

May EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

MT. MEIGS CAMPUS
Ms. Veronica Harris



VACCA CAMPUS
Ms. Victoria Anderson

AUTAUGA CAMPUS

As it is customary for Autauga to celebrate all staff in the month of May, we do not have an employee of the month for this month.



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

To connect with youth involved in the justice system and to change the trajectory of their lives.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

June 2025 Newsletter

Dear DYS Employees,

This month I would like to do something different and yield my space to one of our employees who agrees to return each month and challenge our new employees during their completion ceremony. His message captures the department's mission, vision and values very well. It is worth sharing this with all our employees, whether we are new to the department or have been here a while. **Thank you Mr. Floyd.**

The Power of One – Making a Difference in a Child's Life

"Good [morning/afternoon/evening], everyone.

First, congratulations on reaching this incredible milestone! Today marks the beginning of a journey that is not just a career but a calling—a calling to guide, mentor, and change the lives of children who need it most.

You have chosen a path that is not easy. You will work with children who have been labeled as "troubled," "difficult," or even "lost causes." But I challenge you to see beyond those labels. Because behind every tough exterior is a child who has been hurt, abandoned, or misunderstood. And behind every mistake is a chance for redemption.

You are stepping into a role that requires patience, resilience, and an unwavering belief in second chances. Some days will be tough. There will be moments when you question if you're making a difference. But I want you to remember this: your presence matters. A kind word, a listening ear, a firm but fair hand—these small acts can change the trajectory of a young person's life.

Think about the teachers, mentors, or family members who helped you get here today. Someone believed in you, and now it is your turn to pass that belief forward.

You won't always see immediate results. Change takes time. But never underestimate the power of planting a seed. One conversation, one lesson, one moment of kindness—it all adds up. And one day, a child you worked with will come back and say, "Because of you, I didn't give up."

So as you step forward into this noble profession, hold on to your passion, keep your heart open, and never stop believing in the potential of the children you serve. You are not just workers; you are life-changers. Congratulations again, and go out there and make a difference!"

- Mr. Quavantis Floyd, YSA, Mt. Meigs Campus

MISSION: To be a life changing resource for youth involved in the justice system by providing quality educational opportunities, services, and supports to reduce reoffending, improve positive outcomes, strengthen families, and enhance community safety.

DYS Celebrates Employee Appreciation Events in May

Throughout the month of May, DYS Central Office and Campuses celebrated employees with a variety of events and activities. Central office celebrated employees with a years of service pinning ceremony and taco salad luncheon on Monday, May 5th. Employees who received service pins include Angie Toney (35 years), Derrick Bolling (35 years), Roderick Reese (20 years), Shawn Stinson (20 years), Elise Massey (15 years), Latosha Mallory (15 years), and Fatima Johnson (5 years).

The Autauga Campus held their employee appreciation event on Wednesday, May 7th. Employees and teachers were honored for their years of service and received staff appreciation awards. Staff who received service pins include Krisstophy Mayweather (25 years), William Merk (15 years), Jason Frank (15 years), Lindsey Roux (10 years), Ivory Townsend (5 years), Deanthony Lucas (5 years), Cornelius Williams-Fenderson (5 years), and Jonathan Baldwin (5 years).

Staff enjoyed a luncheon afterwards. On Thursday, May 8th, the Mt. Meigs Campus held their employee appreciation event which included a staff recognition ceremony and a service pin ceremony. Employees and teachers who received service pins include the following: Kevin Hampton (45 years), Victor Black (35 years), Jessica Jackson (30 years), Paulette Underwood (30 years), Starr Weaver (25 years), Mary Edwards (20 years), Toni Toney (20 years), Audry Hunter (15 years), Michelle Archie (10 years), Tacory Sankey (5 years), Kristian White (5 years), Tamara Boyd (5 years). Veronica Harris was celebrated as the May Employee of the Month. Staff were honored for their years of service and participated in a luncheon provided by Mt. Meigs leadership.

The Vacca Campus staff appreciation luncheon was held on Wednesday, May 21st. The students presented a program titled "The Vacca Edition". The guest speaker Deputy Director Alesia Allen provided an inspirational message on the importance of working together as a team. The Vacca Specialists then presented staff awards. The staff and students were served lunch from Taco Mama. All staff were presented with a gift bag from the executive staff and a second gift bag from the Vacca administrative team. Staff and teachers who received service pins include Marsha Clark (40 years), Eric Wright (30 years), Michael Smith (25 years), Joy Wright (25 years), Whitney Ervin (5 years), and Patrick Pullom (5 years).



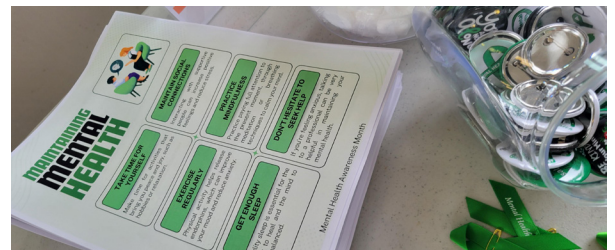
L.B. Wallace School Hosts Graduation Ceremony

On Thursday, May 22nd, L.B. Wallace School celebrated graduation for 13 youth. Ten youth received their high school diploma and three youth received their GED. There has been a total of 12 high school graduates during the 2024-25 school year, and 13 students have received their GED since June 2024. The commencement event included a processional, pledge of allegiance, invocation, greetings from Ms. Shenika Weatherly, keynote speaker Dr. Eric Wright, presentation of diplomas, key remarks by Dr. Tracy Smitherman, and a recessional. Parents were invited to attend. A reception for youth and their families were held after the ceremony.



