

YSD SCOOP!

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YSD CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Happy Anniversary

In January of 2025, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department celebrated its 10th anniversary. The department reflected on its goals to empower youth and families to realize their full potential and be the driving force of a thriving community. Thank you to all of the Youth Services Department team members for leading YSD into success.



Celebrating 10 Years

of Serving Youth & Families
in Palm Beach County

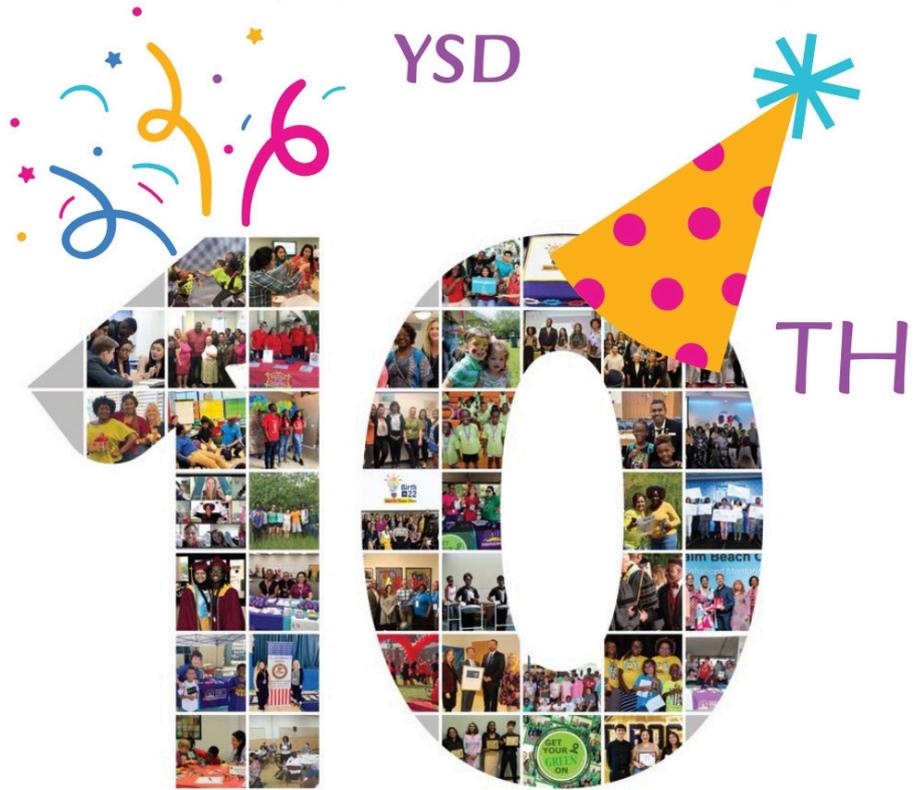


Photo collage created by Tevin Ali

PALM BEACH COUNTY YOUTH MASTER PLAN 2.0

HIGHLIGHTS FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department is proud to announce the release of the Palm Beach County Youth Master Plan 2.0 (YMP 2.0), an update to the original “Strengthening the Steps to Success” Youth Master Plan for Palm Beach County, published in 2016.

The YMP 2.0 was officially distributed at the 8th Annual Birth to 22 Task Force Meeting, on Tuesday, February 18, 2025.

The updated plan is now available online
Pbcbirthto22.com

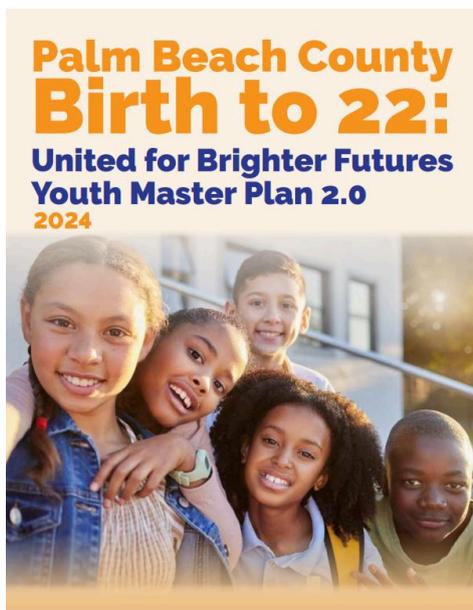


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JANUARY 2025 PROCLAIMED AS NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH IN PALM BEACH COUNTY



At the Board of County Commissioners meeting on Jan. 7, 2025, Commissioner Marci Woodward presented a proclamation declaring January 2025 as Mentoring Month in Palm Beach County. January is National Mentoring Month, an annual campaign 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 have a significant positive impact on youth academic achievement, school connectedness and engagement, and educational success, which can lead to outcomes such as improved attendance, grades, test scores and classroom behavior. Mentoring programs have also been found to positively impact many aspects of mental well-being by reducing unhealthy coping mechanisms and improving interpersonal relationships with friends and family. Mentors can also help young people set career goals and connect them to industry professionals who provide training and job opportunities.

MENTORING MONTH IMAGE

Pictured (l to r): Digital Vibez Executive Director Wil Romelus, Youth Empowered to Prosper Executive Director Lisa Cobb, T. Leroy Jefferson Medical Society Executive Director Laurel Dalton, Ruth & Normal Rales Jewish Family Services Community Mentoring Program Coordinator Lisa Cauff, Program Manager Sadia Rahman, United Way of Palm Beach County Mentoring Initiative Manager Edina Veres, Youth Services Department Program Coordinator Wen Fils-Aime, Youth Services Department Director Elisa Cramer, American Association of Caregiving Youth Volunteer Manager Bina Pancholi-Martin, Community Partners of South Florida Community Services Director Tina McNutt, Youth Services Department Outreach & Community Programing Division -

Director Ike Powell, United Way of Palm Beach County Mentoring Associate Vice President Gwynette Williams, Commissioner Marci Woodward, United Way of Palm Beach County Executive Vice President of Community Investments Dr. Seth Bernstein, Assistant County Administrator Tammy Fields, Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County Program Performance Lead Michelle Abarca, United Way of Palm Beach County Mentoring Initiative Specialist Jarryn Ivery, Fuller Center Associate Director of Community Engagement Lisa Tally, National Alliance on Mental Illness Palm Beach County Chief Executive Officer Katherine Murphy and Engineering and Public Works Department Director David Ricks.

MARCH 2025 PROCLAIMED SOCIAL WORK MONTH

At the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners meeting on March 11, 2025, Commissioner Powell presented a proclamation declaring March 2025 as Social Work Month.

During this month, the Youth Services Department aims to highlight the vital role social workers play in the community supporting our most vulnerable individuals, as this work is crucial to the well-being of those served daily. These professionals have a profound impact on the lives of youth and families in our community.

