



THE RESIDENTIAL CIRCLE-UP

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

June 2022



Becomes Canvas For “New Beginnings” Mural

During the school intersession week of March 21-25, the residents of Unit 67, facilitated by Counselor Eva Skillman, began a discussion of the concept of “Spring/New Beginnings.” The residents were prompted to come up with a visual representation of what the idea of “New Beginnings” meant to them, which was to be presented in a mural they would create later that week. Residents mapped out images, poetry, and concepts they had learned in treatment that made them think of different forms of “New Beginnings.” One resident stated, “To me, it meant with spring coming up, starting over, it’s like spring cleaning. You’re rebuilding yourself for the rest of the year.”

(See “Mural,” page 3)



**Deputy Director’s
Message**
Joyce Holmon

From COVID To New Normals

COVID-19 created a time of uncertainty and unease for all of us in the last three years. However, it is often in the most uncertain and difficult times that we learn and grow the most.

I believe that, as a division and as an agency, we have seen a great deal of growth in our practices as a direct result of COVID-19. We have learned how to harness the power of

(See “Message,” page 3)

Staff Appreciation

Residential Services staff continue to go above and beyond to support and encourage the youth at Bon Air JCC. Bon Air supervisors have noticed this good work, and would like to take the opportunity to recognize staff for the great work they do.



Desiree Walker
Community Manager

I want to highlight Emerald City's team for their endless dedication and drive to make all of their events seamless and successful. I would like to personally thank the team for coming together and making sure that our two events (Emerald City Challenge and Fall-La-Ganza) in 2021 were executed with the objective to foster teamwork, unity, trust and a dynamic partnership. A very special thank you to community coordinators Larry Jackson, Jermaine Bullock, and Jermaine Washington; RS IIs Paige Peterson, April Sanders, and Mark Hurdle; counselors Ayonia Mitchell, Eva Skillman, Douglas Carroll, and Ashley Leigers; RPICs Pam Williams and Rukiya Bellamy; and last but not least rec staff Cortez Smith.

You all dedicated both your time and monetary resources to ensure that our residents had a phenomenal and unique experience. Your acts of kindness do not go unnoticed and I appreciate you and all that you contribute to the agency's

cornerstones for youth development. Let's continue with the momentum in 2022 and remember that excellence is intentional."



Russell Jennings
Superintendent, Bon Air JCC

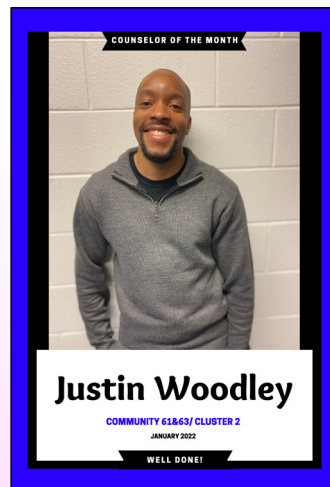
I wish to recognize our Bon Air JCC staff who oversee the expansion and existing schools for the amazing job they do daily in both schools. However, I specifically want to recognize two individuals: Resident Specialist Aquanetta Carlos and Resident Specialist Marshae Jones. They both consistently put forth extreme measures daily, to ensure the existing DOE is safe for staff and residents. RS Carlos and RS Jones do an excellent job working together and collaborating with unit staff and teachers to ensure a smooth transition to and from school as well as class exchange. They both have established a healthy rapport with the residents, and on most occasions, they can get residents to comply with their directives. RS Carlos and RS Jones are effective communicators, role models, and team players daily.

These veteran staff are an asset to Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center, and I truly appreciate their everyday contribution. I thank them for their dedication and hard work. Excellent job!

COUNSELORS OF THE MONTH

Bon Air JCC counselors continue to demonstrate excellence in service to our youth. They have a collaborative nature that is made clear whenever there is a new announcement for Counselor of the Month as e-mails flood in to

congratulate the new recipient with kind words of support and praise. In case you missed it, see below for the December, January, February and March Counselors of the Month as chosen by their peers:





Mural (Continued from page 1)

Using the Bon Air tennis courts as their canvas, the residents mapped out a “quilt,” marking off sections for each of the nine residents to create their images. While some residents worked on their section independently, all residents ended up collaborating with each other and assisting with drawing and sharing ideas. The sunny spring weather sustained, and residents enjoyed

working for over two hours on the mural, taking up over a quarter of the tennis courts.

When the mural was complete, the residents circled up to process the activity. “It brought everyone together,” one said. “We set aside our differences, and instead of acting like a bunch of kids, we acted like one big family.”

Message (Continued from page 1)

technology in a more comprehensive way through collaborative documents and online meetings. We have used teleworking options where possible and appropriate, and minimal telework continues to be permitted. We have increased health-conscious practices such as higher levels of disinfection and ready supplies of hand sanitizer in every room. Although we may see a decline in some practices such as masking, there are many things that will remain a part of our daily lives as we move into our new normal.

