

# YSD SCOOP!

IN

THIS  
ISSUE

Youth Services Department  
Employee Retreat

Youth Services Department "Superheroes" gather for the Sixth Annual Employee Retreat. p.2-3

YSD Holds Ninth Annual  
Super Spelling Bee

The competition was held at Pahokee Middle Senior High School with Summer Camp Scholarship Program sites in attendance. p.6

CBA Spotlight:  
For The Children

For the Children Provides low-income families with children ages 3-19 with quality and affordable educational, recreational, and family support services. p.19-20



November 2023



# YOUTH SERVICES SUPERHEROES GATHER FOR ANNUAL EMPLOYEE RETREAT



On Thursday, August 3, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department held its sixth annual employee retreat at The Wellington Community Center. YSD's Seeds of Success Cross-Divisional Action Team coordinated and executed the event with a superhero theme to shed light on 'emotions being our superpowers' and the various superpowers YSD staff possess in their work towards serving youth and families in Palm Beach County. The superhero-themed retreat welcomed special guests, including County Administrator Verdenia Baker, Assistant County Administrator Dorritt M. Miller, County Appellate Practice Chief Attorney Helene Hvizd, and Keith Clinkscale and Marcela Millett from County Office of Financial Management and Budget.

Throughout the day, staff superheroes were immersed in a series of engaging activities. The Retreat started with celebrating the Youth Services Department 2023 'Employee of the Year,' Tevin Ali, Public Relations Specialist. Palm Beach County Administrator Verdenia Baker, Assistant County Administrator Dorritt Miller, and Director of Youth

Services Department Tammy Fields presented the award to Tevin who received five nominations from the department. Tevin's nominators said, "Tevin demonstrates exemplary performance through work products, publications, attention to detail and design, and excellent communication skills. As YSD's Public Relations Specialist, Tevin's work is a crucial element to the success and networking power of the department. Collaboration and support for others is the hallmark of Tevin's work. Lending his expertise beyond our department, he champions community initiatives and young people throughout our region."

Following the Employee of the Year presentation, an interactive superhero-themed 'Menti' community check-in was conducted with staff to see which superhero symbolizes their feelings and whom they can call upon for help as their trusted sidekick. The YSD team then watched a captivating 'Year-in-Review' video to take in all the heroic work done by the department all year-round.



# YOUTH SERVICES SUPERHEROES GATHER FOR ANNUAL EMPLOYEE RETREAT (CONT'D)

An inspiring "why my feelings are my superpower" video was shown with staff answering the questions "which superhero do you identify with" and "why are emotions your superpowers." The superhero team then transitioned into a fun interactive trivia game testing their knowledge of the Youth Services Department's various services, initiatives and programs.

All three Cross-Divisional Action Teams - Seeds of Success, Equity Diversity & Inclusion (EDI), and Sanctuary showcased their work with unique team-based activities, fostering a strong sense of camaraderie and collaboration. Before and during the superhero luncheon, participants enjoyed interactive activity tables hosted by Youth Services staff members and the Palm Beach County Wellness Center. The table exhibitions included engaging and wellness sessions on tessellation, innovations, stone artistry, guitar tutoring, origami, paraffin wax, chair massages, a scavenger hunt, and nutritious ingredients for overall well-being.

The afternoon session of the Retreat started with a presentation by the Program Evaluation team on the

analysis of the Youth Services Department's climate survey. Afterward, staff focused on leadership development and learning about their communication styles through an assessment and leadership training led by Tessie Watts, Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Consultant of The Leadership Haven Resource Center LLC. The session provided valuable insights and skills for the staff's personal and professional growth.

The Retreat provided the perfect opportunity for all attendees to unleash their unique superpowers and embrace their strengths, making it an unforgettable experience for the YSD team and attendees.

"Our department is spread throughout the county with seven different office locations. This retreat is our opportunity to come together as one team. Each member of staff is a superhero, and together we are mightier than the Justice League," said director Tammy K. Fields.



## HOW SANCTUARY IS INCORPORATING EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING (EDIB)



On September 5, 2023, the Sanctuary Institute hosted a Sanctuary Training at Youth Services titled "How Sanctuary is incorporating EDIB?"

The training was offered as optional for staff to participate in and was led by YSD's Sanctuary consultant, Aaron James.

The discussion focused on how equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and the Sanctuary are connected and why adding the B (belonging) to EDI is important.

Other topics of discussion included creating safe spaces, utilizing gratitude (kudos) to combat social trauma, awareness of microaggressions during conversation (i.e. Saying someone is assertive rather than aggressive), and utilizing coping plans before addressing a difficult topic.

## SANCTUARY TRAINING FOR YOUTH SERVICES CORE TEAM AND SUPERVISORS



The Youth Services Department Sanctuary consultant, Aaron James, met with all Core Team members and Supervisors to identify any implementation

challenges the department has faced and help create solutions to address those challenges.