The department employs social workers who are dedicated to providing the best quality services to all county residents, and the Residential Treatment and Family Counseling Division provides free, accessible, and professional trauma-informed mental health services and educational programs.



Pictured here (l to r): PBC Fire Rescue Division Chief of Medical Services Phillip Olavarria, PBC Fire Rescue Medical Social Work & MIH Coordinator Lauren Young Work, unknown woman/son on left, Library System Director Doug Crane, Youth Services Department Therapist Jacqueline Burke, Youth Services Department Licensed Therapist Angela Dwyer, PBC Library Social Services Coordinator Chandra Thornton, Youth Services Department Therapist Marlene Aboytes, Youth Services Department Residential Treatment and Family Counseling Division Director Dr. Twila Taylor, Youth Services Department Director Elisa Cramer, Reentry Center Sago Palm Case Manager Stanley Hooks, County Administrator Verdenia Baker, Commissioner Bobby Powell Jr., Youth Services Department Community Based Services Chief Katia Cavalié,

SOCIAL WORK MONTH IMAGE

Community Services Department Assistant Director Taruna Malhotra, Youth Services Department Outreach and Community Programming Division Director Ike Powell, Strategic Planning and Performance Management Senior Strategic Planning Performance Analyst Marcela Millett, Families First of Palm Beach County Program Supervisor Behavioral Health Patricia Goodrich, Assistant County Administrator Tammy Fields, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries Director of Community Programs Laura Waterman, Community Partners of South Florida Mentoring Programs Supervisor Mildred Rodriguez, Community Services Director Dr. James Green, PBC Fire Rescue Chief of Medical Services Charles Coyle.

(see page 3)

MARCH 14th, 2025, PROCLAIMED GRANT PROFESSIONALS DAY



At the Board of County Commissioners meeting on March 11, 2025, Commissioner Joel Flores presented a proclamation declaring March 14, 2025 as Grant Professionals Day. These professionals play pivotal roles in securing and protecting funding for projects and programs that address the needs of children, youth, the elderly, the disadvantaged, the environment, the arts, education, libraries, hospitals and more. These dedicated individuals work diligently, often behind the scenes, to research, identify and apply for grant opportunities, ensuring the development and implementation of initiatives that enrich our communities.

The county's Grant Cross Departmental Team was created under the direction of County Administrator Verdenia Baker by the Strategic Planning and Performance Management Division to break down silos and encourage cross departmental collaboration in working to secure and manage grants in Palm Beach County.

GRANT PROFESSIONALS DAY IMAGE

Pictured here (l to r): Youth Services Department Program Evaluator Donna Goodwin, Office of Financial Management and Budget Director Lisa Master, Strategic Planning and Performance Management Division Director Dr. Keith Clinkscale, Staff Attorney Wilneeda Emmanuel, Commissioner Joel G. Flores, County Administrator Verdenia Baker, Intergovernmental Affairs and Community Engagement Division Director Ed Chase, Strategic Planning and Performance Management Senior Strategic Planning Performance Analyst Marcela Millett.

SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS OPENED FOR PBC FAMILIES WITH LIMITED INCOMES

The Youth Services Department hosted eight (8) outreach events at local Palm Beach County Libraries to assist parents and caregivers with submitting their applications.

SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION ASSISTANCE EVENTS:

<p>SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2025</p> <p>10 AM – 12 PM</p> <p>WEST BOYNTON BRANCH</p> <p>9451 JOG ROAD, BOYNTON BEACH, 33437</p>	<p>SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2025</p> <p>10 AM – 2 PM</p> <p>GARDENS BRANCH</p> <p>11303 CAMPUS DRIVE, PALM BEACH GARDENS, 33410</p>	<p>MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2025</p> <p>3 PM – 7 PM</p> <p>BELLE GLADE BRANCH</p> <p>725 NW 4TH ST, BELLE GLADE, 33430</p>	<p>MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2025</p> <p>10 AM – 12 PM</p> <p>WEST BOYNTON BRANCH</p> <p>9451 JOG ROAD, BOYNTON BEACH, 33437</p>
<p>TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2025</p> <p>4 PM – 7 PM</p> <p>GLADES ROAD BRANCH</p> <p>20701 95TH AVE S, BOCA RATON, 33434</p>	<p>THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2025</p> <p>10 AM – 12 PM</p> <p>LANTANA ROAD BRANCH</p> <p>4020 LANTANA ROAD, LAKE WORTH, 33462</p>	<p>THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025</p> <p>2 PM – 5 PM</p> <p>LANTANA ROAD BRANCH</p> <p>4020 LANTANA ROAD, LAKE WORTH, 33462</p>	<p>SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2025</p> <p>10 AM – 2 PM</p> <p>OKEECHOBEE BOULEVARD BRANCH</p> <p>5689 OKEECHOBEE BOULEVARD, WEST PALM BEACH, 33417</p>

Apply Now!

SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

KEEPING KIDS SAFE ALL SUMMER LONG

Application assistance is available at the local PBC Libraries below. . . .

<p>West Boynton Branch 9451 Jog Road Boynton Beach</p> <p>Saturday, February 1, 2025 10am – 12pm</p>	<p>Belle Glade Branch 725 NW 4th Street Belle Glade</p> <p>Monday, February 10, 2025 3pm – 7pm</p>	<p>Glades Road Branch 20701 95th Avenue S Boca Raton</p> <p>Tuesday, February 11, 2025 4pm – 7pm</p>	<p>Lantana Road Branch 4020 Lantana Road Lake Worth</p> <p>Thursday, February 13, 2025 2pm – 5pm</p>
<p>Gardens Branch 11303 Campus Drive Palm Beach Gardens</p> <p>Saturday, February 22, 2025 10am – 12pm</p>	<p>West Boynton Branch 9451 Jog Road Boynton Beach</p> <p>Monday, February 24, 2025 10am – 12pm</p>	<p>Lantana Road Branch 4020 Lantana Road Lake Worth</p> <p>Thursday, March 6, 2025 10am – 12pm</p>	<p>Okeechobee Blvd. Branch 5689 Okeechobee Blvd West Palm Beach</p> <p>Saturday, March 15, 2025 10am – 2pm</p>

Offers eligible children, ages 5 - 17, a full scholarship to day camp between June 2 to August 8, 2025.

AGE REQUIREMENT

5 - 17

Requires 5-year-old children to be currently attending or have completed VPK to be eligible. Families must meet scholarship guidelines. To determine eligibility using an online calculator, please visit: www.pbc.gov/youthservices/Pages/Summer_Camp.aspx

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FROM

January 27 - April 4, 2025

To submit an application, please visit: www.pbc.gov/youthservices/Pages/Summer_Camp.aspx
If you need access to a computer or assistance completing an application, contact your camp of choice or call the Youth Services Department at (561) 242-5713.

