DYS provides youth with opportunities to give back through community service. By giving back, youth gain a sense of responsibility. They learn what it means to make and keep a commitment. Youth practice how to be on time for a job, do their best, and be proud of the results. It is a reminder that we are all responsible for the well-being of our communities.

Last week DYS recognized the youth who contributed the most community service in Calendar Year 2018. Director Gies, Assistant Director Walburn, Community Engagement Liaison Heimberger, Juvenile Parole Officer Pendlebury and Village Network staff member Reaves gathered at The Barn Restaurant in Smithville for dinner to celebrate former Youth E. The young man, who is now on parole, completed 515.5 total hours of community service last year, the highest number of any DYS youth!

The majority of Youth E’s community service was conducted off grounds at the Akron-Canton Food Bank, True North Ministry, and the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery. He also completed service within the facility by making items for Crayons to Computers. Youth E explained that he most enjoyed his time at True North Ministry where he was able to contribute to the daily functions of the farm. The 19-year-old was released from Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility in early December 2018.
Youth E is doing well on parole. He is participating in residential treatment at the Village Network. He is also involved with Goodwill Industries of Wayne & Holmes Counties, working about 27 hours a week. Goodwill helped him secure professional clothing for his job as well as prepare financial aid paperwork for attending Hocking College beginning in August 2019. These supports are providing valuable training and programming, helping Youth E as he transitions to independence. He continues to give back, already completing 24 hours of community service on parole.

Those at the dinner acknowledged the youth’s commitment to serving others and his promising future. Youth E had high praise for Juvenile Parole Officer Pendlebury and for Ms. Reaves with Village Network. He also reflected on his time at the facility, expressing his appreciation for Unit Manager Robbins.

If you interested in having your nonprofit organization, school, church, or government agency benefit from community service by our youth, you can check out our website and/or contact Ryan Heimberger, Community Engagement Liaison, at (614) 466-3407 or at Ryan.Heimberger@DYS.Ohio.Gov.