Mt. Meigs Hosts Events for Mental Health Awareness Week

A heartfelt thank you to the Mt. Meigs Campus staff for making Children's Mental Health Week a resounding success! Throughout the week, students and staff received folders packed with mental health resources to support their well-being. Nursing staff were gifted cookies and stress balls as a token of appreciation. Parents of ABSOPP and GAP students attending visitation also received valuable mental health information. On Monday, therapists engaged students in meaningful conversations about mental health, providing tailored resources. Tuesday featured Green Ribbon Day to boost awareness, while Thursday saw everyone donning green in solidarity for National Mental Health Awareness Day. The week wrapped up on Friday with a fun gift basket giveaway for staff. Your dedication made this week truly impactful!



Congratulations to Our New Hires! New Employee Orientation Class for May 2025

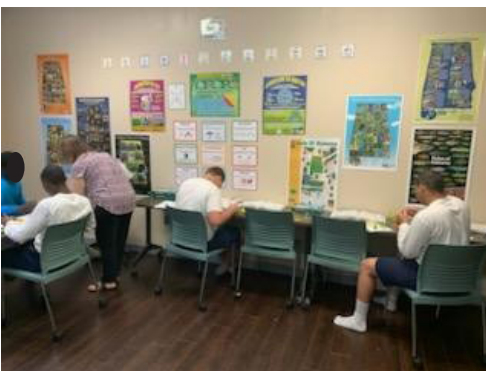


Kaye Allen - Mt. Meigs Campus
Nicholas Barnes - Mt. Meigs Campus
Calvin Calhoun - Mt. Meigs Campus
Raquel Gildersleeve - Mt. Meigs Campus
Emily Grant - Mt. Meigs Campus
JaQuarius Harris - Mt. Meigs Campus
Mari Reynolds - Vacca Campus
Tierra Scott - Mt. Meigs Campus
Zackary Williams - Mt. Meigs Campus

Spotlight on L.B. Wallace School Annex - Autauga Valley High School Mrs. Russell's Science Class Activities

Mrs. Russell's science class had the opportunity to participate in the green bean germination project. They planted two green bean seeds from a packet produced for use in 2021 and two from a packet for 2025 in clear cups with wet paper towels. They were able to observe the root growth and the sprouting of the seeds. The goal was to determine if the age allowed them to predict if the new beans would germinate better and faster than the older beans. They also transplanted the sprouting bean seeds to seed starter cups. The students kept a journal of the growth for 5 days as they drew the results and noted the growth or nongrowth. The students took the resulting plants and planted them outside in the campus garden. The plants are doing very well! The Autauga Campus has one planter with the old bean plants and one with the new bean plants to observe if there are differences in stability, growth, and taste. So far, the plants are performing equally. It has been an interesting project, as some of the students have had little to no experience planting.

The effort, initiative, and cooperation of the boys in planting the campus garden has been wonderful to see. The students have put in multiple hours digging and preparing planters and planting areas behind our facility. They have planted watermelon, multiple varieties of peppers, multiple varieties of tomatoes, zucchini squash, muncher and pickle bush cucumbers, marigolds, sunflowers, morning glory flowers, and mint. They will soon have an herb garden as well with oregano, basil, rosemary and thyme. - *Special thank you to Ms. LaMetrie Jackson for submitting this highlight!*



Autauga Campus Hosts May Day Event for Youth

On Friday, May 16th, the Autauga Campus held a day of fun filled events for their annual May Day program. The staff held activities for the youth that included student and staff basketball games, sack race, food truck lunch, a student and staff flag football game, corn hole, dodgeball, three-legged race, and tug of war.



EMPLOYEE COUNCIL WELLNESS CHALLENGE

MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS

REMEMBER TO PRIORITIZE YOUR HEALTH!

MEN'S HEALTH MONTH IS A TIME TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT HEALTH ISSUES AFFECTING MEN AND BOYS. REMEMBER TO GET REGULAR CHECKUPS, EAT WELL, EXERCISE REGULARLY, AND MANAGE STRESS.

**#WEARBLUE
JUNE 2025**

CONNECT & REDIRECT

Our Values.....

Safety & Accountability

We believe a safe environment is everyone's responsibility and is foundational for individual and programmatic success.

Character & Integrity

We believe the behavior we desire in others should first be seen through our own actions.

Communication & Collaboration

We share ideas freely and courageously. We embrace the potential of new ideas and approaches.

Respect & Connection

We believe youth and staff become meaningfully engaged through respectful relationships that are consistent, compassionate, and fair.

Empowerment & Discovery

We create opportunities for others to learn, engage, and transform.

Equity & Inclusion

We embrace our diversity, believing it transforms us and our community.

Transparency & Excellence

We are committed to being informed by data to improve the quality of our efforts and accountability to our stakeholders.