SCAN ME

Allows parents to choose from participating camps located throughout the county that meet their child's needs and interests.

Beginning Jan. 27, 2025, the Palm Beach County Youth Services Department began accepting parent applications for summer camp scholarships.

The Summer Camp Scholarship Program offers eligible children, ages 5-17, a full scholarship to day camp for the Summer of 2025. It allows parents to work with the knowledge that their children are safe and gives children educational and recreational opportunities for growth. The deadline to submit an application was April 4, 2025.

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 2025 Summer Camp is scheduled to begin on June 2, 2025.

For more information, please email YSD-SummerCamp@pbcgov.org

YOUTH SERVICES FEATURED AT SANCTUARY INSTITUTE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION



“VISUALS TO REINFORCE PRACTICE” COMPLIMENTS

- “You all should get an Oscar award for making the model live!”
- “I have to thank you for all these wonderful ideas and I will be sharing this with my core team.”
- “I have gotten lots of ideas for tools we can use to encourage the Sanctuary principles! Thank you!”
- “This is awesome!”
- “This is absolutely AMAZING!”
- “INSPIRING!”

At the invitation of the Andrus Sanctuary Institute, the Palm Beach County Youth Services Department (YSD) showcased its Sanctuary® Model practices to an international online audience.

YSD took center stage on January 28, 2025, as the featured presenter for the Sanctuary Institute Community Conversation. Valerie Messineo, YSD Sanctuary Program Coordinator, and Katia Cavalie, YSD Chief of Community-Based Clinical Services, led an insightful session on the topic of “Visuals to Reinforce Practice.”

During this engaging presentation, Katia and Valerie, both YSD Sanctuary Core Team co-chairs, highlighted the extensive work the department undertook in its Sanctuary journey to certification, beginning with the Highridge Family Center in 2019 and the entire Youth Services Department in 2022. They shared valuable insights into the successes the department has celebrated, as well as the challenges faced throughout the implementation process.



The Sanctuary Core Team co-chairs and additional team members also shared some of the ways they have created visuals and activities to reinforce Sanctuary practices within the department. Their reflections offered a comprehensive look at the ongoing efforts to build a trauma-informed culture within the department.

As part of its continued commitment to excellence, YSD is preparing for Sanctuary® Model recertification in May 2025, further solidifying the staff members’ dedication to fostering a supportive and healing environment for all individuals they serve.

Unique tools created to reinforce the Sanctuary® Model include posters featuring the Seven Commitments and other concepts of Sanctuary practice, Theme of the Month newsletters and activities, monthly emails to define commitments and provide real-life examples of use, videos, online trainings, calendars, and more. As an example of the tools created, an “Activity Book Series” is available to the public to download from the YSD Education and Training Center website:

https://discover.pbcgov.org/youthservices/Pages/Counseling_Education.aspx

CHANNEL 20 “KNOW YOUR COUNTY” SEGMENT FEATURES THE YOUTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT



**Leilani Yan
& Elisa Cramer**

A new episode of “Know Your County,” hosted by Leilani Yan and featuring Youth Services Department Director Elisa Cramer highlights the Youth Services Department and the community programming and free therapy it provides.

In the episode, Elisa discusses the Department’s certification in the Sanctuary® Model of Trauma-Informed Care, which all Youth Services programs use to support families and youth served, as well as the administrative portions of the organization.

During this engaging episode, Leilani asks Elisa to share what the community should know about the department, and Elisa discusses the mission, vision, and values of the Youth Services Department.

The mission of YSD is: “Growing brighter futures by providing quality service, education, and access to resources and opportunities.”

The episode emphasizes the importance of utilizing the FREE services and resources the Youth Services Department has to offer, from the Highridge Family Center to outpatient services provided by the

Residential Treatment & Family Counseling Division...to the Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures alliance...to the Community-Based Agencies under contract through the Outreach and Programming Division...and more!

Team members from throughout the Department – whether Finance, Contracting and Administrative Services or direct care services – are shown in the episode. Elisa & Leilani discuss the ways YSD is sharing its resources and providing the community with the ability to gain access to materials, supports, and opportunities for a brighter future.

We want more & more people to know about the free services at YSD, to use them, and take advantage of them.

-Elisa Cramer

The episode encourages Palm Beach County residents to use the therapeutic services offered by the compassionate, empathetic, and trained therapists at the Youth Services Department. The Department also provides an opportunity for doctoral interns at the Youth Services Department to learn firsthand the keys to providing trauma-informed care.

Join Leilani and Elisa in this informative episode provided to the community by Palm Beach County! To learn more about the FREE services that YSD offers, follow the link below to the Youth Services website:

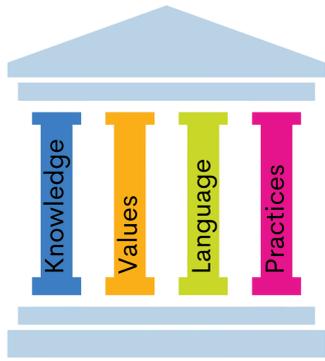
<https://discover.pbcgov.org/youthservices/Pages/default.aspx>

To watch the episode of “Know Your County” hosted by Leilani Yan and featuring Palm Beach County Youth Services Department Director Elisa Cramer, follow the link below:

[Channel 20 “Know Your County Episode featuring the Youth Services Department](#)



CHANNEL 20 "KNOW YOUR COUNTY" SEGMENT FEATURES THE YOUTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT



The Four Pillars

- Trauma Theory
- Seven Commitments
- S.E.L.F.
- Sanctuary Toolkit



AVDA HONORS YOUTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION!



The Youth Services Department was recognized February 25, 2025, by AVDA (Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse) for investing in youth violence prevention.

For the past seven years, Youth Services has supported AVDA's Commit to Change prevention program, including the Commit to Change curriculum and the Committed Men program through MOST Clubs and Coaching Boys Into Men. Those initiatives equip young people with tools for healthy relationships and leadership. Youth Services' leadership in the Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures alliance and the My Brother's Keeper Network of Palm Beach County also was noted.

Before an audience of more than 200 people, Assistant County Administrator Tammy Fields, Youth Services Department Director Elisa Cramer, and Youth Services Outreach and Community Programming Division Director Ike Powell accepted a beautiful floral bouquet and an engraved vase that is in the Four Points office suite for all of Youth Services to enjoy.