During the training, staff learned about common "potholes" that organizations face regarding the seven commitments then broke out into groups to identify these strengths and challenges specific to YSD.

Aaron also provided recommendations as YSD moves towards recertification, including how we update Youth Service's organizational trauma history, maintain fidelity, and address challenges related to staff turnover.

## PBC ACCEPTS NATIONAL 'BEST IN CATEGORY' ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR MENTORING PROGRAM



On Sunday, July 23, 2023, Gregg Weiss, Palm Beach County Mayor, Maria Marino, Palm Beach County Commissioner, Tammy Fields, Director of Youth Services Department, and Dorritt Miller, Assistant County Administrator, accepted the 2023 National Association of Counties

Conference in Travis County, Texas.

Denise Winfrey, President of NACo presented the Palm Beach County team with the award.



(NACo) Achievement 'Best in Category for Children and Youth' to Palm Beach County for the Enhanced Mentoring Engagement Level Up program at the 2023 NACo Annual



# BIRTH TO 22: UTILIZING COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS TO ENRICH THE YOUTH MASTER PLAN 2.0



The Youth Master Plan (YMP) “Strengthening the Steps to Success” was launched by Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures in 2015 after holding 11 community conversations in the Palm Beach County community and surveying hundreds of youth. Six major areas of need were identified, and as

a result, Action Teams and Workgroups were created to address the needs and provide logistics support. As Birth to 22 approaches its 10-year anniversary, it is time to update the Youth Master Plan with the YMP 2.0.

As when the original version of the YMP was created, the alliance believes community collaboration is essential to maintain the standpoint of nothing about us, without us. Birth to 22 can only successfully provide support to our children, youth, and families after first hearing what gaps and concerns exist within our communities.

With the eleven community conversations held in the spring of 2023, Birth to 22 reached 222 youth and 180 adults. The alliance provided facts about the community and the strategic priority areas of mental health, economics, and education around youth transitioning to adulthood. The participants were asked about the needs, gaps, and recommendations related to these topics.

Next, Birth to 22 facilitated two Community Conversations targeting the community-based organizations that provide direct services to the youth and families. The first conversation was held virtually on August 23, 2023, with

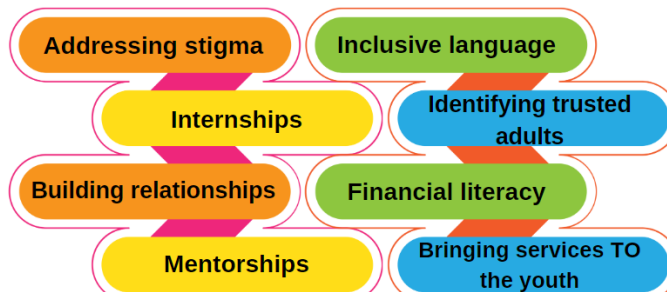
27 participants. The second was held in-person at the Children’s Services Council on September 6, 2023, with 28 participants. Conversation facilitator, Jeanette Gordon of McArthur’s Own, guided the conversation with questions about the priority areas.

Finally, on September 19, 2023, a youth-led conversation was held at Vita Nova, an agency that is a safe bridge to independence for former foster care, LGBTQ, and other homeless youth. The youth were candid and open with their answers about resources, safety, and programs. They identified gaps in services, education, and support and provided recommendations and insight into programs that they find safe and impactful.

Learn more about the Birth to 22 Alliance at: <http://pbcbirthto22.com/>.

To stay connected with Birth to 22 and their upcoming events and initiatives, follow them on their Facebook and Instagram pages @Birthto22.

## Areas of Growth & Identified Gaps





# YSD HOLDS NINTH ANNUAL SUPER SUMMER SPELLING BEE

Palm Beach County Youth Services Department hosted its Ninth Annual Super Summer Spelling Bee on July 25, 2023. The competition was held at Pahokee Middle Senior High School with 157 registered spellers and 20 Summer Camp Scholarship Program sites in attendance.

The spelling bee is for students enrolled in the Summer Camp Scholarship Program's participating camps and provides academic activities to encourage the spirit of learning while preventing summer slide. This was the first year the bee has been in person since 2019. In addition to the spelling bee, the event also included activities with Digital Vibez, Crazy Games, Palm Beach Behavioral Health Coalition, and the Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation Department. The final round also featured dance performances by Bethel Evangelical Church, Pahokee Dance Academy, and Ascension 33.

"This year the Super Summer Spelling Bee returned to an in-person event. It allowed us to engage all of our campers in fitness, competition, and academics. The top three spellers in each category showed off their hard work in the final round on stage in front of their peers. They received trophies, books, gift cards, and tons of applause," said Valerie Messineo, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department Senior Program Specialist. "We can't thank our hosts at Pahokee Middle Senior High School enough. Their campus is beautiful, and their staff welcomed us with open arms."

