

Long-Term DYS Employees Reflect on Years of Service

DYS Communications Chief Kim Jump recently spoke with the agency's most tenured employees to get their perspective on DYS over the years. Five staff members, with a combined total of more than 196 years of service to DYS, shared their thoughts on what has kept them dedicated to the agency.

Since 1971, when the agency was still known as the Ohio Youth Commission, John Turk has been a teacher at Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility. Although he has retired twice, he keeps coming back to interact with youth, who often refer to him as "grandpa." He holds high expectations for his students and himself and explains, "You should expect that you will impact youth." He went on to say, "When the youth leave, I want to say that I did all that I could for them."

Art Bryant, a youth specialist at Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility, has been with the agency since June 1978. All of Mr. Bryant's 43+ years of service to DYS have been provided at Indian River. His motivation is to "help get the kids on the right path and keep them out of prison." He described how meaningful it has been for him over the years to hear from youth who left DYS and succeeded. In particular, it was important to him that he was a young man who became a nurse.

Similarly, Stephen Young, who now works in personnel at Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility but started out teaching computer-aided instruction in 1979, described how rewarding it has been to hear from youth doing well in the community. "I had a youth come back and show me the flash cards I made him," Mr. Young said. "It made me feel good."

Shayne Rowlands, a juvenile parole supervisor in the Northern Region, with over 35 years at DYS, explained the progress he has seen parole staff make. "Parole staff are in the facilities and communicating with facility staff more than ever before," he said. "By working closely, we build a bond and a relationship. Together we can work out the best program for the youth, involving the family and community partners."

With 36 1/2 years under his belt at DYS, Earl Bryant, a youth specialist at Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility, explained that once he began his career in juvenile corrections, he never really considered anything else. "I just stayed," he explained. "And I do what I'm here to do."

While tenured employees agreed that much has changed over the years, the importance of accountability has remained constant. Youth Specialist Ricardo Vargas, who began at Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility in September 1981, put it this way: "There has to be accountability on everyone's part—the youth and all of the staff." He explained further, "The youth have to earn the right. Hold them accountable. If they do something wrong, don't let them slide."



Staff Appreciation

Dear DYS Staff,

At this milestone of 35 years as an agency, I would like to honor you for the part you play in bringing our core values to life, committing to excellence, and impacting so many youth, families, and communities.

Achievement and success are not by accident. Progress is a result of working hard, trying new ideas, making adjustments, following through, and staying consistent. I applaud your efforts.

As we celebrate our anniversary, please accept my appreciation.

Sincerely,

Harvey J. Reed, Director

DYS 35th Anniversary

November 23,
1981 – 2016

A Message from Director Harvey J. Reed

November 2016



This month marks an exciting milestone for us as the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) turns 35 years old! To celebrate, we have created a special anniversary newsletter, looking back on our achievements and thanking our colleagues, partners, and community stakeholders who have helped make Ohio a national leader in juvenile justice.

The path hasn't been easy. A decade ago, facilities were crowded, and options for serving youth were limited. Much less was known about effective prevention and intervention programs for youth.

DYS has been on a journey of transformation that has included youth assessment and placement, treatment within the facilities, processes for release and reentry, and parole supervision. Along with juvenile courts, the agency now relies on a menu of programs and interventions to serve youth closer to their families and in the least restrictive, appropriate setting. The intensity of treatment and community supervision is now matched with a youth's risk to reoffend. As a result, the DYS average daily population has decreased from 1,784 youth in 2006 to around 485 youth.

But there's more work to do, and the time is right for shining an even brighter light on juvenile justice. We are concentrating on collecting data that matters, finding better ways of helping even more youth succeed, and ensuring best practices to steer youth in a positive direction. By doing so, we will close off the juvenile crime pipeline so that fewer young people get caught up in it, and so that once youth inside are ready to exit, they can leave it behind permanently, join our communities, and begin productive adult lives.

