Happy Reentry Awareness Week!

Did you know that DYS releases around 450 youth back into the community each year? On average, youth spend 12 ½ months in a facility. During this time, it is critical that youth, staff, family members, and community partners work together in an integrated manner to support a youth’s treatment plan and to help the youth succeed in achieving the goals of the plan.

For us, reentry is the philosophy of preparing and planning for youth to return to their homes and community. The approach is comprehensive and begins when a youth first arrives at DYS, focusing on establishing a continuity of care that will transition into the community so that youth can reintegrate safely and successfully. In particular, we are planning early for critical reentry needs, including:

- Physical needs – shelter, food, clothing, and healthcare
- Employment
- Education and job training
- Continued behavioral health and substance abuse treatment
- Guidance to help youth avoid criminal behavior and continue progressing

Our reentry-related highlights include:

- Improving policies to address what every youth needs
- Preparing driver training simulators and courses
- Making ServSafe Food Handler training available once per quarter
- Expanding forklift training opportunities for youth
• Offering job fairs; dedicated school fairs coming soon
• Bonding through Books (audio recordings) to keep young parents connected to their children and developing healthy bonds even while away
• Providing CLOSE to Home (Connecting Loved Ones Sooner Than Expected) free busing to facilities – In 2017, we provided a total of 71 trips to 489 passengers
• Youth preparing to leave Circleville JCF are participating in a job readiness program thanks to a partnership with the Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio, IMPACT Community Action, Eckerd Connects, OhioGuidestone, and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
• Youth returning to Cleveland, Lorain, and Lake Counties are being referred to the Cleveland Summer Y.O.U. Program (Youth Opportunities Unlimited), a nonprofit workforce development program for ages 14-24
• Youth at Indian River JCF are connecting with businesses and organizations including UPS, Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics, Goodwill Industries, and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, through ongoing speaker series
• Team up with the Office of the Ohio Public Defender to offer quarterly sealing and expungement clinics

Are you looking for resources for returning youth? Browse resources on our webpage here.