To demonstrate the impact of the Commit to Change program, Mr. Thompson Auguste also was honored during this luncheon. Thompson joined Commit to Change when he was in the 10th grade and participated over the next three years in workshops and discussions focused on leadership, healthy relationships and personal growth. In his senior year, he contributed to AVDA's Committed Men campaign, developing digital music, collaborating on lyrics, and documenting the creative process. In addition, he was mentored as he launched his own videography company, and he has created professional videos for AVDA and public service announcements. His love for media production resulted in meaningful social impact. As AVDA noted in the program, "His journey is a testament to the power of mentorship, creativity, and community engagement in shaping the next generation of changemakers."

YOUTH SERVICES JOINED PALM BEACH PRIDE FEST



On March 29-30th, 2025, the Youth Services Department participated at Palm Beach Pride hosted by Compass Community Center.

Team members John Harre, Residential Youth Counselor, and Yadira Diaz Romero, Doctoral Intern, shared about the free resources Youth Services provides to the community.



GET YOUR GREEN ON 10th ANNIVERSARY

let's CELEBRATE

The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department, in partnership with Healthier Delray Beach and Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures, is celebrating the “Get Your Green On” (GYGO) campaign’s 10th Anniversary! Everyone in Palm Beach County was invited to wear green on May 15, 2025, in recognition of the importance of Mental Health Awareness and Trauma-Informed Care. Mayor Maria G. Marino and the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners issued a proclamation during the board meeting on May 6, 2025, declaring May 2025 Mental Health Awareness and Trauma-Informed Care Month in Palm Beach County.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of GYGO, Palm Tran has designed a Mental Health Awareness bus wrap, showcasing the campaign and emphasizing the importance of mental health awareness. Wrapped in green with references to getyourgreenon.org, the Palm Tran bus is traveling throughout the county. Additionally, Birth to 22 Future Leaders youth advisory council members curated a Mental Wellness/Coping skills playlist titled “Music that Hugs Back: Coping Through the Beats (Playlist)” for all to listen to, and the Board of County Commissioners hosted a Mental Health Workshop on May 20. The annual lighting of the Historic Courthouse and Four Points buildings is underway for the month of May, highlighting the green color recognized nationwide as a symbol of mental health awareness efforts. This will be Get Your Green On’s biggest campaign yet!

Everyone is invited to Get Your Green On during the month of May! Find events to join at www.getyourgreenon.org, and share pictures, using the hashtags #GYGO and #GYGO365.

GYGO RESOURCES

[Get Your Green On 2025 Video](#)

[YSD’s Education & Training Center
GYGO Video](#)

[Music that Hugs Back: Coping
Through the Beats \(Playlist\)](#)

[PBC Mental Health Services
Information Cards](#)

GYGO shirts



#GYGO365 #GYGO



GYGO 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



*2025 Mental Health
Family Day Camp Memories*

Youth Services' Hosted 2nd Annual Mental Health Family Day Camp 2025

The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department's Youth and Family Counseling (YFC) program is proud to share the video recap of its 2nd Annual Mental Health Family Day Camp, held on May 10, 2025, at the Okechee Nature Center.

The event brought families together to celebrate Mental Health Awareness and Trauma-Informed Care Month through a variety of engaging and therapeutic activities. Designed to reduce stigma surrounding mental health and promote community healing, the day camp emphasized the importance of resilience, connection and open conversation around mental health.

Families participated in a series of interactive workshops and group sessions that encouraged collaboration, communication and social connection. Each activity was thoughtfully created to help strengthen family relationships while promoting mental wellness and emotional support.

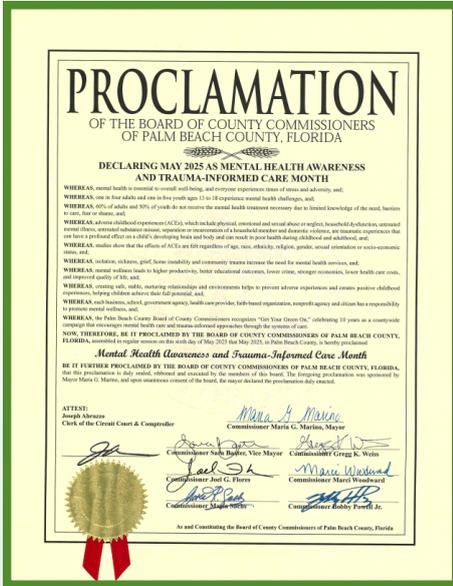
This annual event reflects Youth Services' ongoing commitment to supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of our community.

[To view the video recap, click here: PBCGOV Video Player.](#)



GYGO 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS & TRAUMA INFORMED CARE MONTH PROCLAMATION



On Tuesday, May 6, 2025, the Palm Beach County Board of Commissioners officially proclaimed May as Mental Health Awareness and Trauma-Informed Care Month. Sponsored by Mayor Maria G. Marino, the proclamation highlights the need for accessible mental health services, raises awareness about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and promotes mental wellness. In support of the initiative, Palm Tran unveiled its "Green Bus" to symbolize the county's commitment to mental health awareness. The event was attended by county commissioners, local leaders, and Palm Tran officials, underscoring the community's dedication to improving mental health care and reducing stigma across the region. For more information, please click the GYGO logo in the top left corner of this page.

GYGO BUS WRAP ON FULL DISPLAY





GYGO 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

GET YOUR GREEN ON 2025 CAMPAIGN VIDEO



The many partners of the Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures continued their efforts in celebration of the 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. To learn more about the history of "Get Your Green On," please visit the link below.

[Get Your Green On 2025 Video](#)



CLICK HERE TO WATCH!



GET YOUR GREEN ON 2025 AT YSD





Join YSD's Team

Team Code: 5947

Team Name: PBC Youth Services



GYGO HUNT '25'

- Download **GOOSECHASE** app 
- Play as a guest or set up free account.
- Find **GYGO HUNT '25** or join code **K45E9Z**
- Create your own team or fly solo.
- Complete missions. Earn points.
- Improve mental health and awareness of local resources.
- Share with others!
- Win random prizes.
- Hunt from May 1st - May 31st.



For more **Mental Health Awareness** events go to www.pbcbirthto22.com/gygo/

For Hunt Help contact Prevention@pbcbhc.org



FUN AT THE SOUTH FLORIDA FAIR

From January 17-February 2, 2025, the South Florida Fair invited fairgoers to "Imagine the Future." The Youth Services Department embraced this sci-fi-themed wonderland with its very own fun filled section of the Expo Center. Several YSD team members volunteered to share important information about the free services offered by the Youth Services Department to Palm Beach County residents. Pictured below are YSD therapists Beatriz Ayala and Jackie Burke, encouraging passersby to "Spin the Wheel" and win a prize!



