



Chatham ETC LEAP Program graduates and DJJ Commissioner Tyrone Oliver

Chatham Education Transition Center (ETC) Youth Graduate from Georgia Tech LEAP Program

On November 13, 2019 DJJ held a graduation ceremony for Savannah area youth who participated in the Georgia Institute of Technology Logistics Education and Pathways (LEAP) training program. LEAP is a certification program that prepares students to compete for jobs in the supply chain and logistics field. The program also allows participants to obtain a permanent professional education transcript of continuing education from Georgia Tech University.



Carole Bennett (above), Director of the Leap Program, applauded

how involved DJJ was in the program from the beginning to end. "From the very start there has been very active involvement and engagement from DJJ from the leadership to the instructors in the class and the students," said Bennett. "They have been very excited and always very committed to making sure everything that needed to happen did for this cohort and that is why it has been so successful."

The Georgia Tech Supply Chain and Logistics Institute created LEAP in 2015 through a \$350,000 grant from JPMorgan Chase & Co. to further the financial services firm's "New Skills at Work" initiative. The initiative promotes workforce development to bridge the gap between the talent employers need and the qualifications of the local talent pipeline.

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OUR MISSION

DJJ's Mission is to protect and serve the citizens of Georgia by holding young offenders accountable for their actions through the delivery of services and sanctions in appropriate settings and by supporting youth in their communities to become productive and law-abiding citizens.

OUR VISION

DJJ will lead the nation in preparing young people in its care to develop and sustain productive lives.

OUR PRIORITIES

- Operate Safe and Secure Facilities and Communities
- Enhance Systems of Care for Mental Health
- Gang Prevention and Intervention
- Effective Responses for Human Trafficking Victims and Families
- Recruitment, Retention, and Succession Planning

A Message from the Chief of Staff



I want to express my extreme gratitude for what employees here at DJJ are doing for our youth, communities and the department each day. Recently, Commissioner Oliver and I traveled to several facilities, community offices and development conferences across the state. During this time of engagement, we quickly realized that this organization has so many talented and passionate employees who serve and lead with a true heart of safety, change, education and

rehabilitation for the youth we connect with each day. Many of the employees we met relayed their excitement about Changing the Culture in our department and expressed many great ideas on how to accomplish this vital turnaround for the organization.

I strongly believe we must dedicate ourselves to create an atmosphere of servant and transformational leadership for our most valued resource, you and future employees. DJJ's direction, mission and culture starts with leadership buy-in to cultivate a deliberate sense of trust, care, support, mentorship and respect for each other and our workforce which is paramount for you and the success of the agency. If we accomplish this objective, I believe our attrition rate will decrease and our recruitment and retention of those who

will be the best fit for DJJ will increase because of the positive and enhanced treatment of employees.

The leadership team will strive to strengthen the leadership culture with the mindset of focusing on personnel inclusion into the organization and the genuine building of lasting influential relationship which will pay huge dividends for you and our department in the future.

Again, I cannot thank you enough for all you do and praise you enough for the difference you make each day.

I am honored, humbled and proud to serve alongside you.

Respectfully,
Mark J. Mitchell
Chief of Staff

“Employees who feel
valued &
respected

by their organization will show
respect for their work and become

invaluable
to your team and your
organization's success.”



100%

Elbert Shaw RYDC



Mandatory Standards

Bob Richards RYDC



Mandatory Standards

Crisp RYDC



Mandatory Standards

Terrell RYDC



Mandatory Standards

What are ACA Standards?

ACA standards are the national benchmark for the effective operation of correctional systems throughout the United States and are necessary to ensure that correctional facilities are operated professionally. They address services, programs and operations essential to good correctional management, including administrative and fiscal controls, staff training and development, physical plant, safety and emergency procedures, sanitation, food service, and rules and discipline. Standards reflect practical, up-to-date policies and procedures that safeguard the life, health and safety of staff and offenders.

Elbert Shaw, Bob Richards, Crisp & Terrell RYDCs Gain American Correctional Association Accreditation

Congratulations to the Elbert Shaw, Bob Richards, Crisp and Terrell RYDCs for obtaining accreditation from the American Correctional Association (ACA). The facilities underwent a robust audit of their facility operations and treatment services.

