

TYC SPOTLIGHT

The Electronic Newsletter of the Texas Youth Commission

Houston District Office Helping Youth GitRedy for Success

The Houston District Office is working with grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice to help gang-affiliated Harris County youth and their families re-connect in a positive way with their communities when they return home from Texas Youth Commission secure facilities.

With initial funding of \$524,461, the Gang Intervention Treatment Re-Entry Development for Youth (GitRedy) program is a juvenile demonstration project funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) through the federal government's Second Chance Act. It is a comprehensive approach which identifies eligible Harris County youth at intake to TYC and then provides ongoing outreach to the youth and their families in a manner that is consistent with the families' cultural preferences. First contact with youth eligible for this program takes place during the youth's orientation and assessment and continues throughout the youth's stay in TYC.

The program's goal first-year goal was to provide family-focused re-entry services to 246 gang-involved youth between the ages of 13 and 19. Additional goals were that 40 percent of the youth would enroll in school or job training, 40 percent would find employment and 40 percent would be matched with a mentor. These were very aggressive goals for positive youth outcomes.

Between Oct. 1, 2010 and Sep. 26, 2011, a total of 263 youth were served through the GitRedy program, exceeding the program's expected goal. These youth are divided into two categories, Priority 1 and 2. Of the 263 youth served, 86 were Priority 1 and 177 were Priority 2.

Priority 1 youth are those who received an extension to their minimum length of stay (MLOS) by the Release Review Panel (RRP), and as a result are in need of a more intensive level of on-going treatment and re-entry services. They receive the following supports and services:

- Mental health and substance abuse services
- Care coordination
- Family counseling
- School-based counseling

HDO Staff (from the left counterclockwise): Susan Moynahan, Re-Entry Specialist; Don Finley, Parole Supervisor; Todd Novak, Parole Supervisor; Aaron Williams, Parole Administrator; and Marcus Jones, GitRedy Gang Intervention Specialist.



October 2011

TYC Spotlight highlights events and people making a difference in the lives of those youth committed to the state's juvenile corrections agency. It is periodically published by the TYC Governmental Relations, Planning and Communications Department.

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Scott W. Fisher
TYC Board Chair

Cheryl N. Townsend
TYC Executive Director





Gang Intervention Treatment:
Re-Entry Development for Youth

- Workforce development
- Employability assistance
- Mentoring
- Supported employment
- Aggression Replacement Training ®
- Tattoo Removal
- Birth certificates and State ID cards
- Gang Intervention and Education Curriculum

Priority 2 youth did not receive a MLOS extension from the RRP, and their need for treatment and services is relatively less intense. They receive the following supports and services:

- Aggression Replacement Training® for youth who had three or more instances of assaultive behavior while in placement.
- Tattoo Removal
- Birth certificates and state ID cards
- Functional Family Therapy© for 60 youth
- Coordinated re-entry services and supports through the Houston District Office re-entry team
- Mentors
- Gang intervention/education curriculum

Of the 263 youth served, TYC has obtained 78 youth birth certificates and 12 youth state identification cards. The Reentry Project Specialist is following-up with residential locations to increase these numbers.

The results of the first year are very encouraging. The Harris County one-year re-arrest rate for a felony or misdemeanor level offense for gang-involved youth in FY 2010 (prior to GitRedy implementation) was 60.7%. The rates for one-year re-arrest for a violent offense for the same youth was 16.0%. While it is too early in the project to have a comparable one-year rate of re-arrest for GitRedy youth, using the population as of June 30, 2011, the rate of re-arrest for a felony or misdemeanor of the 151 youth placed onto parole or in a non-secure residential program during or after being enrolled in GitRedy is 27.8% (42 youth), and the rate for a violent offense thus far is 6.6% (10 youth). These comparison numbers look promising.

According to Program Manager Todd Novak, "The GitRedy team is excited about the opportunity the Second Chance Act grant has afforded to strengthen TYC's evidenced-based programming. The initial outcomes unfolding for Harris County's gang-involved youth are promising and the enhanced services are giving these youth the extra help they need to discover a pathway to success!"