SOUTH FLORIDA FAIR
PRESENTS

IMAGINE
the
FUTURE

NEW ACTIVITY BOOKLETS FROM YSD'S EDUCATION & TRAINING CENTER

The Youth Services Department's Education & Training Center has developed and published a series of interactive activity books that blend evidence-based mental health concepts with engaging family activities, helping parents and children explore emotional wellness together through creative exercises, conversation prompts, and skill-building challenges. These activity books feature mental health content, while integrating important concepts related to the Sanctuary® Model of Trauma-Informed Care, specifically the 7 Commitments and the SELF model. Activity books may be used within therapy sessions or as a supplement to therapy, to reinforce therapeutic concepts in between sessions or post-treatment. Offering these free activity books to families allows them access to resources that will improve their family's functioning and address mental health needs. Adding to the series, the Education & Training Center published two new activity books – "Let's Talk About Bullying: A Guidebook for Youth" and "The Confidence Circus: A Workbook for Building Bravery, Resilience, and Self-Worth for Youth Guided by the Sanctuary 7 Commitments." Doctoral Intern, Christina Castellana, MS is credited with developing the content in these particular activity books. To download these booklets click where it says "click to view."



Activity Booklets

[Click to view](#)

[Click to view](#)

THE 11th ANNUAL STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS CONFERENCE



Pictured here (L to R) is Amber Snedden, PsyD, Sarah Barr, PsyD, and Yadira Diaz Romero, MS.

The 11th Annual Student Mental Health & Wellness Conference took place on March 31, 2025, at Park Vista Community High School. With the theme “Creating Pathways of Hope, Joy, and Well-being,” a keynote speaker presented on “Power of the Positive: Cultivating Optimism.”

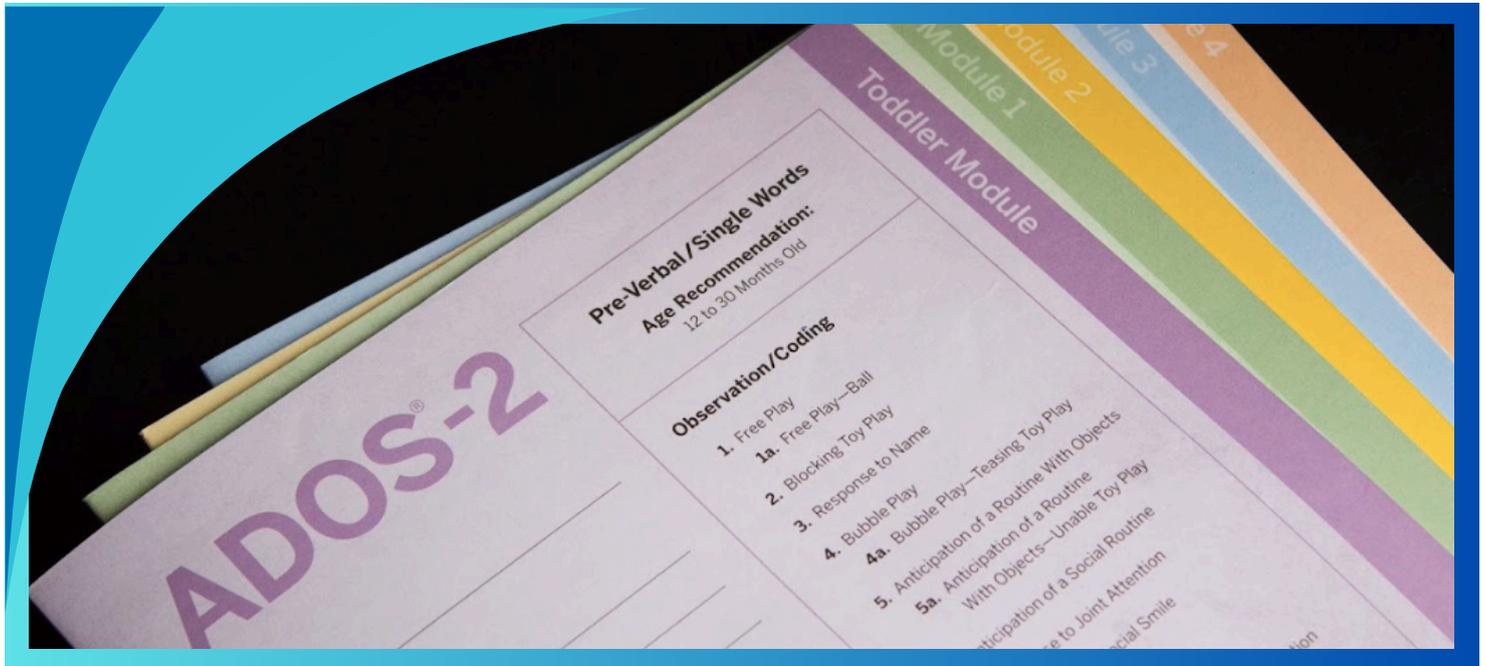
The Student Mental Health and Wellness Conference is presented through the collaborative efforts of the School District of Palm Beach County Department of Behavioral and Mental Health, Safe Schools, School Counseling, Employee Wellness Risk & Benefits Management, Multicultural Education, Wellness Promotion Task Force and SEDNET, as well as Palm Beach County Youth Services, United Way Palm Beach of County, JFK North Hospital and other supportive community agency partners.

The purpose is to provide education and resources to school district personnel, explore District and Community resources for students, family, and staff, and make connections with others who work in support of student mental health and well-being.

The Youth Services Department provided three workshops at this well-attended event, including: Fostering Strength: Building Resilience with Youth & Families (Sarah Barr, PsyD); Are You Feeling Burnt Out? Increasing Self-Care: Educator Edition (Amber Snedden, PsyD); and Classroom “Chill Skills”: Classroom-Friendly Coping Skills for Students and Teachers (Yadira Diaz Romero, MS). The Youth Services Department supported the event, and Dr. Shayna Ginsburg served on the planning committee.



YSD'S EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTER ADOS-2 AUTISM ASSESSMENT



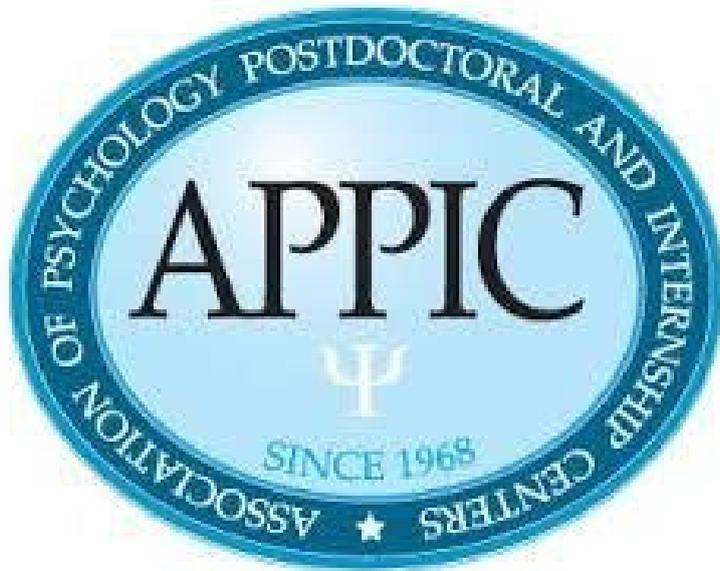
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurological and developmental disorder that affects how people interact with others, communicate, learn, and behave.