The standards created by ACA represent fundamental correctional practices that ensure each facility is meeting the highest industry standards for operating safe facilities with comprehensive treatment at all levels.



DJJ Staff and ACA Accreditation Committee Members

The auditors submitted a recommendation for accreditation to ACA with all facilities scoring 100 percent on mandatory standards. This is an exceptional accomplishment for the facilities. Representatives from Elbert Shaw, Bob Richards, Crisp and Terrell RYDCs went before the ACA Accreditation Standards Committee on January 12, 2020 in San Diego, California to defend their scores and receive their actual accreditation.



DJJ Raises \$11K Through Law Enforcement Torch Run



DJJ raised \$11,462 for the 2019 Law Enforcement Torch Run, the largest fundraiser for the Special Olympics Georgia.



**\$11,462
Raised in 2019**

The fundraiser supports disabled adults and children who compete in the games to offset expenses including facility rentals, housing, meals, sports equipment rental and purchases,

officials' fees, and medals. DJJ was in the top 10 fundraising departments.

DJJ fundraiser supporters took the polar plunge, purchased merchandise, ran the final leg of the law enforcement torch run and volunteered at the games.

By participating in the Special Olympics Georgia, athletes focus on achieving a goal, learning new skills, and developing healthy habits that can help improve overall health.

HITS Officers Earn Basic Street Gang Investigator Certification

One of Governor Brian Kemp's top priorities is to crack down on gang activity affecting communities across Georgia. The Department of Juvenile Justice is committed to establishing strategies that have a positive influence on gang-impacted youth in DJJ facilities and in communities. Four members of the DJJ High Intensity Team Supervision (HITS) program obtained a Basic Street Gang Investigator certification from the Georgia Gang Investigators Association (GGIA). The training is designed to build on the fundamentals of gang investigations through advanced



techniques for investigating and prosecuting gangs. The course also provides officers with information to better recognize gang indicators and understand how gang crimes differ from other crimes.

HITS is a community-based, in-home detention placement alternative for community-supervised youth. DJJ HITS strategies include electronic monitoring, curfew checks, drug and alcohol testing, crisis management, service-learning projects, community service and home, school, work and office visits.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, law enforcement agencies are essential partners in the effort to combat gang violence along with faith-based organizations, community organizations and practitioners.

For DJJ HITS officers Deon Mimes, Kevin Fleming, Terry Roberson, and Cory Rogers the training provided additional skill sets that will make each of their jobs easier and help reduce the number of gang members in communities across the state.

"Education is the key to prevention. By receiving my certification, I have a better understanding of the law and can use that knowledge to help educate the youth that we serve to break the chain of gang violence one link at a time."
Terry L. Roberson

Metro RYDC Youth Showcase Musical & Theatrical Talents



BRIDGE DA GAP

“The energy I felt here with the students was powerful,” said Kevin “Khao” Cates, founder of the Bridge DA Gap program. Bridge DA Gap is a 501 c3 non-profit organization that teaches character building, social and emotional development and life skills through hip hop music.

The Bridge DA Gap team spent 14 weeks with youth at the Metro Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC) in Atlanta. Topics covered in the curriculum included patience, self-love, substance abuse, anger and perception. The team worked with youth to put on an excellent music showcase for DJJ staff on September 27, 2019.

Our Voices Count: The Potential Impact of Strength-Based Music Programs in the Juvenile Justice System is a study from a collaborative project between the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) in New York City and Carnegie Hall’s Musical Connections program. Researchers used a mixed-method design to explore whether intensive engagement

in ensemble music-making at two different youth detention facilities resulted in a range of positive youth development outcomes. According to the study, data demonstrated that staff reports of young people’s externalizing, or acting-out, behaviors were significantly lower following the residency at both facilities.

“Whenever a kid feels good about themselves, they have a different positive outlook on life.”



