

*Employees, Volunteers, Community Partners, and Friends*

# NEWSLETTER



## *Employee Appreciation 2016!*

DJJ held its annual Employee Appreciation Day event May 27<sup>th</sup> at the Shivers Road Wellness Center in Columbia. Highlights of this year's event included a Director's Walk, an employee health fair and recreational activities such as an employee kickball tournament.

Employees also enjoyed great food provided by Hudson's Barbeque. Lefford Fate, Deputy Director of Health Services at the Department of Corrections, spoke at the luncheon

about how personal health and wellness affect teamwork, impressing on employees the importance of staying healthy.

"Our employees make everything we do possible," said Director Murray at the event. "DJJ needs each and every one of you." "We thank you once again, as we do always. Thank you for all you do, each and every day."

Congratulations to those who kicked away the



competition to win the kickball tournament, the Upstate Evaluation Center Highlighters!

**Thank you to all who participated in this fun, healthy, and informative event!**

A special thank you to the Employee Recognition Committee and team who helped organize this wonderful event.

### **Birchwood School CATE Program Career Fair 2016**



On April 27th, The DJJ Career and Technology Education (CATE) Team sponsored an exciting Career Fair for Birchwood School students, faculty, and staff. The event took place in Birchwood gym with over 150 people rotating through the 16 SC Career Cluster stations represented by work industries such as the Columbia Metropolitan Airport, SCANA, LCM Design Group, Inc., It-ology, Job Corps, BB&T and many more.

During the event students took the opportunity to speak with professional representatives about workforce hiring practices; while giving thought to post-secondary options. This was a great event to raise student awareness about their future plans. This event was chaired by Dr. Mamie Hayes Hartwell.



Students, employees and teachers participate in the Career Fair

### **Oconee Garden Project Update**



For over a year the Oconee County DJJ office and their youth have continued to work on a community garden project, which is dedicated to victims of juvenile crime.

Recently one of these juveniles and their grandfather plowed ground to prepare for the plants, as other youth worked alongside long-time volunteer John McDonald. McDonald also installed a sprinkler system to soften the ground and water the future crop.

To get things going Zone 7 in Seneca donated nearly \$200 worth of plants and fertilizer.

“Zone 7 owners Lance and Barbara Yuda have been very generous to us since the project began,” said Oconee County Director Kirsten Abderhalden. “We appreciate Zone 7 and everyone’s help and participation!”

## The Director's Cut



As many of you read in the last issue of the Newsletter, DJJ has been making a lot of improvements at BRRC and doing a lot of work "behind the fence" in all of our secure facilities. I also want to take the time to focus on a few other areas where we're making some important changes out in the community and in other areas. These changes may not be as obvious to many of you as the changes we're making in our facilities, but they're just as important in realizing a new DJJ offering new and improved services in all facets of our juvenile justice system.

In this issue, I wanted to focus in particular on our community **Job Readiness Training (JRT) sites**. One of the enhancements we're making as part of the new DJJ is an allocation of \$480,000 to double the number of JRT sites from 8 to 16. And I want to highlight why we're making this change and why it's important.

The JRT program is an employability training program designed for at-risk high school students. JRT programs are a supplement to DJJ's Teen After-School Centers (TASC), which operate statewide. Annually, each JRT site provides up to 60 high school students, ages 14-17, with comprehensive job readiness skills training, career exposure and paid community internships at local businesses for a "real life" work experience.

These paid community internships are an effective feature of the JRT program, and allow young people to go out and work in real businesses in their local communities. To make this possible, local JRT's partnered with dozens of local businesses and

organizations including Ace Hardware, CVS Pharmacy, Food Lion, Greenville County Recreational Department, Greenville Health and Humane Society, IGA Grocery, Piggly Wiggly, Urban League of the Upstate, YMCA; and many others. These partners have provided DJJ youth with many opportunities to learn "on the job." As we expand the program, we hope to expand partnerships in more communities.

The goal of the program is to teach young people the hands-on skills they need to get a job and to encourage them to stay in school to continue their formal education. According to our most recent performance measure, 96% of youth enrolled in the program completed the program. And 80% of participants pass their Job-Readiness post-test they took on program completion. 97% of young people enrolled in the program stayed in school while they were completing their JRT training. Since its beginning in 2014, about 650 youth have gone through the program.

I hope by expanding the JRT program, we will provide even more of our young people with jobs and careers, a future that will help them to realize their dreams and show there are ways to make money and support themselves without resorting to criminal activity.

The New DJJ is a place where change is happening. Our Job Readiness Training program is one of the many areas that's already seeing positive changes going forward, changes our wonderful DJJ employees are making happen right now.

Thank You!