Early diagnosis and intervention can have a significant positive impact on the developmental outcomes of children with ASD. The Education & Training Center identified a growing need to provide assessments to accurately diagnose ASD within the community.

Dr. Amber Snedden has a strong background in ASD assessment and has been instrumental in assisting with these evaluations and helping to train other members of the team as they work toward competency in ASD evaluation. Dr. Sarah Barr, Ms. Alyssa Payne, Dr. Rachelle Sosu, and Dr. Shayna Ginsburg have recently been trained in the administration and scoring of the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, second edition (ADOS-2), the gold standard in autism assessment, with the hope of making this type of evaluation more accessible to the community in the coming months.



YSD'S EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTER ANNUAL APPIC MATCH



The National Matching Service (NMS), in collaboration with the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC), facilitates the annual APPIC Match, a structured process that helps psychology doctoral students procure psychology internship programs nationwide.

The match aims to provide an orderly and efficient system for both applicants and internship programs to find mutually beneficial placements. The APPIC Match operates in two phases, each involving the submission of ranked lists by both applicants and programs. A computer algorithm uses these ranked lists to determine matches between applicants and programs, to ensure that applicants are matched with the most preferred internship programs, and programs are matched with the most preferred applicants.

The Youth Services Department Training Committee, including Drs. Twila Taylor, Amanda Terrell, Lynn Hargrove, Rachelle Sosu, and Shayna Ginsburg; along with the current postdoctoral fellows, Drs. Amber Snedden, Brittany Grimshaw, and Sarah Barr; as well as the current doctoral interns, Christina Castellana, Michelle Sidhom, Yadira Diaz Romero, and Maria Bayron; all participated in the extensive process of application review, interview, and ranking for the most recent APPIC Match. The Youth Services Department successfully matched with four doctoral students from Nova Southeastern University, who will begin their internship August 2025.



20TH ANNUAL TURN ON THE LIGHT CONFERENCE



Members of the Youth Services Department's Residential Treatment and Family Counseling Division attended the 20th Annual Turn on the Light Conference on Thursday, April 17th, 2025, at the Palm Beach County Convention Center. Dr. Shayna Ginsburg, Ms. Katia Cavalie, Ms. Marlene Aboytes, and Dr. Lynn Hargrove assisted in facilitating a resource table at the event. Dr. Sarah Barr, postdoctoral fellow at the Education & Training Center, and Dr. Amber Snedden, postdoctoral fellow at Highridge Family Center, presented a very well-attended workshop entitled "Out of this World Parenting: Strategies for Getting Young Children to Behave."

HIGHRIDGE FAMILY CENTER STAFF SERVE AT PALM BEACH COUNTY FOOD BANK



Highridge Family Center staff Volunteer at the Palm Beach County Food Bank

Highridge Family Center staff came together for a time of service and team building in partnership with the Palm Beach County Food Bank. While Youth Residents were on Spring Break, Highridge team members engaged in a day of helping the community, but it looked a little different than their usual service delivery with youth and families. Together, the team put their skills to work and measured, weighed, and packaged almost 900 bags of snacks. The food items will be distributed to local libraries, after-school programs, and food banks.

Highridge Family Center is a free, three to four-month residential treatment program for Palm Beach County Youth, aged 11-16. Highridge is currently accepting youth year-round. Highridge residents are typically experiencing difficulties within their home, school, or community. Services are free for Palm Beach County families with the exception of a \$75 activity fee. Please call 561-625-2540 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

To request an appointment online scan the QR code or visit the link below.



<https://survey.pbcgov.com/s3/YSD-Appointment-Information-Request>

ILLUMINATE YOUR BEST SELF YOUTH SUMMIT 2025



Summit of Palm Beach County

On Saturday, April 12th, nearly 600 middle and high school students from Palm Beach County participated in an inspiring day at the annual Youth Summit, “Glow It Up: Illuminate Your Best Self.” This event was held at Palm Beach Lakes High School and was designed to help students discover and showcase their best qualities. With plenty of fun and engaging activities, teens were able to get connected with others and absolutely glowed! Students attending the full Summit were eligible to receive 10 community service hours.

Joining in on the fun, Elisa Cramer (Director of Youth Services Department), Ike Powell (Outreach & Community Programming Division Director) Tamia Williams, JaVona Wilson, Brian Thorton, Lisa Chioffe, Lourdes Perez, Hedy Ramos Rivera, Wen Fils-Aime, YSD’s staff, Birth to 22 and Community Partners, came together to help inform youth and their families of the various FREE services that are offered at the Palm Beach County Youth Services Department.

The event began with elevating morning workshops that were focused on glowing forward, including topics such as mental health (presented by YSD’s Residential Treatment and Family Center), healthy eating, and safety! Students were able to learn a lot of valuable information from each of these 50-minute sessions. Additionally, mock trials, cooking, dancing, jump rope, and tons of music were on full display at this year’s Youth Summit.



GLOW ILLUMINATE YOUR BEST SELF YOUTH SUMMIT 2025





SUCCESSFUL

April 12th 2025

Youth SUMMIT

CREATIVE

sharing smiles and memories

POWERFUL

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

CELEBRATING **EARTH DAY**

APRIL 19TH, 2025

Okeeheelee Nature Center
Okeeheelee Park

7715 Forest Hill Blvd, West Palm Beach, FL

On Saturday, April 19th (from 10 am–3 pm), John Harre, Samantha Shields, and Lisa Chioffe from the Youth Services Department joined together to share information about the Youth Services Department's FREE services to Palm Beach County families.

Okeeheelee Nature Center provided

- Guided nature tours & Live animal encounters
- Rehabilitated animal releases
- Environmental exhibitors and vendors
- Mindfulness in nature tours
- Meet & greets with Oakly, the Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation mascot
- Eco-friendly crafts & story time
- Raffles to benefit the Friends of Okeeheelee Nature Center
- Food trucks, face painting, and much more!



Pictured here is Samantha Shields holding a snake

YSD NAMED CHILD ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AT CHS 5K WALK/RUN



Pictured here: YSD staff & Additional PBC colleagues at CHS 5K Walk/Run. Pictured in the top right corner is the Child Advocate of the Year Award.

