



THE RESIDENTIAL CIRCLE-UP

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

September, 2021

A Dose Of Fun For The Vaccinated

*Special Event Held To Thank Those
With At Least One COVID-19 Shot*



of their vaccination participated in a day of food, games, and camaraderie hosted in the backyard of the State House building. Representatives from Tier I leadership provided popcorn, cotton candy, and entertainment, and music was provided by RS-I Sydney Vanlow. Staff who visited the event were able to stop by the vaccination appreciation photo booth. To view the gallery, click [HERE](#).

Residential Leadership designed the event to be an escape from the regular work day by setting up cookout tables for staff to gather and enjoy each other among celebratory balloons and streamers. Recreation staff provided corn hole, disc slam, and various board games. Maintenance staff set up tables, chairs, and tents. Many thanks to those who participated and those who helped make the event a success!



**Deputy Director's
Message**
Joyce Holmon

You Matter!

There are times when putting yourself first is not a selfish action. It is our job in Residential Services to care for youth from across the Commonwealth, but it is difficult to care for them properly when we have not properly cared for ourselves. Although it is important to be a team player, do your part, and focus on the job at hand, all of those responsibilities will come much more easily if you take care of yourself. Many of our work hours are not flexible and overtime may often be required when short staffed, but be aware of your own limits. Your ability to perform your duties diminishes when your mental and physical health are diminished.

The best way to maintain your health is by
(See "Message," page 3)

Vaccination Appreciation Day was held July 29-30 to celebrate staff members who had received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccination. Residential Services has been dedicated to achieving the Governor's goal of a 70 percent vaccination rate. Our most recent survey shows we are very close to achieving it: 63 percent of Bon Air staff responded to the survey, and 75 percent of those had received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Staff members who showed documentation



Clockwise from above: Community Coordinator Jermaine Bullock tries out the football toss; residents participate in the Disc Slam, the Blind Balancing Ball Act, and the Mystery Puzzle activities.

Emerald City Challenge Returns

With last year's Emerald City Field Day Challenge having to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Recreation Specialist Cortez Smith was determined to make this year's event held last month even better. "Experiencing the pandemic made us stronger and gave us a better perspective on life," Smith says. "So with our 3rd Annual Emerald City Field Day Challenge, I wanted to reconnect with my cluster (65-68) bigger and better, with the hope that our worst days are behind us."

The Emerald City Field Day Challenge tests residents' leadership, listening skills, strategies, decision making, patience, communication and teamwork abilities while navigating a 7-course obstacle. To provide the extra support, we had

their unit staff assist them through each obstacle. COVID-19 protocols were strictly observed, with one unit at a time going through the entire obstacle course, followed by equipment cleaning between each unit. The seven "obstacles" were Potato Sack Race, Blind Balancing Ball Act, Disc Slam, Water Cup Pass, Football Toss, Mystery Puzzle, and Water Balloon Toss.

Smith points out that the goal of the Challenge is roughly equivalent to our expectations for our residents when they return to their communities. "They, too, can return as better citizens and hope that their worst days are behind them with the appropriate support system in place," he says. "Anything is possible."

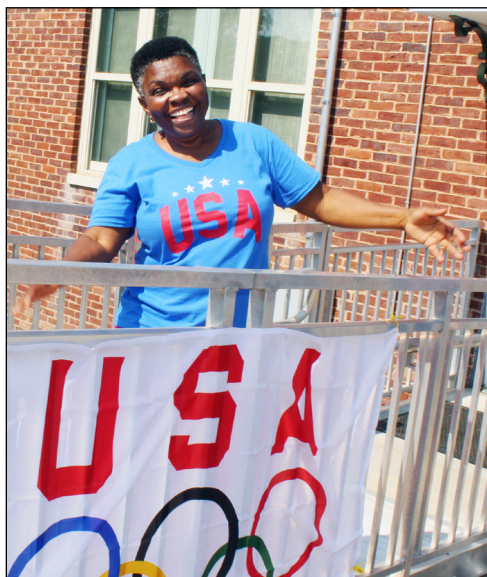


Medical Team Helps Support A Proud Mom

Bon Air's medical staff recently gathered to cheer on U.S. Olympic women's "Rugby Sevens" player Cheta Emba, the daughter of DJJ Nurse Teresa Nwafubo. Rugby Sevens is a variant of traditional rugby in which teams are made up of seven players playing seven-minute halves, instead of the usual 15 players playing 40-minute halves.