**-Sylvia Murray**  
SCDJJ Director

## FJJ Donates Over \$6,000 to the DJJ Giving Hands Program

The Friends of Juvenile Justice (FJJ) recently donated over \$6,000 to DJJ to purchase gift cards to assist with juvenile needs at the agency. The funds go toward gift cards to assist in providing juveniles lunch when transported to placements, to job interviews, to college/internship interviews, and other events.

Funds also support providing juveniles with clothes needed for job, college and internship interviews--as well book bags or school materials needed for DJJ students.

FJJ identified the need for this assistance after asking state DJJ staff how often they paid out-of-pocket to assist juveniles. FJJ estimated that about 200 juveniles needed financial assistance, and staff personally paid to assist.

"Partnerships and support like this means so much to

us at DJJ," said Director Murray. "Having organizations like FJJ who help our young people with financial assistance has such a positive impact on them and on the agency."

### Birchwood School CATE Program Annual Spring Fling 2016



Student-produced items on display at the Spring Fling

On April 13th, the DJJ Career and Technology Education (CATE) Team sponsored the annual Spring Fling activity. Birchwood School faculty and staff had the pleasure of purchasing items such as fish dinners from the Culinary Art Department, recipe books and artwork posters from the Integrated Business Applications Department, beautiful flowers and plants from the Horticulture Department. They also placed orders for birdhouses from the Carpentry Department, welded palmetto trees from the Welding Department, purchased select framed quotes from the Visual Arts Framing class and much more.

The event took place in the Birchwood School Vocational Building, with CATE staff assisting and the JROTC program providing a car wash.

This was one of the most successful Spring Flings with over 200 people coming out to make purchases or place orders. This was a great event to highlight the skills and talents of our students making the items at the event. All funds raised were placed back into the various department accounts for future needs. This wonderful event was chaired by Ms. Betty Harrison, a teacher at Birchwood School.



### DJJ Students Take First at South Carolina SkillsUSA Conference

Birchwood School students participated in and took first place at the 51st SkillsUSA Leadership and Skills Conference held in Greenville, SC on April 14-16th. Three DJJ students competed at this year's Chapter Display event.

Other students worked on this year's project in auto collision repair, welding, carpentry, and graphic design.

Because of their first place win, the DJJ Chapter Display team have the opportunity to represent South Carolina and Birchwood School at the National SkillsUSA Competition.

### Aiken County Staff and Juveniles Volunteer at Equine Rescue and Nonprofit

On May 14, 2016, Aiken County Director Amy Loftus and four juveniles completed 8 hours of community



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With contributing writers from across the agency

service at the Aiken Equine Rescue.

The Aiken Equine Rescue (AER) was founded in 2006 and resides on 90 acres of farmland in Aiken County. Their mission is to rescue unwanted horses suffering from abuse and neglect and to “repurpose” Off-The-Track thoroughbreds. Each horse is provided food, shelter, medical attention and personal interaction until an appropriate home can be found.



A DJJ juvenile helps with Equine Rescue

AER is an officially recognized therapy site that specifically working to help Veterans struggling with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. With only three paid employees and a daily average of 65 horses, the Aiken Equine Rescue is completely dependent on volunteers.

The Aiken County DJJ office is partnering with AER to provide volunteers through community service hours and graduated sanctions to help meet their needs.

The Aiken County office also volunteered with ACTS (Area Churches Together Serving), a local nonprofit organization that provides food, clothing and household items to financially disadvantaged individuals and families in Aiken County. One staff-member and several juveniles volunteered by organizing, bagging and carrying groceries to vehicles of local senior citizens.

Aiken County DJJ staff and juveniles enjoy helping the needy and giving back to the community on the 3rd Saturday of each month at ACTS.

## Chester County Holds First G.R.E.A.T. Graduation



Pictured from left to right are Midlands Regional Administrator Amahl Bennett, Community Specialist and DJJ Great Facilitator Jennifer Shannon, and Chester County Sheriff Alex Underwood.

On March 15th a G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education And Training) graduation was held at The Academy for Teaching and Learning (K-8) Charter School in Chester.

Captain Dwayne Robinson served as guest speaker, and the group was also treated to an appearance by Sherriff Alex Underwood who came to support the DJJ staff and G.R.E.A.T. program.

“As Chester’s first G.R.E.A.T. cycle the Chester County staff are excited to have this initiative in Chester and everyone in the community, including the Chester County Sheriff’s Office, has been supportive,” said Midlands Region Administrator Amahl Bennett.

## DJJ Social Worker Wins 2016 Jim Ward Field Instructor of The Year at USC

From all the Social Work Field Instructors across the state of South Carolina, one of DJJ's own was recently selected as the 2016 Jim Ward Field Instructor of The Year at the University of South Carolina. Deborah Bennett-York was selected as this year’s recipient, and was invited to participate in this year’s Master of Social Work Hooding Celebration at the University of South Carolina in May. She had the honor and privilege of participating in the hooding ceremony that day, allowing her the pleasure of watching nine of her former interns receive their hoods.