On Saturday, April 26, 2025, The Children’s Home Society awarded the Palm Beach County Youth Services Department with the David and I. Lorraine Thomas Child Advocate of the Year award, the highest honor given by the Children’s Home Society to recognize champions of the well-being of children. The award was presented during CHS’ 5K Walk/Run for child abuse prevention at Okeeheelee Park (Micanopy Pavilion). The walk/run started at 7:30 a.m., and the Awards Ceremony was held at 8:30 a.m.

TeamPBC was out at CHS’ 5K Walk/Run in full force, including County Administration, Human Resources, Library, Water Utilities, Community Services, and Fire Rescue, in addition to Youth Services! Thank you, Lourdes Perez, Hedly Ramos-Rivera, and Annette Santiago, for representing YSD at the resource table. YSD’s Beatriz Ayala, Ike Powell, Jeff Sinclair, and additional TeamPBC colleagues ran or walked the 5K in advance of the Award Ceremony, including Assistant County Administrator Tammy Fields, Human Resources Director Dr. David Kahn, and Community Services Department Finance Director Julie Dowe!



Pictured here: CHS Executive Director Dennis Miles presents YSD Director Elisa Cramer the Child Advocate of the Year Award.



CBA Q&A: AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CAREGIVING YOUTH

Q What is your mission?

A We champion youth who provide care for chronically ill, injured, frail, elderly, and/or family members with other physical and mental health conditions. We support their role as caregivers and guide their success in school and life.

Q What does your organization do?

A The American Association of Caregiving Youth® (AACY) was initially established in 1998 as Boca Raton Interfaith in Action to provide volunteer services to adults who were homebound persons/caregiving families. After transitioning adult services to another non-profit, the organization was able to focus on caregiving youth and changed its name to AACY in 2010.

AACY established the Caregiving Youth Project in 2006 to directly serve an otherwise hidden and vulnerable population of middle and high school students who are also family caregivers. These unrecognized youth often sacrifice their education, health, well-being, and childhood to perform adult-sized responsibilities of providing care for a family member who is chronically ill, injured, frail, elderly, or has other physical or mental health conditions.

The extent of care and time spent ranges from significant personal assistance to instrumental activities of daily living, including emotional support, household tasks, translations, medication management, and home health treatments.

Q What key programs does your organization offer?

A Through a formal partnership with The School District of Palm Beach County, our primary program of direct services, the Caregiving Youth Project (CYP), is unique in that we provide needs-driven wrap-around support customized for each of our participants and their families. We currently assist 697 students, including their 2,000+ family members, an average of 5.46 years.

The services we provide are as follows:

- In-School – Identification of Caregiving Youth who qualify for our support and have parental consent; Skills-Building support groups using a copyrighted AACY developed curriculum, individual support, and open to all Lunch and Learn sessions.

- At Home - Family assessments from a professional Family Specialist, special projects (an example: ramps for wheelchairs), respite care for those who qualify, laptop/computers as needed, tutoring services, mentorship, linkages to community resources, and more.

- Out of School - Overnight camp, picnics, education, holiday celebrations, and fun activities are provided. These activities allow much-needed freedom away from adult responsibilities and stressors, giving Caregiving Youth the opportunity to be with their peers from other schools, learn they are not alone in their roles and have fun.

- Collaborative/Community Support – medical assistance, home needs, school supplies, home projects, and more.

Additionally, high school students earn community service hours for the (unpaid) work they do at home. Community service hours are a requirement for high school graduation.

Q How does your agency benefit the community?

A A primary benefit of AACY to the community is its focus on the support and education of a growing population of students who otherwise would most likely not be identified and supported. Research among young adults who dropped out of schools showed that 22% did so to care for a family member.

With recognition and support, CYP participants remain in school! AACY has a 10-year average high school graduation rate of 98.3%. This means the individual most likely earns \$8,000 - \$10,000 more in taxable income than a student who does not complete school, and is less likely to be involved in crime and ultimate system dependency. Thus, the CYP benefits the student, his family, and, ultimately, society.

Q What is your agency's focus for 2025?

A The focus for 2025 includes ensuring the ability to continue services through additional fundraising and other grant opportunities. As funding allows, we are able to reach Caregiving Youth in schools that are not yet participating in our program.

AACY also has a Caregiving Youth Institute to C.A.R.E. – Connect, Advocate, Research and Educate. We plan to hold a conference on November 13, 2025.

CBA Q&A (cont'd)

With furthering education of the public and professionals, we are working to educate legislators to understand and support with policy this otherwise neglected population; only family caregivers who are 18 years of age or older are eligible to receive support.

In working with the school district, we continually look for ways that participants can be accommodated rather than punished at no cost to schools – for example, if a student is late in turning in homework or a project because of time needed in caregiving, the teacher could extend a deadline.



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

A The funds received from the County allow us to support Caregiving Youth and their families in the myriad of needs-driven and prioritized ways that we do, at no cost to them. Without this financial support, the Caregiving Youth would not have the opportunities and support – plus fun – afforded to them! Additionally, the services and recognition provided help to reduce their frustration and anxieties, thus providing a pathway for them to learn, which is essentially impossible when under acute stress.

Q What is your website for the community to learn more about your CBA?

A www.aacy.org



CBA YOUTH SUCCESS STORY: AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CAREGIVING YOUTH

By President and Founder of AACY: Connie Siskowski, RN, Ph.D.



I met N.E. at the beginning of her 7th-grade year. She was referred to me by her school counselor, as N.E. herself didn't initially see her role as that of a caregiver. Her mother, an amputee at the hip who uses a simple wooden crutch, doesn't drive and relies heavily on N.E. to help with appointments and many chores at home.

As a seventh grader, N.E. began attending all our group meetings. Listening to other students share their stories, she slowly started to recognize the important caregiving role she was playing in her mother's life. She became an active participant in our activities, and when she attended our camp, she discovered a love for fishing. We were able to find her a spare fishing rod, and her enthusiasm led us to secure a scholarship for her to attend a five-night fishing camp over the summer.

N.E. and her mother also attended our AACY Christmas parties in Boca Raton during both her seventh and eighth-grade years, making wonderful memories together.

Supporting N.E. has truly been a team effort. Recognizing the language needs, I've relied on the help of another Creole-speaking Family Specialist who assists with phone calls to her mother. Our Care Manager, Cassandra Mendez, has also met with her mother to help find a shower chair and to explore options for financial assistance.