OJJDP Provides Second Year of Funding

Due to the success of the GitRedy Program thus far, the OJJDP notified TYC on Sep. 22, 2011, that the program was awarded \$262,230 for a second year of funding. With this extended funding, the two grant-funded positions will continue along with the services provided during the initial grant period. Additionally, second-year funding will provide for virtual educational and vocational services, fees and books for GitRedy youth provided at either the Houston District Office or a TYC residential location through Navarro College. TYC currently has an MOU with Navarro College to provide virtual education services to youth in both secure and non-secure locations.



In cases where a tattoo was part of an initiation ritual or gang identification, the wearable "art" can make a strong, negative statement about the owner that can make it tough for them to take their place in normal society. As a former gang member complains, "Everyone knows that most businesses won't hire a person with a visible tattoo -- especially if it looks anything like a gang insignia. Well, maybe you can get a job where the customers won't see you. But a questionable tattoo on the back of your hand, or cheek, or arm sure makes it hard to get a good job with a future -- whether or not your tattoo is gang-related."

The Houston District Office tattoo removal program will begin serving youth who are gang involved and reside in Houston, Harris County, Texas as part of the GitRedy Initiative. Youth will have the opportunity to have these tattoos removed at no cost.

TYC Awarded PREA Grant

State and national leaders have noticed the important changes that are taking place in the juvenile justice field in Texas, including the leadership role Texas has taken in the implementation of the Prison Rape Elimination Act draft standards.

The Department of Justice – Office of Justice Programs (OJP) has awarded a \$599,967 grant to the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) to enhance the agency's efforts to improve the sexual safety of its youth. Funding for the agency's Comprehensive Approach for Promoting Sexual Safety for Youth (CAPSSY) Project comes from the FY11 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA): Demonstration Projects to Establish "Zero Tolerance" Cultures for Sexual Assault Program.

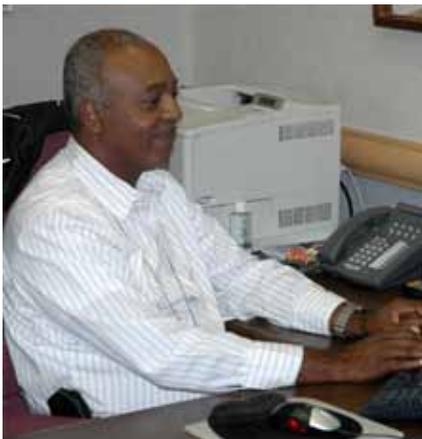
The project period is from Oct. 1, 2011 to Sep. 30, 2013. This grant was highly competitive and was awarded to jurisdictions who have demonstrated leadership, innovation and a commitment to improving the sexual safety of youth in the juvenile justice system.

Rooting out sexual abuse and misbehavior has long been a priority of the agency's leadership, as well as state lawmakers. While the agency has emphasized and enforced its "Zero Tolerance" policy for staff and youth sexual misbehavior, it has also vigorously sought out additional steps that can be taken in this area.

According to TYC Executive Director Cherie Townsend, "When I returned to TYC in 2008, conforming to national PREA standards and ensuring the sexual well-being of our youth was a top priority for me. We have committed significant financial and staff resources to strengthen and improve the culture of the agency, including staff training, greater use of technology, and improved reporting methods."

In April 2010, Ms. Townsend and the agency's leadership engaged The Moss Group, Inc. to conduct a critical review of the TYC system, including every facility and halfway house. The Moss Group's final report, *Systemic Assessment of the Texas Youth Commission's Sexual Safety Reform Strategies*, provided positive findings as well as specific opportunities to increase youth sexual safety. Many of these recommendations have already been implemented.

Beginning in October, with OJP funding and assistance from The Moss Group, Inc. and other collaborative partners, TYC will initiate the CAPSSY project, resulting in innovative and interwoven strategies to further improve previous reforms and sustain a sexually safe environment for its youth. CAPSSY strategies are designed to prevent, detect and respond to any incidence of sexual abuse and clearly establish and sustain a culture of "zero tolerance" for sexual misconduct in juvenile correctional facilities.