You can read more in the pages that follow. Also remember that you can always follow our progress at dys.ohio.gov.

Harvey J. Reed, Director

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Looking Back

1981

In 1980-1981, House Bill 440 created the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS), with William K. Willis appointed as our agency's first Director. Willis was previously Chairman of DYS' predecessor, the Ohio Youth Commission. In addition to the creation of DYS, HB 440 removed youth charged with misdemeanors and status offenses from the state correctional jurisdiction and mandated that a minimum length of stay be instituted.

1983-1985

When Richard Celeste took office as Governor in 1983, he appointed James Rogers, Ph.D., to head DYS. Rogers, who had directed the public library system in Cleveland, made a number of changes both in the administrative structure of the department and in its policies. Rogers reactivated the concept of continuity of care. The idea of an aftercare contract was developed, and for the first time, meetings were expected to be held in the institutions with the juvenile, his or her parents, and DYS staff members. However, with allegations of misconduct, Rogers' term ended with his abrupt resignation.

1985-1986

In April 1985, Governor Celeste appointed J. Thomas Mullen, a social worker and youth advocate from Cleveland, to the position of Director of DYS. Mullen saw as his primary responsibility the restoration of public confidence in the agency and staff morale.

1987-2004

Geno Natalucci-Persichetti was appointed Director in January 1987. Natalucci-Persichetti, the longest running Director in the agency's history, had professional experience in institutional and community-based corrections with both juveniles and adults.

He placed a major emphasis on the professionalism of DYS through initiatives like accreditation by the American Correctional Association (ACA) and the first DYS Training Academy. He also established community corrections facilities (CCFs) and implemented RECLAIM Ohio.

One of Director Geno's strongest legacies, however, was the relationship that he forged between DYS and the juvenile court judges. He worked to change a once adversarial association to one of mutual respect and collaboration that still exists today.

2005-2010

Thomas J. Stickrath was appointed Director by Governor Bob Taft in January 2005. Building on the former leadership's accomplishments, Stickrath guided DYS to become the first juvenile correctional system in the nation to achieve full accreditation by ACA. Director Stickrath also led the department in the development of a community volunteer and mentorship program, instituted the development of a statewide system of risk/need assessment to be used by juvenile courts, and aggressively pursued and was awarded the largest grant in DYS history, \$14 million, to address literacy concerns within the agency's youth population.

2011

Christine Money served briefly as Director, and Martha Spohn acted as Interim Director. On March 1, 2011, Harvey J. Reed was appointed Director of DYS by Governor John R. Kasich. Director Reed, with a degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati, has more than 37 years of experience in Ohio's juvenile corrections system including eight years as the Superintendent of the Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center.

2012-2016

Under Director Reed's leadership, the agency has committed to strengthen family relationships. In 2012, DYS established a free, monthly bus service to help families in need of transportation connect with youth. In 2015, all facilities began offering visitation to family members 7-days-a-week.

The *Path to Safer Facilities* has strived to increase preventative measures, enhance meaningful activities for youth, revise intervention strategies to hold youth accountable, and it has eliminated the use of seclusion as a punishment.

Educational and career opportunities have expanded to include post-secondary education; apprenticeships; supervised off-grounds employment; and the O.N.E.-Stop program, a partnership with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services that provides youth graduates at each facility with access to focused employment, training, and support services.

The agency has prioritized staff safety and wellness because in order for youth to get healthy, staff must be healthy. Ongoing cultural assessments, enhanced training and professional developments retention strategies, and well-being initiatives for staff support a safer and healthier environment for both youth and staff.

DYS Today: Serving the Right Youth in the Right Environment with the Right Treatment

Director Reed has built upon RECLAIM Ohio to further support communities in research-supported programs. Community investments have increased by \$10.3 million when comparing Fiscal Year 2011 to Fiscal Year 2016, with funds to help youth get back on track through Targeted RECLAIM, Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice, Competitive RECLAIM, Detention Alternatives and Enhancements and other reinvestments (in accordance with House Bill 153), and Community Corrections Facilities.

