Reforming release for successful reentry
This month marks the one-year anniversary of the DYS release reform. Individual reentry plans are now being developed and meetings are held to inform youth of release expectations. Nearly all of the release hearings are now done face to face, with the remainder held via video conference, web camera or telephone.

Volunteer partnership recognized
The 3rd Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church Prison Ministry is being recognized for its exemplary service to youth throughout DYS as a recipient of a 2011 ServeOhio Award. The AME church has been a vital volunteer partner with the agency during the past year. In addition to AME members volunteering their time individually with our youth, the church has conducted Youth Summits at all of the DYS facilities. Each Youth Summit was designed to incorporate an educational component involving a partnership with a local college, an employment component, a faith component, a sports component and activities with youth.

Strengthening parole services for successful reentry
We have provided training in EPICS (Effective Practices in Community Supervision) and ongoing coaching is being provided by the University of Cincinnati (UC) to all juvenile parole officers. The EPICS model changes supervision from the traditional compliance monitor role to one of being a helping/teaching source of support. In addition, DYS has piloted a video communicator project between the Toledo Region and Indian River JCF, allowing families to visit more often and improve access to benefits and resources.

Expansion of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
Research indicates that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is effective in reducing recidivism. UC is assisting DYS and community partners in the development and implementation of CBT programs. Two Community Corrections Facilities were converted to CBT in 2010 with four more underway or planned in 2011.

The Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) implemented statewide
Ohio has implemented the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) to ensure that decisions are made consistently about youth throughout the juvenile justice continuum. The OYAS is a uniform risk/needs assessment process that provides the juvenile justice system with a standardized process to evaluate the risk to reoffend and criminogenic needs. As of December 2010, 1,434 total people have been trained and certified to use the OYAS and over 28,000 assessments have been completed in the web-based system.

Community-based services
DYS awarded Targeted RECLAIM funding to the six counties that historically commit the most youth to DYS (Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Montgomery, and Summit). These funds have been used to implement model or evidence-based programs to divert appropriate lower-risk youth from DYS. In addition, DYS and the Ohio Department of Mental Health awarded Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) funding to the same six counties receiving Targeted RECLAIM funding. The purpose of BHJJ is to enhance and expand the local child-serving systems’ ability to identify, assess, evaluate and treat serious juvenile offenders having behavioral health needs and their families through the provision of evidence-based and effective services that are culturally appropriate.

The reduction in admissions from the six counties has been 27% for the first part of FY 2011 as compared to the same timeframe for FY 2010, following a 39% reduction from FY 2009 to FY 2010.