TYC PREA Coordinator Jerome Williams

Jerome Williams, the TYC PREA Coordinator, will be the project manager for the DOJ-funded CAPSSY program. He has been with TYC for 11 years, serving as a parole officer, inspector general, juvenile corrections specialist, facility

superintendent, and currently as the PREA Coordinator. As the project manager of the CAPSSY grant, Williams will be working on the following areas:

- *Ensuring the sexual safety of all youth in TYC custody – all facilities and on parole and contract programs*
- *Ensuring the agency's "zero tolerance" policy is strictly adhered to*
- *Along with the OIG, investigating all allegations of sexual assault, abuse, misconduct and harassment*
- *Ensuring all staff are trained in PREA*
- *Ensuring additional and specialized training is received by all TYC staff, including OIG*
- *Evaluating the agency's sexual safety reforms that have*

been implemented since 2007

- *Developing a database to effectively track PREA-related incidents and provide accurate reporting to the DOJ Bureau of Justice Statistics*
- *Developing a toolkit to be used by agency staff regarding best practices, lessons learned, and available trainings, which are outcome measures for the grant*
- *Working collaboratively with research, OIG, Youth Services and IRD*

Williams is excited about the opportunities presented by the CAPSSY grant and said his motivation is ensuring all youth are safe in TYC facilities, halfway houses, contract care and on parole.

"I want to be a change agent," Williams said. "I want to make sure that staff has the training they need to facilitate the safe environment. And, at the end of the day when I go home, I want to know that I did everything in my power to ensure that youth in TYC are safe."

Williams has worked for 39 years in the criminal justice field in Illinois, Arizona, Washington State and Texas. Twenty-eight of those years have been focused on youth.



9/11 - A National Day of Remembrance and Service

TYC Remembers in 2011

Youth and staff throughout the Texas Youth Commission took time on September 11 to remember the horrific terrorist attacks on our country that occurred 10 years ago and killed nearly three thousand innocent women, men and children. Numerous youth and staff participated in an agency wide teleconference during the week prior to Sep. 11, sharing their thoughts on how the events of that day changed their lives and the lessons we could learn from the tragedy. Some read verse and poetry they created for the memorial, others read the words of well-known figures who continue the struggle for peace. It was a very moving experience for everyone who took part in the memorial.

Individual campuses, halfway houses and district offices also sponsored local events to remember those that lost their lives that day, in addition to the heroes who responded to the events with courage and compassion. Below is a list of many of these activities:

Corsicana Residential Treatment Center

CRTC dedicated the week to remembering those who lost their lives. Students placed cups in the front fence with the initials of those who lost their lives, planted a “Mattie” tree, took part in a remembrance walk, and prepared gift bags for local firefighters. On Sunday, Sept. 11, youth took part in a “Peace Summit” and read the poem “For Our World” by Mattie Stepanek, the young peace advocate who died at age 13 from muscular dystrophy.

Evins Regional Juvenile Center (Edinburg)

Evins held a day of remembrance for victims and survivors of 9/11. Through the Education Department’s horticultural program, students built a flower bed to commemorate the event. Assistant Superintendent Jorge Gonzales’ opening remarks reminded those in attendance about the event that unfolded on 9/11 and described the heroic efforts of countless first responders who lost their lives and those that survived. Principal Ronaldo Chavez led the group in prayer. Student council members, a family member, and a volunteer released white balloons to mark the event. Throughout the week teachers provided lectures on 9/11 to the students in the classrooms.

Gainesville State School

Youth at Gainesville participated in the “Butterfly Project,” making paper butterflies with the names of 9/11 victims inscribed on them. The butterflies were hung on campus trees and in the City of Gainesville. Every dorm created a peace mural and creative writing contests were held on the topic of peace. Youth also wrote thank you cards and provided “goodie” bags for local firefighters.

Giddings State School

Giddings State School participated in a “Peace Project,” which involves youth earning bricks for positive or peaceful behavior. The goal is to build a wall of bricks representing the peace they are building. Different types of positive or peaceful behavior are rewarded with a certain color of brick. The campus also created paper butterflies in honor of each victim of 9/11.

McLennan Co. State Juvenile Correctional Facility (Mart)

Youth tied ribbons in the fence honoring victims of 9/11 and held a balloon-release ceremony and a Peace Summit led by student council representatives. Youth addressed thank you cards to local first responders, who were special guests at Friday’s ceremony. Youth gave thank you cards to local volunteer fire fighters, including two TYC volunteers who are firefighters, and to Scott & White EMS staff. Youth created memory walls made out of stars with more than 1,000 names that are displayed across campus. Students also read original poems at the ceremony.

Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Facility (Brownwood)

A Peace Summit was held to focus on building a more peaceful society, beginning first with the dormitories where youth live. Youth were encouraged to write original essays, poems, and songs, and create pieces of art. The PAWS program on campus demonstrated the importance of K-9 teams at the 9/11 crash sites.

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Remembrance continued

Ayres Halfway House (San Antonio)

Three guest speakers shared a “peace” message about diversity and getting along with others. Youth watched videos and documentaries on what happened on 9/11, focusing on history and the heroic acts of people. Youth and staff attended a citywide memorial service at New Life Christian Center, the location of the city’s 9/11 Memorial Site.

Cottrell Halfway House (Dallas)

Youth participated in a water bottle project, in which youth wrote at least 100 victim names on popsicle sticks, filled a bottle with colored sand, and placed the bottle in the flower bed in front of the building. Some youth and staff participated in a community event at Southwest Center Mall, holding pictures of the victims as part of the community ceremony on Saturday. They also wrote thank you cards to local firefighters, watched videos of 9/11 events, and prepared poems and essays for the Peace Summit.

McFadden Ranch (Roanoke)

Youth participated in a special program including Core Group Presentations, a recognition of local heroes, and refreshments. The youth also participated in a City of Keller Clean-Up Project. On Sept. 11, 2011, the youth observed a moment of silence at 8:45 a.m., 9:03 a.m., 9:42 a.m., and 10:10 a.m., the times the planes struck the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the crash of United Flight 93 in Pennsylvania. They also read victim accounts from that day.

Tamayo Halfway House (Harlingen)

Youth watched the movie “World Trade Center” to learn more about the devastating events of 9/11. On Sept. 7, employees from the Harlingen Fire Department, Harlingen Police Department, Harlingen EMS, and the Cameron County Sheriff’s Office were treated to a barbeque luncheon at Tamayo House in observation of 9/11. Approximately 67 guests attended the lunch. After meeting with administrators from the Harlingen Fire Department, staff decided Tamayo youth would assist the fire stations at least every other week with basic clean-up, which at times may include assisting in washing the fire trucks. This will serve as community service for participating youth.

Turman Halfway House (Austin)

Youth visited local military branches from Sept. 6-9 to talk with the recruiters about criteria to join the military. They also visited Camp Mabry on Saturday, Sept. 10, to participate in their memorial events. The youth made thank you cards for the different military branches that were delivered during the week. On Sunday, Sept. 11,



the youth visited the State Cemetery and released balloons for all of the fallen soldiers.

Fort Worth Parole Office

Youth on parole went to the Arlington Police Department on September 7th to honor the officers who participated in the 9/11 clean up and everyone else who protects and serves. Youth were rewarded with community service hours for writing essays about “What I can do to keep peace in my neighborhood or school” and for going to the police station to recognize the officers in honor of 9-11.

Houston Parole Office (HDO)

HDO had two 9-11 commemoration projects: a 9/11 display table in the lobby, and an artistic wall quilt made by staff, youth, volunteers, and parents of youth.

Faces of TYC

Jesse Watkins
McLennan County
SJCF



Mr. Watkins is the CareerScope Instructor and Tester at Mart. A former school teacher and assistant principal, he has been at Mart for six years.

“I like it here at Mart more than I did when I was in public school. As an assistant principal, I dealt with challenging kids. These are challenging kids, too, and they need someone that can reach them.”

Workers' Compensation Claims Continue to Decline

Employee safety has always been a primary concern of the Texas Youth Commission. In FY 2009, the agency highlighted improving workplace safety and reducing workers' compensation claims as an agency priority and we continue to see marked improvements in this area.

For Fiscal Year 2010, the agency's workers' compensation Injury Frequency Rate (IFR) declined to 20.99 percent over FY 2009. In FY 2011, the agency's IFR dropped again to 17.72 percent, with aggression claims (injuries due to youth aggression directed against staff) comprising 13.42 percent and the industrial IFR (commonly referred to as "slips, trips, and falls) at 4.31 percent.