Among the winners were campers from Bethel Evangelical Church, Destiny Fulfilled, Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders Today, For the Children, Wells Recreation, Tate Recreation, Rosenwald Elementary, and Florence Fuller summer camps.



## 2023 Spelling Bee Winners:

K-2nd	
1st Place - FTC Youth Zone	Lissandra
2nd Place - Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders	Mark
3rd Place - Wells Recreation	Davens
3rd-5th	
1st Place - FTC Youth Zone	Jacoby
2nd Place Tate Recreation	Nyla
3rd Place Rosenwald Elementary	Austyn
6th-8th	
1st Place - Destiny Fulfilled	Mia Valentina
2nd Place - Florence Fuller	Louis
3rd Place - Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders	Daniela
9th-12th	
1st Place - Bethel Evangelical Church	Jemuel
2nd Place - Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders	Regina
3rd Place - Bethel Evangelical Church	Fidely





# MIND YOUR BUSINESS: 4TH ANNUAL YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP FORUM



Saturday, August 5, 2023, was the "4th Annual Youth Entrepreneurship forum Mind Your Business" presented by the Palm Beach County Office of Equal Business Opportunity (OEBO). The event was held at the Palm Beach County Governmental Center. Youth entrepreneurs aged eight to eighteen in the community were invited to attend with their family and friends.

Participants learned about entrepreneurship topics such as starting a business, financing a business, networking, and developing a business brand identity.

The event started with a welcome to attendees by Gregg Weiss, Palm Beach County Mayor, Verdenia Baker, Palm

Beach County Administrator, and Tonya Davis Johnson, Director of OEBO.

Speakers included Gerald Hearn, CEO of Brick by Brick Academy; Jason Pritt, Market Manager at BankUnited; Ed Chase, Division Director of Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Affairs and Community Engagement; and Maiah Andrews, Founder of Lifestyle Brand Group.

Youth Service's very own Tevin Ali, Public Relations Specialist, served as moderator for the panel discussion comprised of Youth Entrepreneurs.





# 2023 BACK TO SCHOOL PBC! BASH

July 22, 2023 was the Annual Back to School PBC Event. The event ensures Palm Beach County students are ready for the upcoming school year by providing families with essential school supplies. This year Youth Services represented at four Back to School PBC locations at the Palm Beach County Convention Center in West Palm Beach, Village Academy in Delray Beach, Palm Beach State College in Belle Glade, and the Edna W. Runner Tutorial Center in Jupiter.

Team members Jacqueline Burke, Humberto Sigler, Marlene Aboytes, Tania Shindo-Henderson, JaVona Wilson, Beatriz Ayala, Rachel Clemons, Brian Thornton, Stacey King, Toni Summerville, Manuel Signo, Samantha Shields, and Tevin Ali, represented YSD as volunteers sharing resources about the department at the events.





# 2023 ALYSSA SANGEETA JACOBSON (ASJ) SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

Friends of Youth Services and Palm Beach County Inc. has announced the 2023 Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship recipients. This year two recipients were named. The awarded scholarship provides \$2,000 a year, distributed over two semesters to each recipient. The scholarship is renewable for up to four years, depending on the degree or certificate program. Following an online application process, finalists were selected based on application submission, letters of recommendation, and a written essay. Scholarship eligibility was limited to residents of Palm Beach County.

Congratulations to the 2023 Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship recipients:

- **Jasmine Akins** is a graduate of Glades Central Community High School. She plans to attend Palm Beach State College and major in Psychology.
- **Joseph Rudnick** is currently enrolled at the University of Florida, pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering.

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

## Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship

# Congratulations 2023 Recipients!



**Jasmine Akins**

Glades Central Community  
High School



**Joseph Rudnick**

University of Florida



# FUTURE LEADERS UNITED FOR CHANGE HOSTS FIRST MEETING OF SCHOOL YEAR

Palm Beach County Youth gathered to connect, learn, and inspire on September 21, 2023, at the exciting, in-person "Future Leaders Link Up" event.

The event was hosted by Future Leaders United for Change, a countywide youth council of high school students and young adults up to age 22. Future Leaders was created in response to Palm Beach County's call to have the voice of young people distinctly heard as their needs are assessed, and programs and services that will influence them are implemented.

This youth council gives future leaders a chance to network with like-minded individuals, gain valuable insights, and foster meaningful connections. Future Leaders is designed to empower youth on their leadership journey, expand their network, and unlock their potential.

More than 30 participants attended the first in-person Future Leaders meeting since the pandemic began, with students and young adults from Vita Nova, City of Greenacres, Achievement Centers, and local high schools,

including Santaluces, Florida Atlantic University (FAU) High, Palm Beach Gardens, Dwyer, Turning Points Academy, and Spanish River.