“We don’t get the opportunity to choose how the kids come to us, but we definitely get the opportunity to choose how we affect them once they get here,” said Pamela Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of Secure Facilities. “This program (Bridge DA Gap) provides an array of opportunities for the kids from life skills to social skills and mentoring. Whenever a kid feels

good about themselves, they have a different positive outlook on life.”

According to research cited in the study, composing, rehearsing and performing are associated with gains in mutuality or an openness to constructive interpersonal exchange and social bonding, allowing participants to practice and refine the skills of interpersonal interaction and conflict resolution in favor of larger

shared goals like putting on a great performance or making a recording.

Metro RYDC students showcased their growth and creativity by writing and performing original songs and were honored for their hard work and commitment to completing the program.



Playwright Margaret Baldwin, Alliance Theatre members and KSU students with DJJ youth

Alliance Theatre

On November 12, 2019, youth from the Metro RYDC gave a special dramatic performance for members of the Alliance Theatre, the Georgia Council of the Arts, and the Kennesaw State University School of the Art and Design. Youth were given professional training for ten weeks by playwright Margaret Baldwin and drama students from Kennesaw State University as a part of the Alliance Theatre's Collision Project funded by the Georgia Council of the Arts.

Through improvisational exercises, oral history, choreography, individual performing talents and their writing, the Metro RYDC youth performed a new piece inspired by the play "Ghost". The youth performance contained moments of spoken word and hip hop improvisation set to a musical background.

"This project has been such an honor and a gift to all of us that have been lucky enough to participate," said Christopher Moses, Associate Artistic Director of the Alliance Theatre. "What we witnessed with these young people courageously and boldly speaking their truth was one

of the most moving theatrical experiences I have seen in years."

Based on the popular young adult fiction novel that was a National Book Award finalist for young people's literature and named one of America's best-loved novels by PBS's The Great American Read, "Ghost" teaches the importance of finding your team.

For the Metro RYDC youth on stage, each performance took a personal turn. Whether sharing tales of trouble or expressing their desires to better themselves while in the Metro RYDC facility, all of the youth told their life stories and dreams directly from the heart. The performances were inspiring to the KSU students and Alliance Theatre actors.

"I am blown away by the depth of the conversation that arises from the students, about how introspective they have been and how honest and raw it has been," said Karen Paty, Executive Director of the Georgia Council of the Arts. "I hope that we will continue to be able to bring it to more students."

There are current plans to add the program and other performance arts to two more DJJ facilities in the near future.

Atlanta YDC Youth Complete Georgia State University, Georgia Perimeter College Pre-College Enrichment Classes

During fall 2019, six youth at the Atlanta Youth Detention Center (YDC) participated in the Georgia State University and Georgia Perimeter College Pre-College Enrichment Classes. The class was offered to the Connections Graduate Program graduates and extended to Georgia Preparatory Academy students. Youth were exposed to topics that included college admission applications, identifying courses and majors, SAT and ACT pre-college exams, writing, college matriculation and critical thinking.

Dr. Katherine Perry, Director of the Georgia State University Prison Education Project presented youth with certificates of completion. The Office of Education hopes that the connection made with Georgia State University promotes a healthy interest in youth to attend college.

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Georgia Tech Logistics Education and Pathways (LEAP) Graduation

Chatham Education Transition Center (ETC) Youth Graduate from Georgia Tech LEAP Program (Continued)

LEAP prepares students in the basics of supply chain and supply chain's roles within organizations. The course includes defining supply chain management and the various domains within the supply chain (i.e., customer service, manufacturing and service operations, order management, procurement and supply management, demand planning, inventory management, warehousing operations, and transportation operations). It includes an explanation of how the supply chain supports organizations' strategic and financial goals.

Nine DJJ Chatham County Education Transition Center students earned certificates of completion in Supply Chain

Management, Customer Service, and Warehouse Operations. The 40-hour certifications allow students to learn at their own pace through a convenient online format.



Commissioner Oliver with graduate Vin'Tay Lonon

LEAP program graduate Vin'Tay Lonon's Supply Chain Management Principles and Customer Service Operations certifications will certainly help

him achieve his goal of becoming a pilot. "I will make my mentors and everyone that helped me proud," said Lonon. "This is a new path for me because I never had anything in front of me like this. Going forward in life, I will put these certifications to use."