Targeted RECLAIM, established in Fiscal Year 2010, funds evidence-based and model interventions, focused on a youth's risk to re-offend, to courts that have historically sent the most youth to the department; participating juvenile courts have committed to reduce—and then maintain—DYS admissions through the use of these funded interventions.

First launched in 2006 and expanded in Fiscal Years 2010 and 2014, the Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice initiative provides for the identification and home-based

treatment of youth with co-occurring juvenile justice and behavioral health issues, up to and including the diversion of deep-end youthful offenders with serious behavioral health needs from DYS.

Competitive RECLAIM, which started in 2015, helps juvenile courts and communities meet the needs of their young people with competitive grants to fund unique, research-backed diversion and intervention programs.

Most recently, the Detention Alternatives and Enhancements Initiative reserves detention placement for the right youth, addresses challenges of troubled youth early, and improves detention services and conditions of confinement.

Core Values

- All people can change.
- Treat everyone the way you would like to be treated.
- Every life matters.
- We strive to provide youth everything they need to succeed.
- We want the best for youth, and we believe in families.
- We believe in being good role models.

Accomplishments

Accreditation

DYS has maintained full accreditation by the American Correctional Association (ACA) since first achieved in 2004. All juvenile correctional facilities have maintained accreditation along with the parole regions, the DYS training academy and central office. Sites and their programs are reaccredited on a three-year cycle. All community corrections facilities achieved accreditation by ACA in 2009.

National Honors

In 2015, Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility won top honors from the national Performance-based Standards Learning Institute for the second time in three years. Both awards recognized the facility's commitment to improving the lives of youth in custody.

Safeguards for Youth

All of the juvenile correctional facilities and community corrections facilities, as well as Lighthouse Youth Services—Paint Creek, have met all of the standards of the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act, demonstrating that the safety of youth is the agency's top priority.

The law, known as PREA, seeks to improve the detention, prevention and prosecution of sexual harassment and abuse in correctional facilities across the country. Ohio's three state-operated juvenile correctional facilities, twelve community corrections facilities, and Lighthouse Youth Center -Paint Creek passed external audits, which are required under the law, during the first cycle of audits from 2014 to 2016.



Shining a Light on Juvenile Justice

Juvenile justice has been transforming throughout the country. Ohio and other states have moved toward research-backed efforts to improve outcomes for youth, families and communities.

At the heart of transformation, efforts seek to protect public safety through the use of effective, rehabilitative services and supports to youth in contact with the juvenile justice system.

The following are some of the best practices that the agency has embraced.

Detention Alternatives

The agency's Detention Alternatives and Enhancements Initiative is helping youth—especially those first involved with juvenile justice—get the help they need to prevent diving deeper into the system. As a Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative site, Ohio is committed to the use of secure detention only when necessary.

Diversion

Because Ohio has a wide range of treatment options for youthful offenders, the vast majority of youth are able to be served locally, reducing commitments to facilities, lessening out-of-home placements, and getting better results through the use of local, evidence-based programs and services.

Treatment

Facility-based services include education, behavioral health, behavior management, and rehabilitative programming. The facilities are geared to provide the highest level of accountability for youth and rely on research-based, developmentally appropriate, individualized, strength-based, and trauma-informed practices.

End of Seclusion as a Punishment

Ohio was among the first states to end the use of seclusion as a punishment in their state facilities. Now part of a growing movement, organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention have called for other jurisdictions to end the use of solitary confinement except in those instances when used as a temporary response for those youth who pose an immediate threat to themselves or others.

Family Engagement

Youth who make the most progress in DYS have parents, guardians or other persons who provide support and take an active part in their treatment. DYS staff invite family members to participate in their young person's treatment throughout his or her stay at DYS and while on parole. Further, the agency has adopted a broad definition of "family" that includes biological family members, extended family members, godparents, foster siblings, and other key individuals such as mentors, teachers, faith-based leaders, and coaches.