This reduction in claims has also lowered the amount of money the agency has paid out in claims. Workers' compensation expenditures for the agency in FY 2011 totaled \$5.14 million, down from \$6.48 million

expended in FY 2010. Of that total, previous year claims accounted for 67 percent of those expenditures.

Much of the improvement in TYC's workers' compensation numbers is directly attributable to the increased attention being placed on workplace safety. Every campus has instituted safety programs designed to make employees aware of hazards and unsafe techniques as well as to address any unsafe conditions in the workplace. The agency has provided training to employees to implement Aggression Replacement Training® which is assisting youth to learn better ways to resolve conflict and anger. And, in July 2011 the agency adopted new policies to insure that there are increased consequences for serious assaults. As these new policies and techniques become ingrained in every employee's daily routine, we expect to see continued improvement in workers' safety and in workers' compensation claims.

Letter From a Former TYC Youth

The letter below is from a former TYC youth who was at Ron Jackson Unit 1 and then at Turman House until being discharged from TYC on his 21st birthday. One of the volunteers who assisted the youth while he was at Turman House has continued to mentor him and has helped him become a member of her church.

"It is quickly returning to the date of my own release nearly 5 years ago. So much has happened in my life, both good and bad. I am so extremely grateful to serve a GOD who truly loves me and has seen me through some very ugly, frightening, and lonely moments. I still review the Resocialization workbook for ideas on how to tackle the everyday battles in my life.

"I have attempted to give up during this journey of self-realization, but I am proudly able to stand tall today and yell through the storm, "I am still here!" I will not say that everything in TYC was perfect while I was there, but I am able to happily and gratefully admit that I did learn something, and that I am, and always will be, honored to share whatever I can with the guys who sit where I once sat, wondering who truly cared and if their future really is worth fighting for.

"So I really appreciate each opportunity I receive for being involved in a place where my heart resides. Thank you and the rest of the staff and Administration for allowing me such an opportunity. I hope and trust this finds you in a wonderful moment, encouraging you to never give up on a single person, in TYC or not. We

each have demons to fight and we each need someone who not only sees what we go through, but desperately seeking a hand that has gone through it already and is willing to do it again for our sake. Please continue, both you and the Turman House staff, to make a difference. It may not be appreciated at the moment but, in the end, it has the largest impact."

Faces of TYC

Jerral Leyva
Gainesville State
School



Mr. Leyva is a JCO IV. He has been at GSS for 15 years.

"I've seen a lot of successes and I've also seen some recommitments. Our key to getting youth involved and dealing with their futures is being involved in their lives, being role models, and setting standards."

Crockett Staff and Volunteers Have Final Banquet

Contributed lantha Coleman

Crockett State School staff hosted a final Volunteer Appreciation Banquet on July 11th, from 5:30pm till 7:30p.m. All volunteers from Houston County and the surrounding areas, including staff that had volunteered hours of their free time to clean and work with youth as mentors, were invited. More than 40 volunteers and staff, along with 13 youth, attended the banquet.

They all had a great time and ate plenty of roast, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, salad, rolls and various desserts. The volunteers were presented with "Special Thanks" awards for being a valuable part of the TYC mission and for playing an active role in the lives of Crockett State School youth.

Superintendent Donald Brooks greeted and spoke with the volunteers, expressing the appreciation of the Crockett staff and everyone throughout TYC. A TYC youth gave a welcome speech to the volunteers, telling

them how much they had meant to every Crockett State School youth. TYC Manager of Volunteer Services Tammy Holland was the guest speaker and she presented eight Presidential Volunteer Service Awards. Frank Smith was presented with the Gold Award for volunteering more 500 hours within 12 months. Deputy Director of Youth Services Alan Walters gave closing words.

Several attendees remarked that this would remain one of their fondest memories of their time with TYC.



Ron Jackson Holds Vacation Bible School

Contributed by Allison Voss

On August 27-28th, 29 young ladies at the Ron Jackson SJCC participated in the second

annual Vacation Bible School held at the Texas Youth

Commission unit. The event, which was made possible by the support of TYC volunteers, allowed the young ladies to participate in events such as arts and crafts, recreation, worship, and Bible study.