The youth engaged in conversations with their peers, gave their input on important topics, discussed their feelings and goals, learned about each other's skills and passions, and indulged in a light meal together.

As members of the Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures alliance, the Palm Beach County Youth Services Department and Digital Vibez partner with Future Leaders United for Change, coordinating Link Ups and community engagement opportunities for Palm Beach County's youth and young adults.

Future Leaders "Link Ups" will be held bi-monthly on the 3rd Thursday of the month from 4:30pm-6:30pm.





# EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTER BIDS FAREWELL TO GRADUATING DOCTORAL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINEE COHORT AND WELCOMES NEW COHORT

On July 27th, 2023, Ed Center said farewell to the graduating doctoral psychology trainee cohort of 2022-2023, Kristy Kopeczi-Boocz, and Denieka Ellis.

On July 31, 2023, Ed Center welcomed the new doctoral psychology trainee cohort of 2023-2024, including practicum trainees, interns, and postdoctoral fellow: Ed Center (Sarah Barr – Pacific University; Amber Snedden- Chicago School of Professional Psychology; Denieka Ellis – Nova Southeastern University; Kristy Kopeczi-Boocz – Nova Southeastern University;) and Highridge (Brittany Grimshaw – Nova Southeastern University; Amber Cope – Long Island University; Dr. Megan O'Connor-Szuma – University of Detroit Mercy).



## PROGRESS PALM BEACH COUNTY ECONOMIC SUMMIT

On September 21, 2023, Tammy Fields, Director of Youth Services Department attended the "Progress Palm Beach County Economic Summit" hosted by the Central Palm Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The summit provided opportunities to bring education, government, and business leaders together to work collaboratively on the workforce pipeline in Palm Beach County.





# SUPERVISOR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



Congratulations to our very own Ty Hall, Financial Analyst II, for completing the 2023 Palm Beach County Supervisor's Apprenticeship Program!

As part of the PBC Academy of EXcellence and in keeping with our organizational value of "Creative Leadership," the purpose of The Supervisor's Apprenticeship® is to provide general and introductory leadership skill development for high-performing, non-management employees within Palm Beach County who are interested in pursuing a supervisory/management position.

"It was a wonderful experience and I would suggest any future leader or current leader if allowed to take the course. The ideas and strategies discussed during class opened my mind to a new leadership style.

My biggest takeaway was the Three Guiding Principles:

1. Focus on the Positive in every situation (Even in the most difficult situations, being optimistic can only help others do the same.)
2. Model Respect for individuals, teams, and the organization (It is not what you do but what you don't do that will show disrespect to others in the workplace.)
3. Stay Centered when challenged (Simply stated... keep your cool! When others around you are reacting, you be the one to stay solution-oriented)" said Ty Hall, Financial Analyst II.

## THE VALUE OF GROWING STUDENT INTERNS

Youth Services Department has adopted a 'grow our own' approach in developing the next generation of professionals. Part of this approach is the value of hiring student interns. Youth Services is proud to share the success stories of student interns becoming full-time employees with the county.

Frederick DuBois started as a student tech assisting the Youth Services Department with public relations work and now serves full-time as a Procurement Specialist.

Dimitri Cason served as a Seasonal Paraprofessional during the summer of 2022 and 2023 and now works full-time as a Buyer Assistant in Palm Beach County's Purchasing Department.

Blaze Green, who served as a student worker in the

Community Services Department, now works as a full-time Fiscal Specialist II at Youth Services.

Lastly, Takeba White Simeon (Bre), who started with Youth Services as a Seasonal Paraprofessional assisting with summer programming, now works full-time as an Administrative Technician with Youth Services Family Violence Intervention Program.

"Hiring students allows us to add committed employees into our workplace. and allows young adults to start a career path with Palm Beach County" said Tammy K. Fields, Director of Palm Beach County Youth Services Department.



# HIGHRIDGE FAMILY CENTER PARTNERS WITH WEST PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

On July 18, 2023, Highridge Family Center and the West Palm Beach Police Department re-launched a joint initiative aimed to bridge the divide between law enforcement and community members. The Community Engagement Team, comprised of four officers and a community clergy member, facilitated weekly discussions on topics such as respect, safety, anger management, and decision-making. Residents and officers had the opportunity to engage in conversations they might not otherwise have in the community. Residents were able to ask questions and express opinions and concerns. Some discussions veered off script, as is expected when adolescents are involved. Yet, this neither deterred nor detracted from the greater mission---building a bridge.

Over ten weeks, we've seen very scared, nervous, reluctant, wary, or suspicious residents become more comfortable and open to the intervention and the officers. In getting to know the individuals behind the badge and uniform as fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers, they became people like themselves and their

families. Highridge facilitated a safe space for open and respectful exchange, to challenge assumptions, and to vet narratives that hinder other possibilities. We hope this positive experience was meaningful for all participants: residents, staff, and officers as we forge ahead.