The selection process began with a nomination by the Masters of Social Work students, and then a committee chose the recipient from a crowded and well-qualified field of candidates.

## DJJ's Job Readiness Training Center Partners with Sowing Seeds to Help DJJ Juvenile Obtain Employment



The Job Readiness Training Center (JRTC) partnered with Sowing Seeds of the Midlands with the assistance of Zakiya Esper, the founder of Sowing Seeds and a former DJJ Richland County probation officer. A recent success story is of a former DJJ-involved youth, "Princess" from Richland County. Through the collaborative effort between Sowing Seeds and the JRTC, "Princess" gained employment at Sonic and her GED.

Princess was referred to the Job Readiness Training Center by Esper. While working as a probation officer, Esper assisted Princess with completing a resume, obtaining a birth certificate and completing several job applications. She also worked with Princess on interviewing skills and dressing for success.

"We're all proud that Princess has come back from DJJ involvement and an uncertain future to a new employment opportunity and a chance to turn things around," noted JRTC director Harold Mayes.

## Volunteers For Super Service Saturday



Staff, volunteers and youths participate in Super Service Saturdays

Have time you want to volunteer, and just don't know what to do? DJJ is sponsoring Super Service Saturday. What is "Super Service Saturday?"

The Super Service Saturday events are wonderful opportunities to make a difference while having some fun! Twice each month on Saturday mornings they gather at DJJ to spend a few hours with a group of young men behind the fence.

Volunteers spend time in the garden, complete team building exercises on the fifty-five foot Alpine Tower, beautify the campus and put a fresh wash and shine on several of the transportation vehicles. Enjoy volunteering to help young people make positive changes in their lives.

On July 9<sup>th</sup>, volunteers will be bringing in horses behind the fence at BRRC as part of an equine program for juveniles. DJJ youth will have an opportunity to learn about grooming and riding during this Super Service Saturday event.

To learn more or to volunteer give us a call at 896-4836.

See you at Super Service Saturday!!!!

## In Pictures



On April 27th, CEC Classification Coordinator Lalita Wilson was recognized as the facility's Non-Security Employee of the Year.



DJJ Volunteer Services Director Jennifer Wallace spoke at the South Carolina Midlands Citizen Review Panel (CRP) Volunteer Summit on April 21st at Columbia College.



Priscilla Pee, Alex Washington, and Jennifer Loschiavo receive their Certified Public Manager certification.



Corporal Nathaniel Drakes graduated from the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy on May 27th.



Governor's Public Servant Appreciation Luncheon (April) with DJJ's Christine Wallace



Governor's Public Servant Appreciation Luncheon (May) with DJJ's Bonnie Martin

## **DJJ** Promotions & Announcements

**Latasha Farr** (UEC), **William Fries** (CEC), **Hayward Jacobs** (MEC), **Maurisha Scott** (DJJ Police), and **Richard Taylor** (JDC) were honored at the South Carolina Correctional Association (SCCA) 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Appreciation Luncheon in May. **Hayward Jacobs** was further honored as the DJJ Correctional Officer of the Year at the event. Congratulations to these officers!

The Division of Community Services has promoted **Ivan Belin** to the position of County Director for Marlboro County.

**Marchelle Brown** has been selected as the new Nurse Manager for the Coastal Evaluation Center.

The Division of Community Services has promoted **Lakisha “Nykki” Bryan** to the position of County Director for the Beaufort County DJJ Office.

**Anthony S. Cotton** has been appointed as DJJ's new Chief of Police.

**Jo B. Crosby** has been appointed as the Director of Information Technology in the Division of Administrative Services.

**Corporal Nathaniel Drakes** and **Sgt. Shirley Pittman** graduated from the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

**Tia Fletcher** has accepted the position as Director of Special Education for the Division of Educational Services.

**Jeremy Franklin** has been named to serve as Mentor Coordinator for the Division of Planning and Programs.

DJJ's **Crayman Harvey** was the guest speaker for Detention Class 363 at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

The Division of Community Services has named **Peter Henzler** as the new Lancaster County Director.

**Floyd Lyles** has been named the new Principal at Birchwood School.

**Patrick Montgomery** has been appointed as DJJ's new Public Affairs Director.

**Freddie Pough** has accepted the position of Deputy Director for the Inspector General's Office.

**Liza Robertson** has been appointed as the new DJJ Human Resources Director.

**Anthony Wynn** has been named the new Deputy Director for Rehabilitative Services.

## DJJ Bonus Recipients

### May, 2016

**Verlie Griffin** - Unit Manager - Maple Unit - Rehabilitative Services

**Marcia Davis** - Administrative Specialist - Upstate Evaluation Center - Rehabilitative Services

### June, 2016

**Tami Nates** - Administrative Assistant - Rehabilitative and Administrative Services Divisions