For many of the students, this was the first time that they have ever participated in a Vacation Bible School program. The focus Bible verse for the weekend was Psalm 25:4-5. The young ladies were encouraged to shine by utilizing the gifts that God has uniquely given to each of them.

Gainesville State School To Be Recognized on CBS

The Gainesville State School and its football team will be the subject of a national television show in November. Produced by Intersport media, the school will be one of the featured segments on CBS's "Courage in Sports" television show. Administrators and coaches from Gainesville State School were interviewed about the mission of the Texas Youth Commission, the youth that are sent to the agency, and the different incentives that are used to reach the students.

Because it is a sports show, the segment will focus on the football team and the requirements a youth must meet in order to be a part of the sports program. The camera crew followed the Gainesville Tornadoes to their game against the Prince of Peace High School in Carrollton on Friday, Sept. 23.

At this point, the one-hour show is expected to air on Sunday, Nov. 13, during the afternoon. An email will be sent to all

employees when TYC is notified of the exact time the show will be aired. Congratulations to Superintendent Gwan Hawthorne, Assistant Superintendent Mike Studamire, Coach Walt Scott and everyone else who represented what TYC is all about – changing young lives and in so doing improving community safety!



Troupe d' Jour Presents at Corsicana Residential Treatment Center

Contributed by Dianna Hughes

Corsicana Residential Treatment Center (CRTC) students were treated to a five-line writing experience workshop in mid-September by Troupe d' Jour members



Hal Evans and Tracy Hults. Based in Houston, Troupe d' Jour has been working to meet the educational and cultural arts needs of students across the nation since 1994, presenting to more than 50,000 students each year.

CRTC students listened to a short history of theater, an explanation of the tragedy and comedy masks, and were then given an exciting opportunity to write the opening scene of a play and have the professional actors perform them. Laughter was prevalent as students started with sentences like "What is that smell?"

Evans and Hults have been coming to CRTC for years entertaining and educating the students with their stories of the theater, acting, writing, and the concept of writing creatively. Each year the CRTC students enjoy the presentation and this year was no exception!

"Imagine the Possibilities" Banquet: HDO Honors Youth Education Successes at Houston Gala

Contributed by Joy Nyberg, HDO Volunteer and former TYC employee

Budget cuts may have limited the number of youths who can participate in non-public education programs in Harris County, but that has not stopped the Houston Area Resource Council for Texas Youth from celebrating the youth's accomplishments.

This year's "Imagine the Possibilities" Education Banquet was held on May 19, 2011 at the Crown Plaza River Oaks Hotel. This event drew nearly 150 people honoring Houston area youth who have achieved educational and prevocational success.

Broadcast journalist Kim Davis from Houston's NBC News station KPRC served as the Mistress of Ceremonies for the occasion.

Mrs. Vernon Broussard, former TYC employee and current TYC Volunteer, was honored for her years of dedication to the youth. Mrs. Broussard accepted recognition stating, "I believe all children can achieve." This ongoing belief will continue to drive her to reach out and help Harris County youth far into the future.

For 18 years, the Houston Area Resource Council for Texas Youth, a group of Houston area community volunteers, has hosted a banquet to recognize youth assigned to the Texas Youth Commission in Houston

who are making remarkable progress after a history of juvenile crime. The group was founded by four dedicated women, Mrs. Broussard being one of them, who continue to support these youth in a variety of ways through their volunteering.

Keynote speaker for the Education Banquet was Harris County Department of Education Public Information Officer Jim Schul. He provided an inspirational speech discussing characteristics of greatness. Asking for audience participation in recognizing famous quotes, he connected with youth by quoting famous sports icons. His message encouraged youth to take their newly developed skills and implement them with "doing the right thing" attitude.



Turman House “Special Event” Celebrates Successes

Contributed by Sandra Dreesen

On July 27 Turman House hosted a Summer Event recognizing student accomplishments during the summer months as well as recognizing staff and volunteers.

During the last three months, nine youth obtained their forklift certificate which will assist them in securing employment. In addition, three youth completed an “Essential Office Skills Course” through the Austin Area Urban League where they learned basic office skills, resume writing, and interview skills.