Each Wednesday, when I visit Lake Worth Middle School, I set aside time to meet individually with students. N.E. began meeting with me almost weekly. During one of our sessions, she asked if we could assist her mom with Palm Tran Connection tickets, which her mother depends on for shopping, laundry, and attending appointments. We helped her mother update her account to the new online app and have been purchasing tickets for her for over a year now. Although it may seem like a small gesture, these tickets have made a huge difference in both N.E.'s and her mother's daily lives. Her mother earns income by babysitting from home, and reliable transportation access has been vital.

This year, N.E. transitioned from fishing to basketball. She proudly shared with me that she tried out for—and made—the school basketball team! However, just 24 hours before the district's paperwork deadline, she told me she needed urgent help completing the necessary documents: a health application, a physical exam, and two notarized forms.

N.E. and I sat down together to complete the lengthy health application. She called her mother and arranged for a physical the following morning. That afternoon, I picked up her mother and took her to the nearest UPS store to notarize the needed documents and then to the doctor's office to schedule the early morning appointment. The next morning, before school, N.E. and her mother used Palm Tran Connection to get to the doctor for her physical. Afterward, N.E. biked home and delivered all her paperwork—completed, notarized, and signed—to school before the noon deadline. Thanks to her determination, she officially made the team and played the entire season, with her coach proudly noting her talent!

Next year, N.E. will move on to high school. While I will miss seeing her weekly, she will remain in our program and transition to working with a new Family Specialist at Lake Worth High School. She will continue participating in our groups and receiving the support she deserves.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: TY HALL



Pictured here is Ty Hall (left) and his family.

At YSD, we view our employees as one of our greatest strengths. This quarter, we’re featuring Ty Hall. Ty works in the Finance, Contracting & Administrative Services Division here at YSD as Financial Analyst III, and we are so grateful to have him as a part of our team.

- Q** Where is your hometown?

A Riviera Beach, Florida
- Q** What is your favorite thing about your job at YSD?

A My favorite part about my job at YSD is knowing that I indirectly support the youth of Palm Beach County from behind the scenes, through procuring goods, processing reimbursements for training, and handling other fiscal duties that may often go unseen. I take pride in contributing to the programs and services that positively impact our community’s youth.
- Q** What hobbies and interests do you have outside of work?

A Outside of work, my hobbies include anything that gets me "outside" — whether it's traveling, bike riding, or walking my dog. I also enjoy spending time with my wife, playing PS5 with my military buddies, listening to music, and diving into a good audiobook.
- Q** What was your first job?

A Working as a bagger for Publix
- Q** What are the three most important skills you need for your job?

A **Patience:** to remain calm and focused while navigating complex tasks and resolving issues.

Ability to multitask effectively managing multiple responsibilities and deadlines simultaneously.

Building rapport with other fiscal staff by establishing strong working relationships with fiscal staff across the County to promote collaboration and efficiency.
- Q** Is there a memorable moment that you would like to share in relation to your work here, at YSD?

A Working at the Special Needs Shelter (SpNS) during a storm. As County employees, it is mandatory for us to work the storm shelters, and at YSD, we have the privilege of serving at the Special Needs Shelter. There is a client, Ms. J, who frequently comes to the shelter — she is the sweetest person. The shelter does not always open every storm season, so sometimes a year or more can pass without an activation. The next time we had an activation, sure enough, Ms. J came in, saw me, and said, "Hey, I remember you — you're Ty!" That moment gave me the biggest smile and reminded me that I truly made a positive impact on someone's life.
- Q** What is the most important lesson you’ve learned in the last year?

A The most important lesson I’ve learned in the past year is how to be both a husband and a true friend to my wife. We recently became empty nesters, and it’s been a big adjustment now that our children are entering young adulthood. We’re in a stage of life that feels similar to the time before marriage and kids — rediscovering how to love each other, connect, and find new passions together outside of being parents. It’s been a rewarding journey of growth and deeper partnership.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: TY HALL (cont'd)

Q Where would you like to go on a dream vacation?

A For my dream vacation, I would love to visit Egypt. I cannot wait to see the pyramids and the Sphinx in person. It would be an incredible experience to witness such iconic history and to learn more about the remarkable architecture and culture behind it.

Q What is your favorite quote?

A "A closed mouth doesn't get fed." It reminds me of the importance of speaking up for what you need, advocating for yourself, and not being afraid to ask questions or seek opportunities.

Q Who or what inspires you?

A God, my faith, and my belief in a higher power inspire me. They guide and motivate me to keep my head held high, stay 10 toes down, and remain focused on living with purpose and integrity.

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

A One thing my coworkers might be surprised to know is that I'm a bit of an introvert outside of work. While I enjoy being social and connecting with others, I value my quiet time to recharge and reflect. This helps me be the best version of myself, staying balanced, focused, and energized.

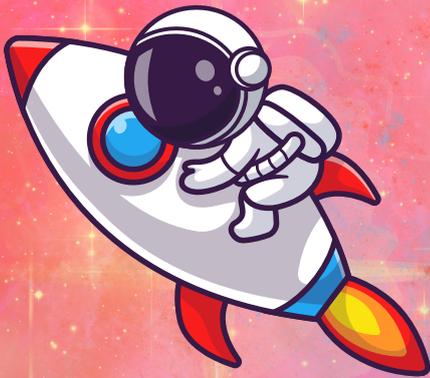


*Ty Hall,
on behalf of YSD*

**THANK YOU
SO MUCH**

Welcome

NEW EMPLOYEES



HEDDY RIVERA
ADMINISTRATIVE
TECHNICIAN III
(RTFC)



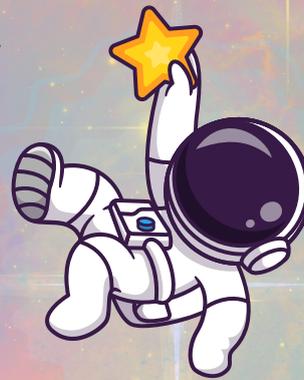
TRISTAN BUTLER
SEASONAL
PARAPROFESSIONAL
(OCP)



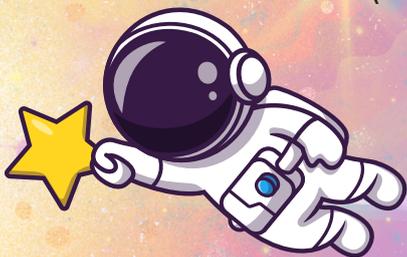
MARGARETT CHARLES
FINANCIAL
ANALYST III
(FCA)



CHRIS DORNEY
RESIDENTIAL YOUTH
COUNSELOR
(RTFC)



MARKELL LEE
SEASONAL
PARAPROFESSIONAL
(OCP)



LISA CHIOFFE
ADMINISTRATIVE
TECHNICIAN I
(RTFC)



HANNAH LISKA
SEASONAL
PARAPROFESSIONAL
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