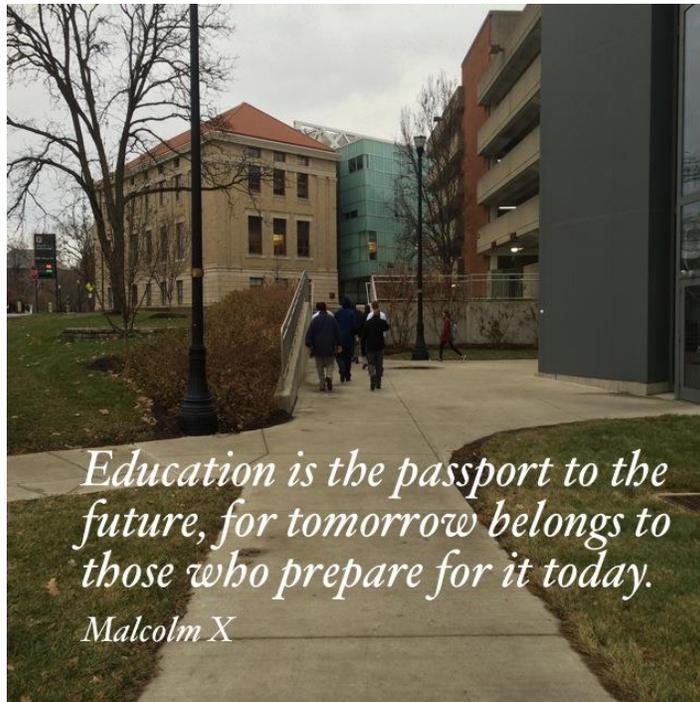


**January 2015
Preparing for the Future**



The dawn of a new year is an exciting time. Perhaps it is hard to say goodbye to holidays spent with family and friends, but such disappointment is often tempered by the prospect of a fresh new start. We all get to begin with a clean slate in 2015.

For youth leaving one of our facilities, preparing for a fresh start is about more than simply finishing required time or paperwork. Preparing youth for a successful adult life is a significant undertaking. It requires rigorous treatment, quality education, and intensive rehabilitative services. We're committed to providing opportunities for youth that will make them better and help them grow.

I'm especially proud of a recent experience that some of our deserving youth received to help them grasp the value of a college education. Two weeks ago, four young men from the Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility had the chance to tour the campus of *The Ohio State University* (OSU) along with DYS staff. This was a life-changing experience for these youth. The experience jolted them into thinking about a new vision for their lives. Dr. Terrell Strayhorn, Director of the Center for Higher Education Enterprise (CHEE) at OSU, encouraged the young men to "...think of college as a time of opportunity and growth. It provides a space for you to construct what you want for your life."



Youth and staff listen to words of wisdom from Archie Griffin

OSU Athletic Director Gene Smith met with the youth. He told them, “You have faced adversity. Draw from that experience and the lessons learned. Accomplish something great.”

Archie Griffin, President and CEO of the OSU Alumni Association, and two-time Heisman Trophy winner, also spent some time with the group. He told the boys about a challenging time in his life playing football for the Cincinnati Bengals, explaining, “Everywhere we went, people kept telling us how bad we were. It was tough.”

With some changes in place and lots of determination, the Bengals turned around a losing streak. “That’s what life is all about,” Archie said. “How you handle those tough times is what’s important.”

In our profession, we are tasked with providing the knowledge and skills youth need to overcome challenges including criminogenic behavior, substance abuse, behavioral health, negative peer influences, assaultive behavior, and falling behind in schoolwork. Thank you for your commitment to high-needs youth. We have a solid team in place, dedicated volunteers, and some of the best court and community partners to help us along the way.

This coming year will, again, be all about providing the best services possible for youth, families, and communities. Our goals include:

- Increase preventative measures, enhance meaningful activities for youth, and reduce acts of violence on youth and staff
- Empower families by increasing accessibility to their youth through department initiatives
- Increase collaboration between parole, facilities, the Release Authority, and communities
- Invest in our employees by providing opportunities for training and skill development needed to retain staff and advance careers

Because of you, and because we know we have so much to offer our youth, I have such great confidence in our future. We are ready to make a difference for each and every youth touched by DYS.