One youth recently completed a basic construction skills course through Austin Community College (ACC) and is now completing a basic electrician course through ACC. Additionally, four youth who are currently employed in the community were recognized. Each of these youth are learning valuable job skills that will help them become more successful once they are released home.

Turman House also completed a second group of students who participated in a Creative Writing Group sponsored through Gemini Ink and the Austin Independent School District. For 12 weeks, students learned how to put their thoughts and feelings into words by writing short stories and poetry, as well as learning how to express themselves through art. All of their creative works will be placed into a bound book for publication.

While school was out for summer, 16 students attended tutoring with volunteers from the Austin Learning Center. Each student received a gift card from McDonald’s for their hard work in learning. One student in particular spent a lot of time with the tutors and his hard work paid off as he earned his GED a few weeks ago. The Austin Area Volunteer Council gave the young man a \$25 gift card for his accomplishment.

During the Summer Event, various volunteers and staff were recognized for their contributions and dedication to Turman House youth throughout the year by providing incentives for the youth, remembering them for special holidays and birthdays and countless other ways they brighten up the lives of the young men at Turman House.

Evins Celebrates Graduations



Pictured left to right: Youth LP, Youth PH, Principal Ronaldo Chavez, and Youth RS.

Contributed by Fidel Garcia

The Evins Regional Juvenile Center celebrated youth graduations on July 22nd. Three students received their high school diplomas and 16 others received their GEDs. Principal Ronaldo Chavez presented each youth with their high school diplomas and GED certificates. The keynote speaker was State District 36 Representative Sergio Munoz Jr., who spoke on the importance of getting a second chance and being productive members of society. In honor of their accomplishments, Mr. Munoz, indicated that he would be presenting the Evins Center with a flag that flew over the state capitol and another flag presented by U.S. Representative Henry Cuellar, which flew over the U.S. Capitol.

Faces of TYC

Lizzie Thomas

Corsicana Residential Treatment Center

Ms. Thomas is a JCO IV. She has been with TYC for just under four years and transferred to CRTC from AI Price in September.



“I have a passion for kids and, if I can make a difference in just one life, I’ll have done something good.”

Volleyball Camp Held at Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex

Contributed by Penny Riggs

Howard Payne University Volleyball Head Coach Ken Carver provided an extensive volleyball camp to 17 young ladies at Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex. Coach Carver came to campus for eight days during the first two weeks of July to coach the students on form, passing, bumping, spiking, serving and setting. The students showed excellent teamwork and sportsmanship and continuously encouraged one another in their efforts.



Mr. Carver said, “Whether you make a play that is great or terrible, it’s in the past – so move on.” This is good advice on the court and off.

The group is in a class called Team Sports, in which each girl has earned the privilege to participate. They are preparing to demonstrate the skills learned in on- and off-campus games.

TYC staff who arranged and assisted with the Camp were Coach Wells, Coach Galloway, Coach Bailey and Coach Larrea.

Evins “Splash Event” Promotes Peace Treaty

Contributed by Fidel Garcia

Approximately 70 youth at the Evins Regional Juvenile facility recently participated in a Super Splash Event. The event was hosted by the Evins facility for all youth who have signed the facility’s “Peace Treaty” and kept their commitment to be “gang” neutral while at Evins.



leave their gangs, but asking that they remain neutral while doing their treatment program at the facility.”

Jorge Gonzalez, assistant superintendent of the facility, notes that when youth arrive at Evins, they are afforded the opportunity to sign the Peace Treaty and become part of an ever-changing culture that promotes good behavior, team work and conflict resolution through mediation. Mr. Gonzalez added that “we are not telling the youth to

As a reward for signing the treaty and complying with its terms, youth are often rewarded with incentives that reinforce their good behavior and participation. All 70 youth were treated with hamburgers, chips, soft drinks and allowed the opportunity to enjoy the Super Splash Waterslide. Radio Station FM 102.5 provided a disk jockey for entertainment. Coordinating the event was Gang Coordinator Ramon Briseno, Francisco Campos, Eduardo Garza and several other Evins staff.

If you have articles or story ideas that should be featured in the TYC Spotlight, email the Spotlight editor at Jim.Hurley@tyc.state.tx.us or call at (512) 424-6016.