

August EMPLOYEES OF THE 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

September 2025 Newsletter

Greetings DYS Employees,

As we gear up for the upcoming fiscal year, our focus remains steadfast on supporting, training, and retaining our dedicated direct care staff across all facilities. Your well-being and professional growth are central to our mission.

The Employee Council is actively advancing our Strategic Plan by championing staff wellness initiatives. Expect to see dedicated spaces at each campus designed to support the employees at each campus.

For our newer team members, we are committed to providing robust supervision and comprehensive training to build confidence in your roles. When our staff feel competent, it fosters a safer environment for both youth and staff, leading to greater job satisfaction.

Our Training and Staff Development Office has revitalized New Employee Orientation and partnered with the Institutional Services Division to deliver ongoing training on key topics, policies, and procedures. All-Staff Wednesdays will serve as a valuable opportunity for additional professional development in these areas.

Transforming the lives of the youth we serve requires the collective talents of our team, united by a shared mission. The roles of case management and treatment staff must evolve to meet the changing needs of today's youth. This may involve adopting new approaches, maintaining consistency, and integrating with other programs and interventions to inspire meaningful change in our students' lives.

Our contracted partners and volunteers also play a vital role in this mission. By warmly welcoming their services and making space in our schedules, we enable their success, which directly benefits our students. Their contributions make our work more impactful and manageable.

Let us continue to be mindful that our DYS Values apply to our co-workers and students alike.

Thank you for all that you do

Steve Lafreniere

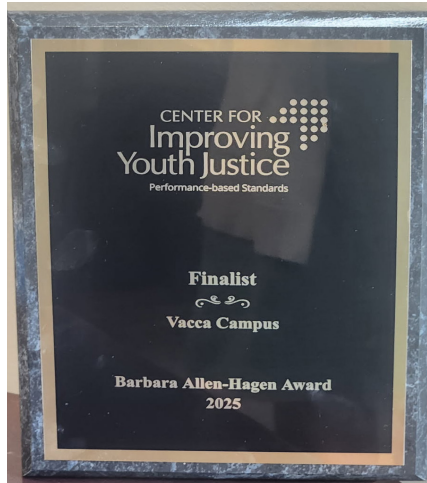
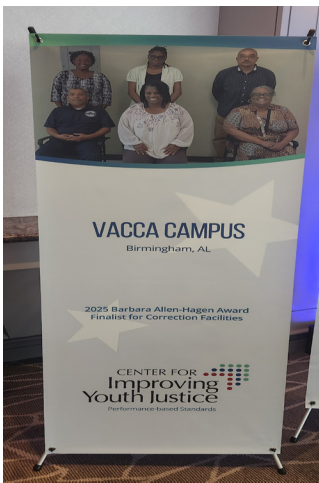
MISSION: To be a life changing resource for youth involved in the justice system by providing quality educational opportunities, services, and supports to reduce reoffending, improve positive outcomes, strengthen families, and enhance community safety.



MT. MEIGS CAMPUS
Ms. Tatiana Timmons

The Vacca Campus Honored at the Center for Improving Youth Justice Awards Night Gala

On August 8th, 2025, the Center for Improving Youth Justice hosted the 2025 Awards Night Gala. The event honored the Barbara Allen-Hagen Award winners, the Kids Got Talent Contest winners, and the J. Russell Jennings Scholarship Award winner. During the event, the Vacca Campus was honored with an award that highlighted their achievement as a finalist in the correction category for the Barbara Allen-Hagen Award. This honor highlights facilities that go above and beyond in implementing research-based standards to enhance safety, health, and programming for youth. The Vacca Campus has demonstrated remarkable progress in creating a positive atmosphere for both youth and staff. Established in 2007, the Barbara Allen-Hagen Award honors the legacy of Barbara Allen-Hagen, a pioneering advocate from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). She spearheaded the development of the PbS project, which has evolved into CIYJ's flagship program for continuous improvement in youth justice. The award recognizes facilities that embody her vision: treating every young person as "one of our own" through evidence-based practices and unwavering commitment to reform. Congratulations to Vacca for this honor!



Congratulations to Steve Lafreniere for Receiving the CJJA President's Award

On Friday, August 22nd, the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators awarded Steve Lafreniere, Executive Director of DYS, with the prestigious President's Award. The CJJA President's Award is given to those who exemplify leadership and significant contributions to CJJA. Mr. Lafreniere has served on the CJJA Board for over nine years. He has been a member of the CJJA Executive Board holding the offices of Treasurer, Vice President, President, and immediate Past President. Mr. Lafreniere has also served the board by chairing the South Regional Committee, the Behavioral Health Committee, and the Communications Committee for CJJA. Mr. Lafreniere's recognition is a testament to his unwavering dedication, visionary leadership, and profound commitment to transforming the juvenile justice system. Congratulations to Mr. Lafreniere!