Guest speaker, Lt. Colonel Reginald Martin, spoke encouraging words to the graduates. "The possibilities in logistics are endless and opportunities are waiting on you," said Lt. Colonel Martin. "Congratulations on this stepping stone that will take you to the next level. Always remember not to allow your past circumstances to define who you are."

Providing career and technical education are identified as an essential practice in the Youth In Custody Practice Model (YICPM), a guide to best practices in youth corrections. The model identifies



Judge Lisa Colbert
DJJ Board Member

more than 70 critical policy and practice elements and outcomes.

The Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA) and the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University’s McCourt School of Public Policy (CJJR) developed the research-driven and data-based practice model to organize the tools agency and facility staff members need to achieve better results for youth once they leave facilities.

DJJ Board member Judge Lisa Colbert showed her support to the youth saying, “I get a little emotional because often times I have to deal with young people when bad things have happened. It always brings me great joy to be a part of a celebration when they accomplish things that I know they can accomplish when given the opportunity and support.”

According to the YICPM, it is essential that juvenile facilities provide youth with dependable access to high-quality

education programs that are commensurate with their needs. Among the U.S. Department of Justice and Department of Education guiding principles for high-quality education in secure care settings, highlighted are opportunities for post-secondary education and pre-vocational and vocational opportunities that are relevant to youth’s interest and aptitudes and that correspond to employment opportunities in the communities to which youth will return.

The model says facilities should offer youth vocational training that prepares them for local employment opportunities, teach them skills to obtain and maintain jobs and forge meaningful and dynamic post-release community connections while a youth is still in placement. Vocational courses should be based on professional and industry standards and should provide hands-on learning opportunities for youth to practice the skills they have learned.

At the time of graduation, four graduates had already received job offers and three others had job interviews scheduled.

“It is not where you start, but where you finish and they are going to finish strong,” said DJJ Commissioner Tyrone Oliver. “It warms my heart to know that they are leaving with a certification and a job. That is very important. That is going to be key for them to succeed. That’s part of our mission of rehabilitating youth, so when they reenter society, they are better people.”



LEAP graduate Sirmarri Benton
reads a poem titled “Our Deepest Fear” by Marianne Williamson



LEAP PROGRAM COURSES

Warehousing Operations

Supply Chain Management Principles

Customer Service Operations

Transportation Operations

Inventory Management

Supply Management and Procurement

Demand Planning

Manufacturing and Service Operations

DJJ Awarded for Farm to School Efforts

DJJ received an Honorary Award at the Golden Radish Award ceremony held on September 17, 2019 at the Mercedes Benz Stadium in Atlanta. A Golden Radish Award is given to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in Georgia who are doing extraordinary work in farm to school initiatives.



The Award was presented by Golden Radish partners Georgia Organics, Georgia's Departments of Agriculture (GDA), Education (GaDOE) and Public Health (GDPH), the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and University of Georgia Cooperative Extension (UGA Extension).

The agency's most notable farm to school achievements from the 2018-2019 school year includes offering locally grown items on the school menu, having edible gardens at schools and adopting farm to school language into the wellness policy.

As a Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI), DJJ provides locally grown food items 365 days a year. DJJ kitchen staff incorporates the produce grown by students in their school gardens into meals and has served more than 800,000 meals with local ingredients. DJJ currently has two edible gardens located at the Eastman Youth Development Campus (YDC) and the Elbert Shaw Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC). The garden at Elbert Shaw RYDC has a SHAPE grant-funded aquaponics system in their school greenhouse.

Lisa Mantz, the assistant deputy commissioner of the Division of Support Services and Lauren Gean, director of the Office of Nutrition and Food Services, attended the award ceremony on the agency's behalf.

"We are excited and honored to be recognized as Honorary Golden Radish recipients for the

second consecutive year," said Gean. "Our team is dedicated to expanding farm to school opportunities to the youth at DJJ and to continuing to grow these initiatives statewide."