Reentry Planning

Reentry planning is comprehensive and starts the day a youth arrives at DYS utilizing evidence-based practices and approaches. Plans focus on establishing a continuity of care that will transition into the community, addressing challenges youth are likely to face including education, employment,

housing, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and reconnecting with families.

Community Partnerships

DYS is fortunate to have many community partnerships. Whether it's personnel with the juvenile courts, sister agencies, providers, volunteers, or others, community partnerships leverage resources, empower families, and build communities, resulting in meaningful change for Ohio's youth.

While more information is still needed to better understand what services directly impact recidivism, DYS programming and treatment for youth is resulting in success. Each year three release cohorts are observed. Youth who have been released for one, two, and three years are tracked to determine if they have been readmitted to DYS (from either a revocation of parole status or a new felony charge) or admitted to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. As detailed in the chart below, the one-year rate for recidivism reached a new low of 19.9%.

CY	1-year	2-year	3-year
2005	30.0%	43.9%	52.1%
2006	30.4%	43.6%	50.9%
2007	26.7%	40.8%	49.1%
2008	27.5%	40.5%	48.0%
2009	24.2%	39.2%	46.4%
2010	22.7%	37.2%	45.0%
2011	22.9%	38.1%	47.2%
2012	26.0%	39.0%	46.5%
2013	24.7%	39.6%	
2014	19.9%		



DYS: Now and Then

2016



Department of Youth Services



1981-1983

A glimpse of DYS today compared to how the agency was described in its first biennial report (1981-1983) to legislators

—Mission and Vision—

DYS Now The mission of the Department of Youth Services is to improve Ohio's future by habilitating youth and empowering families and communities. The vision of the agency is a safer Ohio: one youth, one family and one community at a time.

DYS Then "The mission of the Department of Youth Services is to provide and support a series of statewide services for youth who are in contact with the juvenile justice system. For the purpose of public safety, the Department of Youth Services has the primary responsibility to provide institutional treatment and supervision to the felony offender. The responsibility for unruly and misdemeanor offenders rests with the local community."

—Facilities and Parole Offices—

DYS Now DYS has three state-operated facilities, four alternative placements, and two regional parole offices.

DYS Then DYS had nine state-operated facilities and seven regional parole offices.

—Family Members—

DYS Now The agency prioritizes families. By supporting positive relationships between youth and their families, DYS is strengthening relationships, helping families address ongoing issues in the home and empowering parents and guardians to hold youth accountable. Keeping families engaged in their youth's treatment and programming increases the chances of rehabilitation, assists in transitioning the youth back into the community and ultimately helps the youth get on the right path.

DYS Then The 1981-1983 biennial report mentioned little about the role of family. It was noted that the Mohican Youth Center provided both individual and family therapies. Seven of the facilities had a "foster grandparent program" in which senior citizen volunteers provided twenty hours of service each week to be "surrogate grandparents to the youth, sharing their time, their experiences and their wisdom in a non-authoritative relationship."

—Community Support—

DYS Now In partnership with the juvenile courts, DYS strives to serve youth where they have the best chance to lead successful, law-abiding lives. The agency supports community programming for the low to moderate risk population of youth who are more effectively served in appropriate, less costly community settings. Programs include RECLAIM Ohio, Targeted RECLAIM, Competitive RECLAIM, the Detention Alternatives and Enhancements Initiative, Youth Services Grant, Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BH/JJ), and community corrections facilities.

DYS Then The agency had "a role in encouraging and assisting local communities in assuming the responsibility for providing the delinquent offender residential placement, youth development and treatment services." Support included "developing standards and guidelines, providing substantial subsidies to support local services and offering technical assistance." Subsidies included the Youth Services Grant, the Delinquency Facility Maintenance Subsidy, and the Detention Operations and Maintenance Subsidy.