Mt. Meigs Campus Hosts Hope Inspired Ministries (H.I.M.) Graduation Ceremony

On Friday, August 15th, the Mt. Meigs Campus hosted the H.I.M. Graduation Ceremony for three youth who completed the program. The ceremony included a welcome and opening prayers, introduction of graduates, the H.I.M. pledge, special recognitions, presentation of diplomas, and closing remarks and prayer. Congratulations to the youth who graduated!



The Vacca Campus Hosts the Second Annual Queen Mother's Ball

The Vacca Campus held the Second Annual Queen Mother's Ball on August 27th, 2025. The Queen Mother's Ball represents the lasting love of a son for his mother. The students were provided the opportunity to express their gratitude to their mother, sister, aunt, grandmother, and other mother figures in their lives. The students displayed their gratitude to their mothers through poetry, music, and dance. After the student dedications, the students, their family members, and the Vacca staff were served a meal and dessert bar. A DJ provided music for the students, their mothers, and female staff to dance. Thank you to the Vacca Campus staff for making this day so special!



DYS Staff Attend Congresswoman Terri Sewell's Annual Job Fair Event

On Thursday, July 31st, DYS staff attended the 14th annual job fair in Tuscaloosa, AL. U.S. Representative Terri Sewell (AL-07) announced that this year's signature event featured at least 70 employers from 10 industries. DYS was one of twelve state agencies represented. Special thanks to Ms. Connie Rich, Mr. Roger Griggs, and Mr. Eric Evans for assisting us at this event. We had a great turnout at the DYS booth!



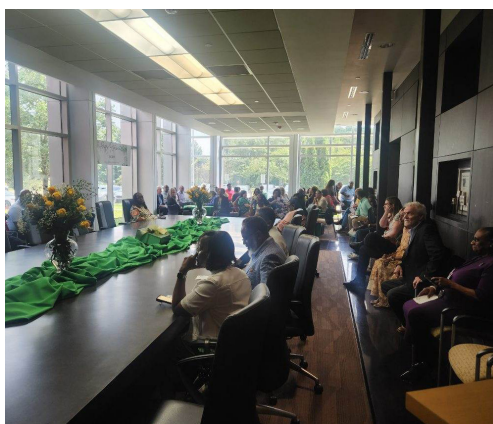
Mt. Meigs Campus Hosts Annual Wellness Event for Staff

On Wednesday, August 6, the Mt. Meigs Campus held their annual staff wellness event. They hosted vendors that included the following: State Wellness, Behavioral Health Services, UAB, SEIB, RSA, PNC Bank, AAA, Boston Mutual, Bloodmobile, ASEA, and Dignity Memorial. Staff received updated wellness information, giveaway items, and snacks. Special thanks to the staff who helped organize this wellness event!



DYS Central Office Staff Celebrate the Many Years of Service and Retirement of Ms. Carol Davis, Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director

On Thursday, August 28th, DYS Central Office staff had the opportunity to congratulate Carol Davis on her 25 years of service and her retirement. Staff provided many well wishes and participated in her retirement celebration. The program included a welcome and opening prayer along with reflections by Ms. Anita Boswell, Mr. Christopher Narcisse, and Mr. Steve Lafreniere. Ms. Laketa Patterson ended the program with a special song for Ms. Davis. Special thank you to everyone who helped make this day special for Ms. Davis.



DYS EMPLOYEE COUNCIL

EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

The DYS Employee of the Quarter program recognizes an employee each quarter that goes “above and beyond” his/her normal duties to accomplish something exceptional. This person should be exemplary in attendance, attitude, dedication, effort, effectiveness, and resourcefulness.

Nomination Qualifications

- Nominations are open to Youth Services Aides, Senior Aides, and Security Officers.
- Employees must have 1 ½ years of experience.
- Nomination forms may be submitted throughout the year to a Council Representative.

REPRESENTATIVES

Autauga
Runyun Thomas

Mt. Meigs
Michelle Archie
Tonya Dorn
Kevin Hampton
Roosevelt Walker

Vacca
LaShondra Hinton
Shuntae Robinson

Please see a representative for an electronic or written nomination form.

EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER NOMINATION FORM

The DYS Employee of the Quarter program recognizes an employee each quarter that goes “above and beyond” his/her normal duties to accomplish something exceptional. This person should be exemplary in attendance, attitude, dedication, effort, effectiveness, and resourcefulness.

**Please fill in all information.*

Nominee: _____

Nominee's Unit/Campus: _____

Your Name: _____

EXAMPLE

1. Why are you nominating this person for the DYS Employee of the Quarter award? Include reasons for nomination, description of employee's actions that led to the nomination with as many supporting details as possible. Please also describe how the actions contribute to DYS mission.
2. When working with the youth in his/her care, how does the nominee demonstrate the DYS vision to connect with youth in the justice system and to change the trajectory of their lives?

RECOGNIZE YOUR COLLEAGUES

NOMINATE



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.