A special thank you to the dorm counselors and therapists who provided support and encouragement to the residents along the way.



## HISPANIC HERITAGE CULTURAL TOUR

On September 15, 2023, Tammy Fields joined many county leaders on the Hispanic Heritage tour organized by Virginia Savietto of the Mayor's Office, Community Services Department and Palm Tran. The Hispanic Cultural Tour celebrated and highlighted the cultural and economic impact and growth of the Hispanic/Latino community in Palm Beach County.

Throughout the tour, Palm Beach County Leaders had the privilege of learning from different leaders inside the tour bus representing agencies that tirelessly serve our community year-round. They opened up about their incredible programs and services that benefit the community.





# YOUTH SERVICES INTERN CONTINUES TO REPRESENT STUDENT VOICES IN TALLAHASSEE

Since 2015, Achieve Palm Beach has been uniting the community and focusing on improving access to and completion of an education beyond high school. Achieve Palm Beach was joined by YSD Program Evaluator Intern, Humberto Sigler-Finales to advocate for universal FAFSA. Humberto joined as an advocacy fellow for 2022-2023 and participated in the program to raise awareness for financial resources in post-secondary education such as Federal Pell Grants. In Palm Beach County alone, students left behind \$29.7 million in Pell grants on the table in 2022.



# DIGITAL VIBEZ 12TH ANNUAL 'JAMATHON'

Digital VibeZ, a Youth Services Department community-based agency, empowers youth in diverse and underserved communities through dance, fitness, technology, and the arts. In partnership with Prime Time Palm Beach County and Palm Beach County Youth Services, Digital VibeZ hosted thousands of children from Palm Beach County summer camps at its 12th Annual KidsFit Jamathon. The PBC Board of County Commissioners presented a proclamation to Digital VibeZ, Inc., declaring July 19, 2023, as the 12th Annual KidsFit Jamathon.





## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

On September 12, 2023, Commissioner Marci Woodward sponsored a proclamation from the Board of County Commissioners declaring October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.



## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

Tammy K Fields, Director of Youth Services Department, and Valerie Messineo, Senior Program Specialist, completed Mental Health First Aid training on August 31, 2023.

Mental Health First Aid was designed to extend the concept of first aid training to mental health and substance use challenges.



## BACK TO SCHOOL BASH - RIVIERA BEACH

On July 29, 2023, The City of Riviera Beach Back to School Bash event was held in conjunction with Councilman Douglas Lawson and the Sincere 2000 Foundation.

This event helped ensure students were ready for the upcoming school year by providing families with essential school supplies. Youth Services team members Lourdes Perez, Administrative Assistant II, and Tammy Fields, Director of YSD, represented YSD at the event.



## SECOND ANNUAL DELRAY BEACH UNITY FEST

On Saturday, August 5, 2023, Youth Services Department represented at the 2nd Annual Delray Beach Unity Fest. Samantha Shields, Contracts & Grants Coordinator, and Janae Jones, Licensed Therapist, shared about the free resources the department offers to the community.





# COUNTY DEPARTMENT FAIR

On July 26, 2023, Youth Services team members Frederick DuBois, Procurement Specialist, and Tevin Ali, Public Relations Specialist, represented Youth Services at the County Department Fair hosted by Palm Beach County Library System.

The fair showcased the resources, programs, and services Palm Beach County departments offer the community. Members of the community were appreciative of the event and learning about all the different county departments.



# RALLY FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Ike Powell, Director of the Outreach and Community Programming Division, and Tammy K Fields, Director of the Youth Services Department, attended the Rally for Youth Mental Health on August 24, 2023, hosted by BeWell PBC.

In attendance were youth, parents, funders, and community partners, all dedicated to the mission of addressing the mental health crisis for youth in Palm Beach County.



# IT TAKES A VILLAGE NONPROFIT FAMILY FIELD DAY

On Saturday, July 22, 2023, YSD team members Kathleen Alexis, Grant Compliance Specialist II, Jennifer Brito, Fiscal Specialist II, and Tevin Ali, Public Relations Specialist, represented at the Love, Hope, and Healing 'It Takes A Village Non-profit and Family Field Day' at Gaines Park in West Palm Beach. YSD's resources were shared with the community at the event.

Among the community members who attended the event included Katrina Long-Robinson, Vice Mayor for the City of Westlake, and Bobby Powell, State Senator.





## FALL INTO WELLNESS

On Saturday, September 30, 2023, Youth Services participated at the 'Fall Into Wellness' event hosted by the Riviera Beach Health Initiative.

Toni Summerville, Licensed Therapist, and Lourdes Perez, Administrative Assistant I, shared with community attendees about the services Youth Services offers to the community. The YSD team even shared about our services with City of Riviera Beach Councilman Douglas Lawson.