DJJ has served 800,000 meals with locally grown ingredients

DJJ is the 181st School District in the state of Georgia. There are 30 Georgia Preparatory Academy (GPA) campuses across Georgia located in RYDCs, YDCs and Education Transition Centers (ETCs).

DJJ was among 90 Georgia school districts recognized for their achievements at the 2019 Golden Radish Awards.

DJJ also received a \$20,000 Farm to School grant from the United States Department of Agriculture to develop a strategic action plan for implementing sustainable school gardens at DJJ secure facilities. With the opportunities provided by the USDA grant, DJJ will strive to supplement purchased produce with facility grown produce, showing good stewardship of state funds through our commitment to budget consciousness and sustainability.



Lisa Mantz, assistant deputy commissioner of the Division of Support Services and Lauren Gean, director of the Office of Nutrition and Food Services at the 2019 Golden Radish Award ceremony held at the Mercedes Benz Stadium

Commissioner Oliver Host Youth Council Meeting



On October 8, 2019, Commissioner Tyrone Oliver hosted his first Youth Council Meeting. Youth from RYDCs and YDCs across the state came together to engage the DJJ leadership team and ask important questions regarding their facilities. The guest speaker for the meeting was Dr. Rashad Richey from radio station WAOK-Atlanta. Dr. Richey shared his truly inspirational journey to success after being in the juvenile justice system.



Held quarterly, the Commissioner's Youth Council (CYC) gives incarcerated youth at our secure facilities the opportunity to discuss issues or concerns directly with decision-makers within the Department of Juvenile Justice. For youth to serve on the council, they must be at least 15 years of age, not have a release date within six months of the meeting and display leadership qualities. Furthermore, youth council members must also show they are working to achieve their educational goals and maintain participation in the behavioral management program. The CYC not only allows youth to voice their concerns but teaches them communication skills, leadership and is meant to increase their self-confidence.

Georgia Preparatory Academy, Pathway to Success Graduation Ceremony

DJJ held its annual winter high school commencement ceremony for youth attending the Georgia Preparatory Academy on December 20, 2019 at the Rockdale Regional Youth Detention Center in Conyers, Georgia. DJJ Commissioner Tyrone Oliver presented 15 High School Diplomas, 31 General Equivalency Degrees (GED) and two Technical Certificates of Credit to qualifying students.

"It takes great dedication to embark on a path to higher education."

"I am extremely proud of the hard work and perseverance demonstrated by our youth," said Commissioner Tyrone Oliver. "It takes great dedication to embark on a path to higher education."

ACHIEVEMENTS

53

High School Diplomas

100

GEDs

70

Technical
Certificates of Credit

We remain committed to providing youth with an education that empowers life-long learners to reach their potential and become college and career-ready."

The Department of Juvenile Justice is the 181st school district in Georgia. Within the school system, there is a middle and high school called Georgia Preparatory Academy and a GED program called Pathway to Success. Georgia Preparatory Academy and Pathway to Success are located at 30 campuses within Regional Youth Detention Centers, Youth Development Campuses, and Education Transition Centers across Georgia.



"Graduation is not to be taken lightly. Many in our current situation may not get the opportunity to see this day. Therefore, let us be grateful, celebrate and cherish the moment."

- Valedictorian -



"I am delighted to present diplomas to our graduates," said Dr. Monica Henson, DJJ Deputy Superintendent of Schools. "Their accomplishments are even more impressive in light of their circumstances. The goal of Georgia Preparatory Academy, Pathways to Success, and all the education programs of the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice is to prepare our young people to succeed as productive members in adult society. These graduates represent our hope for the future."

DJJ operates the Georgia Preparatory Academy with a curriculum that meets the education standards set forth by the Georgia Department of Education for all public schools. During the 2018-2019 school year and first semester of the 2019-2020 school year, DJJ issued 53 High School Diplomas, 100 GEDs

and 70 Technical Certificates of Credit.

"We have achieved one of life's major milestones," said the GPA Valedictorian. "Graduation is not to be taken lightly. Many in our current situation may not get the opportunity to see this day. Therefore, let us be grateful, celebrate and cherish the moment. Thankfully this is not the end, instead it is the beginning. It is the rebirth and the start of a new journey. Let us not allow what we have done in the past define who we will become in the future. Let us use this achievement as a stepping stone. Let us take a step of faith into the next phase of our lives, leaning, believing and trusting in God."