Teresa says Cheta excelled in athletics from a very young age, regularly playing basketball and soccer as she was growing up in Richmond. After graduating from the Governor's School in Richmond, Cheta went on to attend Harvard University, where she served as the Crimson's goalkeeper for four years. Cheta soon learned about rugby, and tried playing in one game, which was all it took for some scouts to notice her ability. She was recruited for the U.S. national women's rugby team, and then for the Olympic Rugby Sevens squad. At the Tokyo Olympics, the U.S. team placed sixth.

Teresa says Cheta continues to do lots of work in the community, and loves inspiring kids to try rugby.



Above: DJJ Nurse Teresa Nwafubo reveled in the support of her fellow medical team staff members, who recently donned USA T-shirts (below) to show their support for her daughter Cheta Emba, who represented the U.S. on the women's "rugby sevens" team. Cheta played with Harvard University's women's soccer team for four years before being noticed by scouts and tapped for the Olympic rugby team.



Message *(Continued from page 1)*

defining a healthy work-life balance, making time for self-care. Find specific ways to restore yourself when you are not at work. This will look different for each of you. Spend more time with family or friends; exercise; take an art class; read a few good books; take a nap or two. It is important for you, and all of us in Residential Services, to remember that you are a person first.

This idea is at the heart of our mission to change the culture for staff both inside and outside of the secure perimeter. As a division, we have worked hard in the last several years to improve hiring practices and retention efforts to include retention bonuses and a focus on consistency in treatment of staff. We continue to assess ways to improve in these areas to stabilize staffing patterns and ultimately assist you in facilitating your self care. Our guiding principles

of safety, connection, purpose, and fairness do not mean much if we are not willing to consider how they apply to staff outside of their roles within Residential Services. You must set aside time to ensure your mental and physical safety or well-being. Maintain your connections outside of the workplace with family and friends. Find a purpose or passion that drives you in your personal life: volunteer work, reading, art. Most importantly, be fair to yourself; understand your limitations and don't expect or force yourself to be capable of more.

Former First Lady Michelle Obama once said, "We need to do a better job of putting ourselves higher on our own 'to do' list." That is something I encourage you to consider. We need healthy and positive staff to have the greatest impact on the youth we serve, and that must begin with self-care.

New Award Highlights Coordinators' Work

The Bon Air JCC Community Managers started a new initiative, the CM Spotlight Awards, to highlight the exceptional work being done by Community Coordinators (CC). The goal is to recognize one CC each week during the Community Supervisors' meeting, so they can be celebrated by their peers and supervisors.

The first CM Spotlight Award recipient was CC Michael Lowery. Mr. Lowery was highlighted for the Community Circle Up (intervention) he did with a resident that was released from Bon Air. A resident who was recently released from Unit A3 was having some challenges resulting in two probation violations at his independent living program in Richmond. He reached out to Lowery for support. Lowery requested permission to have an intervention meeting in the community with the resident on July 14, and he collaborated with CSU 7–Newport News Probation Officer Donald Sullivan to schedule the intervention. Lowery along with his staff, RS-I Anthony Cornwall, Counselor Anthony Gaston, BSU Therapist Katie Wilkins, and Counselor Carrie Harris met with the resident at Tarrant's Cafe in Richmond. Initially, the youth was taken aback by the presence of his former staff and was resistant to the process. The team excused him from the table so they could develop a strategy to reach the former resident. When the



resident returned to the table, the impromptu treatment team provided support to include assisting him with completing a job application at Tarrant's. They helped him process some of his difficulties and offered guidance about his peer choices and high-risk social situations. Overall, the intervention was effective. It reinforced the principles of the Community Treatment Model and the DJJ Strategic Framework. For going above and beyond, CC Michael Lowery received a certificate of appreciation and a small trophy in the presence of his peers.



Workshop Helps Refine Community Treatment Model Language Skills

A recent three-day retreat was held to give the leadership team an opportunity to see firsthand the training, coaching, and development the Residential Practice Improvement Coaches are giving to the new hires during Virginia Community Treatment Model (CTM) Fundamental "It's What We Do" training.

"This was done to ensure that everyone is speaking the same language as it relates to the CTM,"

says RPIC Pamela Williams, who organized the event. Over the three days the team conducted team-building exercises, completed activities, and reviewed processes such as Mutual Help Groups, check-ins, and circle-ups. The interactive training also provided additional tools such as transferral skills, shareable documents, and a better understanding of the processes and expectations as it relates to the CTM.