## EMPTY BOWLS

On Saturday, September 30, 2023, YSD Director Tammy K Fields was a celebrity soup server at the 2nd Annual Empty Bowls in the Gardens at Downtown at the Gardens. The theme was to "eat simply so others can simply eat." Proceeds for the event went to the Palm Beach County Food Bank.



## EMOTIONS BOOK DONATIONS

Youth Services Department (YSD) is extremely grateful for continued opportunities to partner with the County's Library System and Parks and Recreation department to positively impact children throughout Palm Beach County. The Library System provided YSD 60 boxes (720 sets) of donated books to distribute to children and families.

Inspired by Disney and Pixar's film Turning Red, this box set of five fun storybooks entitled Mei's Little Box of Big Feelings, highlights some of the big feelings and emotions that come with growing up. YSD distributed the books to various community based agencies and YSD service locations. Special thank you to Parks and Recreation Department for assistance with delivery of the books.





## DORRITT MILLER WINS ATHENA AWARD

YSD proudly congratulates our Assistant County Administrator, Dorritt Miller, on receiving the Athena Leadership Award on September 28, 2023.

In addition, one of the Youth Services funded agencies, the Center for Child Counseling, received the organizational Athena Award. Congratulations to all the nominees and awardees.



## YSD WELCOMES ASSISTANT DIRECTOR



# Welcome!

**Elisa Cramer,  
Assistant Director**



A native of Palm Beach County, Elisa is a Certified Public Manager who formerly served as the Acting Regional Managing Director and Circuit Community Development Administrator for the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). During her more than 14 years of service with DCF, she worked in circuit, regional and statewide leadership roles, including in the Tallahassee headquarters, where she was focused primarily on child welfare policy development and implementation. Prior to joining DCF, Elisa worked for 15 years as a journalist, serving as a reporter, editor, editorial writer and Opinion columnist with The Palm Beach Post. A graduate of Spelman College, Elisa enjoys having fun with her family, reading, writing, & creating handmade craft projects.





## CBA Q&A: FOR THE CHILDREN INC.

### Q What is your mission?

“village” is responsible for raising each child/youth under our care.

Key Club (Lake Worth Kiwanis) memberships.

**A** To provide low-income families with children ages 3-19 with quality and affordable educational, recreational, and family support services that foster positive physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth and development.

### Q What key programs does your organization offer?

**A** Our main programs include:

#### The Kids Zone

This space was designed to ensure children between the ages 3 to 5, are socially, emotionally, and academically prepared to enter kindergarten. We offer programs that allow them to explore the worlds of art, science, math, music, languages, and more in a safe, nurturing environment.

The Youth Zone was planned to increase educational success of children, ages 5-12, by creating environments where learning is fun and attending school is the norm.

It includes:

- **Academics:** In addition of homework assistance, the program offers academic enrichment and peer-to-peer mentoring.
- **Multicultural arts program:** It concentrates on drawing, painting, photography, video production, drumming and performing arts among others.
- **Recreational Activities:** Provides flag football, martial arts, musical theater, volleyball, basketball, computer literacy, poetry writing, tennis and video games and more.
- **Social Activities:** give access to Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and

#### The Teen Zone

It is composed of the Youth Empowerment Center (YEC) and Teen Learning Center (TLC).

They offer:

- **Academics**  
YEC offers daily homework assistance, and small group tutoring in reading and math. TLC operates at Lake Worth Community High and Boynton Beach High School and presents free ACT, FSA, and SAT Prep.
  - **Career Exploration:** The Teen Zone offers teens opportunities including, career exploration, “teen-preunership,” summer employment, and jobs shadowing.
  - **Life Skill and Developmental Tasks** including understanding self and personal values, abilities dealing with family stress, nutrition, human growth and development, and issues related to social and emotional transitions from adolescence to adulthood.
  - **Leadership Development:**  
Youngsters are trained as peer mentors to support children ages 3-8 by assisting in small group enrichment activities and other program-related tasks in the classroom.
- Participants run a “Youth Council” and meet twice monthly to address issues such as neighborhood cleanups, fundraising events, community service learning projects, and other activities.

### Q What does your organization do?

**A** To fulfill its mission, For The Children (FTC) has been providing an integrated youth-centered approach to development that has yielded a robust Return on Investment (ROI) and renders solid short-term goals and a long-term impact in our marginalized communities. To accomplish this, FTC has focused on supporting academic goals in conjunction with the Palm Beach County School District; providing enrichment activities whose purpose is to help youth stay interested in learning; providing a holistic approach to well-being that keeps youth physically and emotionally healthy; familiarizing youth with governance and provides opportunities for leadership sparing them from the Juvenile Justice system; and with an open door policy, FTC became the center of a community where people become neighbors and, in turn, turn into a large family.

