residents meet the requirements to complete the HiSet required multiple transportations that could prolong the time it takes to complete the process.



We have already seen an improvement in the process and hopefully will increase the number of residents who complete the requirements to earn their High School diploma! Our first candidate to complete the process in house, will hopefully be recognized as a high school graduate sometime in early September! Good luck to all our residents that are enrolled in the Adult Basic Education program and may your hard work reap the ultimate goal ... a High School diploma!



## WINNERS Teen Development Advisory-A Success!

By Robyn C. Green, J.D., DCJDC



The WINNERS Teen Development Advisory at **Davidson County Juvenile Detention Center (DCJDC)** is closing the initial 8-week cycle. The progress these young people have made under these circumstances has been astounding. The majority of these youth are not accustomed to being successful in school. However, every WINNER has written motivational quotes and responded to reflection questions daily in our program. For many youth, writing daily is an accomplishment in itself. In the WINNERS Teen Development Program, we have provided the students with two end results: a notable employment certification and an entrepreneurship idea in progress.

Each WINNER has developed their own brand for a product to be copyrighted, trademarked or patented. For their products or brands, the youth have developed websites to launch and market ideas. This provides the WINNERS with legitimate revenue-generating goals that they can consider pursuing at any point in their lives.

Finally, our WINNERS are preparing to sit for the nationally-recognized ServSafe Certification to increase their employment opportunities. Our students have simultaneously worked on creating personal businesses while learning 15 chapters of restaurant etiquette and certification. They have progressed from an average of 65% on the review tests in week 5 to an average of 86% in week 8. The passing score to certify the WINNERS is 80%, thus encouraging our students that 100% of them will be successful on September 9 when they take the official test.

This program has exposed the WINNERS to gourmet recipes and meals that will forever change their lives as we hope to do. The WINNERS Teen Development Advisory will continue to work to provide employment certification and character development for all.





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### KYA Family Day

By Mr. Washington, KYA Program Director

On August 5th, **Kissimmee Youth Academy (KYA)**, a secure program for boys, ages 14 to 21, hosted the Back to School Family Day event. We were excited for the opportunity to bridge the relationships between our youth and their families. Family Day has been a huge success within our program and has grown immensely over the last year. This Family Day extravaganza was nothing short of spectacular in every aspect. There were a number of families that traveled from many areas throughout the state to enjoy this illustrious event.

There were a variety of fun filled activities paired with some delicious edibles available to all parties in attendance. These activities included a gas card & restaurant card raffle, cloudy snow cone truck, and a dunk tank that caused a huge splash!



### BYTC YOUTH BECOME FOSTER PARENTS!!

By Carmita Rosenberg

In August, Broward **Youth Treatment Center (BYTC)** accepted the challenge of becoming foster parents. Meet Dingo and Lion our new facility puppies. The puppies are part of the [Pixel Foundation](#), an animal rescue shelter based out of Florida and Maine. BYTC's goal is to foster two puppies at a time to get them ready for their permanent families. The youth will gain a sense of responsibility and purpose as they are to ensure the puppies receive baths, are fed and learn basic commands. BYTC aspires to become a permanent family for puppies in transition once we complete the probationary phase.





## HEALTHY BODIES, HEALTHY MINDS!

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

This month I wanted to highlight a valuable part of the **Muskegon River Youth Home (MRYH)** team that often does not get recognition for their contributions. The kitchen staff do a lot more than just feed approximately 100 people three meals a day. The staff are all very caring and enjoy talking to the clients on a personal level and helping them. It is a relationship appreciated on both sides that benefits everyone. One staff commented that seeing the kids grow and mature while they are here is what she enjoys the most. Several clients commented that some of the kitchen staff fill that motherly void while they are here. The clients seem to fall in line a little quicker when called to meals. Not only are clients getting favorites such as baked ziti and biscuits and gravy; for some having a good meal and getting heartfelt advice is like going back home or getting bonus therapy. Here at MRYH, food is definitely good for the soul when the hands that prepare it throw in the special ingredient called **care**. Not just care in their job and responsibilities but also for the well-being of the people who consume it. We salute the kitchen staff and thank you for all your contributions in helping us serve our clients in more ways than one!

# #1 Ingredient: CARE



## Strategy & Orientation Workshop – A Success!

By Kristina O’Neil, Executive Coordinator

Meeting face-to-face with a group of bright individuals can elicit creative ideas, a better understanding of one another’s day-to-day activities and renewed focus on common goals. Thanks to Jim Hill, Brian Neupaver, Melissa McBride, Joseph Nixon and Dallas Scott for sharing your time and talents with us!