Following graduation, each student who remains in a DJJ secure facility is enrolled in the

Connections Graduate Program (CGP), which is designed to prepare the youth for college or a career. CGP instructors specialize in educational and employability development.

Guest speaker, Dr. Rashad Richey from radio station WAOK-Atlanta, provided encouraging words to the graduates. "It meant so much for me to be a part of this moment in their lives and I hope that something I said takes root and grows inside their soul," said Richey. "Beyond just their academic ability, they have a real support system here through family and institutionally. This was the absolute best graduation I have spoken at in 2019."

Students participating in the commencement ceremony are from DJJ secure facilities across the state.



"Seeing our youth graduate is one of the most enjoyable parts of being on the DJJ board. It is so encouraging to hear them voice their plans for the future and I look forward to watching them reach their goals."
Board Chair Sandra Taylor



"This graduation is the start of our youth gaining the confidence they need to be successful in life. I am so proud of these students."
Board Member Dr. Thomas Coleman

Simmons Named DJJ Teacher of the Year



Kimberly Simmons

Congratulations to Kimberly Simmons the 2020 DJJ Teacher of the Year. Kimberly is a Science teacher at the Macon YDC and has 15 years of teaching experience. She joined DJJ in 2006 as a special education math teacher. In 2010 she was promoted to a special education and curriculum consultant with DJJ and continued to serve in this capacity until she left the agency in 2012. Upon her return to DJJ in 2018, Kimberly began serving in her current role as a science teacher.

"I am the equity in my classroom that ensures every student has the support they need to be successful," said Simmons. Simmons is a graduate of Florida Memorial University where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degrees in Political Science and Public Administration. She also has a Masters degree in Educational Counseling and Psychology and an Education Specialist degree in Educational Leadership. Ms. Simmons will represent DJJ at the state level in May 2021.

DJJ Medical Director Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. Michelle Staples-Horne, DJJ's Medical Director, received the 2019 Georgia Juvenile Services Association Harold K. Ables Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1993, Dr. Michelle Staples-Horne was hired by the State of Georgia to develop a health care system for the Department of Juvenile Justice. At that time, DJJ's 20 Regional Youth Detention Centers did not have on-site medical staff and only limited nursing staff was available at DJJ's four Youth Development Campuses. Dental and behavioral health services were also unavailable on-site at DJJ secure facilities.

As a result of Dr. Staples Horne efforts, by 2008 the Federal Department of Justice identified Georgia as the leader in health care among juvenile corrections agencies in the United States. To help preserve Georgia's national standing, Dr. Staples-Horne has maintained long standing partnerships with Emory University Rollins School of Public Health and the Morehouse

School of Medicine to successfully obtain grant awards to support additional services for DJJ youth.

Dr. Staples-Horne has served as President of the Society of Correctional Physicians, as a member of the American Correctional Association (ACA) Health Care Committee, and as a member of the Juvenile Health Committee for the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC). She has authored chapters in three books and has been published in medical journals and periodicals including articles on juvenile justice health care issues in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, the Journal of Adolescent Health, Public Health Reports, Juvenile Justice, Corrections Today, CorrDocs, and the SCP Newsletter.

In 2013, Dr. Staples-Horne was the recipient of the 2013 Armond Start Award for Professional Excellence from the Society of Correctional Physicians (SCP). In 2018, she was presented with



Dr. Michelle Staples-Horne

the Bernard P. Harrison Award of Merit at the 40th annual National Conference on Correctional Health Care.

She received her medical degree from Morehouse School of Medicine and her master's in public health from Emory University. Her clinical experience includes pediatrics at Columbia University and Preventive Medicine at Morehouse School of Medicine.

**It's not what we do
once in a while
that shapes our lives,
but what we do
consistently.**

-Tony Robbins-





Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice

3408 Covington Highway

Decatur, Georgia 30032

404-508-6500

publicaffairs@djj.state.ga.us

<https://djj.georgia.gov/>