This way, “a place where children are first” was created, and a



# CBA Q&A CONTINUED



**Q** How does your agency benefit the community?

**A** Education:

One of our main contributions to the community is to make sure that in marginalized populations, FTC's participants do not lag behind. Therefore, one of our major contributions is achieving our promise of leading our children to success measured by meeting our academic objectives:

Goals Met:

- At least 99% of children attending the Kids Zone, meet the Florida learning and developmental standards for school readiness moving to kindergarten on time.
- The academic promotion rate of at least 97% indicates that our youth keep not just a standard score but numerous students excel in school obtaining cumulative averages of A and B.
- One hundred percent of our youth graduate on time.

Long Term Impact

- At least 90% of our Teen Zone program's interns either move on to college, or are employed after high school graduation.

- Our notable alumni contribute to many professional and entrepreneurship careers, elevating the economic standards of their communities. They are scientists, renowned performers, nurses, teachers, bankers, and entrepreneurs, to name a few.

**Q** What is your agency's focus for 2023?

**A** FTC main focus of 2023-2024 is to bring all the programs to a single site. Construction will take place at the Historical Osborne School's location. This one will be refurbished, while the other two structures will be built to accommodate administrative offices, programs, a community center, and some amenities.

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

**A** The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department helps fund For the Children (FTC). The funds are used for the critical support of the center, including utilities and staff salaries. We are so grateful for this funding as it allows us to consistently provide a safe, stable, and nurturing environment for our students. In addition, with funds from Palm Beach County, FTC has changed not only behaviors but also the social context of a community. As both adults and

children learned about their personal responsibility regarding well-being by changing eating habits, exercise, and mindfulness, parents expanded their knowledge of other cultures. They learned that there are more options beyond their traditional ones.

**Q** What is your website information?

**A** <https://forthechildrenfirst.org/>

Email: [info@forthechildrenfirst.org](mailto:info@forthechildrenfirst.org)

Main office: (561) 493-1190 Fax: 561-721-2954





# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## JACQUELINE BURKE



At YSD, we view our employees as one of our greatest strengths. This quarter, we're featuring Jacqueline Burke. Jackie works as a Therapist with the Residential Treatment and Family Counseling Division (RTFC). In her role as a Therapist, Jackie provides services to Palm Beach County families that she meets daily.

To her, it is rewarding at the end of the day knowing that she was able to build rapport, establish trust, and make a difference in each family's lives.

**Q Where is your hometown?**

**A** I was born in Jamaica, grew up in the Bronx, New York, then relocated to West Palm Beach in 2003.

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

**A** My very first time leading a Summer Camp presentation for more than fifty Summer Camp Providers.

**Q What is your favorite quote?**

**A** "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Maya Angelou

**Q What was your first job?**

**A** My first job was at Burger King when I was 15 years old.

**Q What hobbies and interests do you have outside of work?**

**A** I love cooking, gardening, spending time with family and friends, and traveling.

**Q Who or what inspires you?**

**A** My family inspires me, with the tradition of hard work and support for others.

**Q What are the three most important skills you need for your job?**

**A** Good listening skills, empathy, and problem-solving.

**Q What is your favorite thing about your job at YSD?**

**A** I love providing support and guidance to the kiddos and young adults so they can understand and overcome their trauma, become emotionally intelligent, and improve their resiliency.

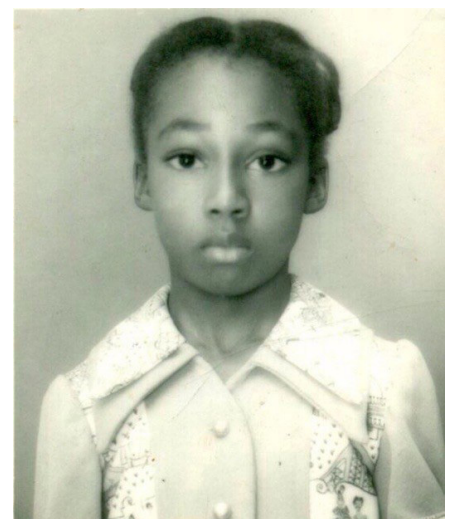
It is a joyful feeling for me to see how the services provided benefit the entire family.

**Q What is the most important lesson you've learned in the last year?**

**A** I learned that embracing those who come into your life and those who leave is important. As the quote says, "People come into your life for a reason, a season or a lifetime."

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

**A** I would like to visit Ghana or Switzerland.





# EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

## KEISHA DORAN



Keisha Doran was awarded this quarter's YSD Employee of the Quarter (July-October 2023) for her hard work, dedication, and service as the Residential Treatment and Family Counseling (RTFC) Division's Program Coordinator, particularly her work as YSD's Residential Nurse Manager.

Thank you, Keisha, for all you do for the Youth Services Department and the Palm Beach County Community.





# EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

## TEVIN ALI



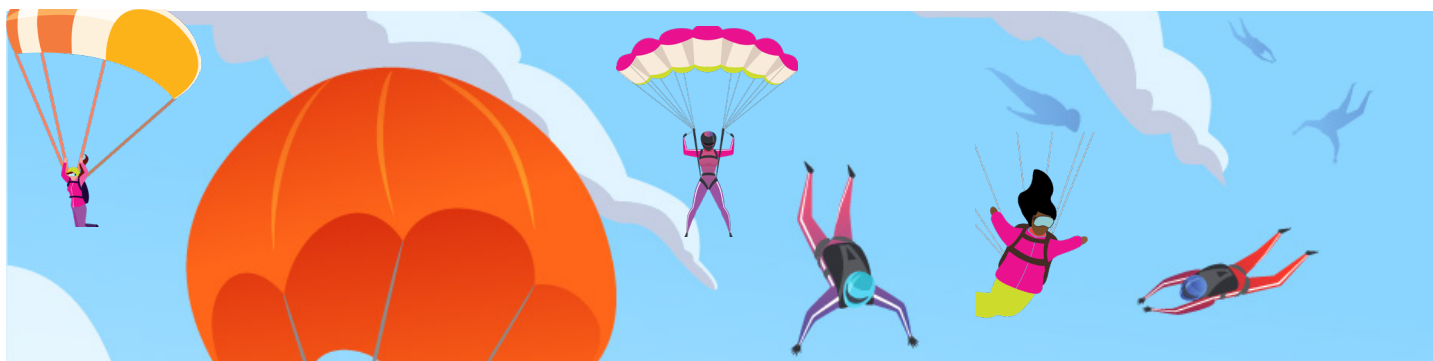
Receiving five nominations from the department, Tevin Ali, Public Relations Specialist, was announced as the "Shining Light of the Year," the YSD equivalent to 'Employee of the Year.' Tevin's contributions were recognized as a crucial element to the success and networking power of the department.

"Collaboration and support for others is the hallmark of Tevin's work. Lending his expertise beyond our department, he champions community initiatives and young people throughout our region." Thank you, Tevin, for all you do for the Youth Services Department and the Palm Beach County Community.





# WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES



<i><b>Employee</b></i>	<i><b>Position</b></i>	<i><b>Division</b></i>
Wen Fils-Aime	Program Coordinator	OCP
Angela Heras	Licensed Therapist	RTFC
Blaze Green	Fiscal Specialist II	FCA
Bianca Torres	Administrative Assistant II	Admin
Elisa Cramer	Assistant Director	Admin
Tamia Williams	Senior Program Specialist	OCP
Annette Santiago	Administrative Assistant I	OCP
Victoria Flores	YFC Intern	RTFC





# FAREWELL TO ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DORRITT MILLER



This past quarter, YSD Bid Farewell to Assistant County Administrator Dorritt Miller. The YSD team wishes her well as she transitions to retirement and thanks her for her service, support, and leadership of the Youth Services Staff. Dorritt shared the following note with the department:

*My Dear Youth Services Team:*

*It has been an absolute joy working with each of you and it has been an honor of a lifetime.*

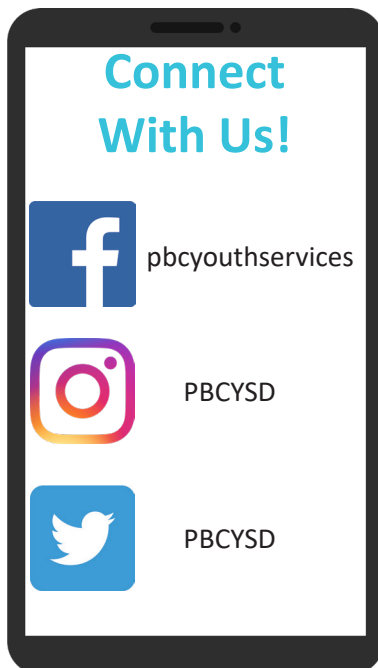
*The positive impact you have on Palm Beach County youths and families is immeasurable! It is hard work and it takes a special heart to do this job. I thank you*

*So as I say goodbye on this side, thank you for welcoming me to the PBC Team and I will see you on the other side.*

Regards, Dorritt







**Youth Services Department Director**

Tammy K. Fields

**Youth Services Department Assistant Director**

Elisa Cramer

**Director of Finance, Contracting and Administrative Services**

Michelle Liska

**Director of Outreach and Community Programming**

Ike Powell

**Director of Residential Treatment and Family Counseling**

Dr. Twila Taylor

**Editor-in-Chief & Designer**

Tevin Ali

**Palm Beach County  
Board of County Commissioners**

Maria Sachs, Mayor, Maria G. Marino,  
Vice Mayor, Gregg K. Weiss, Michael A.  
Barnett, Marci Woodward, Sara Baxter,  
Mack Bernard



**County Administrator**  
Verdenia C. Baker

**Assistant County Administrator**  
Todd J. Bonlarron