Staff are still encouraged to consider virtual meetings whenever possible. This provides more flexibility for staff who work in different locations or remotely as it cuts out travel time. Similarly, staff should continue to explore other ways to work collaboratively from a distance. This can include collaborative documents and presentations on Google Drive, e-mail polls and surveys to check-in with your teams, and even your e-mail chat feature. We will also continue to offer and encourage virtual visitation for youth and their families as a

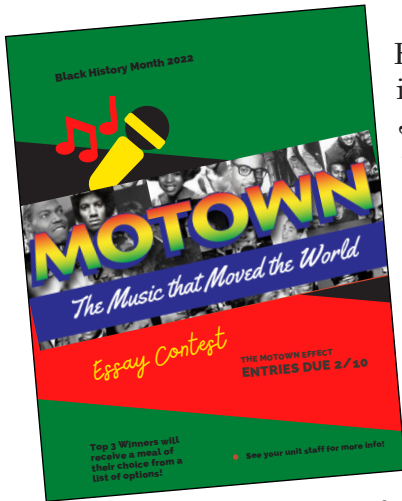
supplement to in-person visitation.

We also will maintain heightened awareness of our hygiene practices. You are still encouraged to avoid close contact such as hugging or shaking hands on a regular work day. Consider personal boundaries and comfort levels of others before engaging in such contact. Continue to have in-person meetings in spaces that allow the attendees to spread out as much as possible with a goal of three feet between participants and be sure to have hand sanitizer readily available.

As we move into summer, I encourage you to be mindful of the risks of COVID-19 as you travel or even in your own community. These health-conscious practices will help us prevent the spread of any illness to include yearly infections such as the flu and any future occurrences of COVID-19.

Your perseverance has been admirable throughout this pandemic, but take heart in knowing that these struggles have made us stronger, more resilient, and better equipped to face any challenges the future may bring.

Music, Movies and Photos Teach During BHM



To observe Black History Month (BHM) in February, Bon Air JCC sponsored three weekly activities for the residents. The first week was titled “**Motown Effect.**” All units viewed a 15-minute YouTube video titled “The Motown Effect.” It highlighted the accomplishments

of African Americans in music and how their music influenced the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Six residents from three units participated. Essays were well written and really showed that they were paying attention to the video. One resident wrote, “As a people, we went from fighting for our rights, to fighting and killing each other. What is going on? Why are we disrespecting each other?” In a nod to popular songs by Marvin Gaye and Aretha Franklin, another noted, “Artists over the past few years have influenced and coached us to be subjected to the harmful messages. This has led us to be filled with hate and anger toward one another while fighting the everyday battle of drug addiction, murder, crime and sex.” A third spoke about the “ongoing racism in every country and the police brutality of blacks and other minorities in hope of changing some of the outcomes of such instances,” and referenced the George Floyd tragedy.

The second week’s activity was titled “**The Green Book.**” All units received an article titled



“The Green Book: The Black Travelers’ Guide to Jim Crow America” by Evan Andrews and a copy of the 1936 book, “The Negro Motorist Green-Book” by Victor Hugo Green. The residents were asked to read the article and use the article and the book to answer 20 questions. This was to be done as a

“As a people, we went from fighting for our rights, to fighting and killing each other. What is going on? Why are we disrespecting each other?” – From resident essay in “Motown Effect” contest

Mutual Help Group and upon completion, the unit was to submit their questionnaire for eligibility in Movie Night. Nine units submitted their completed questionnaires, then received snacks and the movie for viewing. The movie, “Green Book,” was an adaptation of the story of Dr. Don Shirley as a world-class African-American pianist, who is about to embark on a concert tour in the Deep South in 1962. In need of a driver and protection, Shirley recruits Tony Lip, a tough-talking bouncer from an



Italian-American neighborhood in the Bronx. Despite their differences, the two men soon develop an unexpected bond while confronting racism and danger in an era of segregation. Residents were very excited about the movie night and said they learned a lot about traveling during the Civil

Rights Movement.

The third week’s activity was titled “**10 Black Photographers.**” All units were given an article titled “10 Black Photographers Who Shaped History” by Laura Powell. The residents were asked to read the article and choose something about the article that interested them, including specifics about one or more photographers. They wrote brief 100-word essays and submitted them for eligibility in the photo contest. They then were given access to a digital camera and were escorted on campus to take pictures of various scenes, people, activities, etc. They were asked to pick one photo to submit in the photo contest to document what they believe will shape the world today. The three residents who participated all turned in OUTSTANDING submissions.

The winners of all Black History Month competitions received a certificate and a lunch of their choice from Popeye’s Restaurant.

CTM Staff Training Employs Therapies Used With Residents

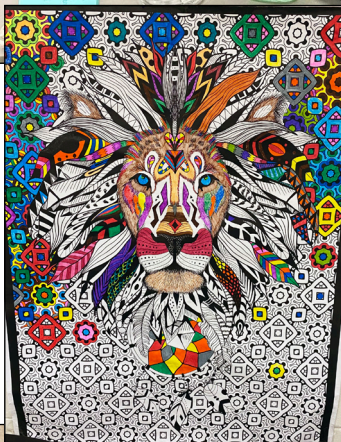
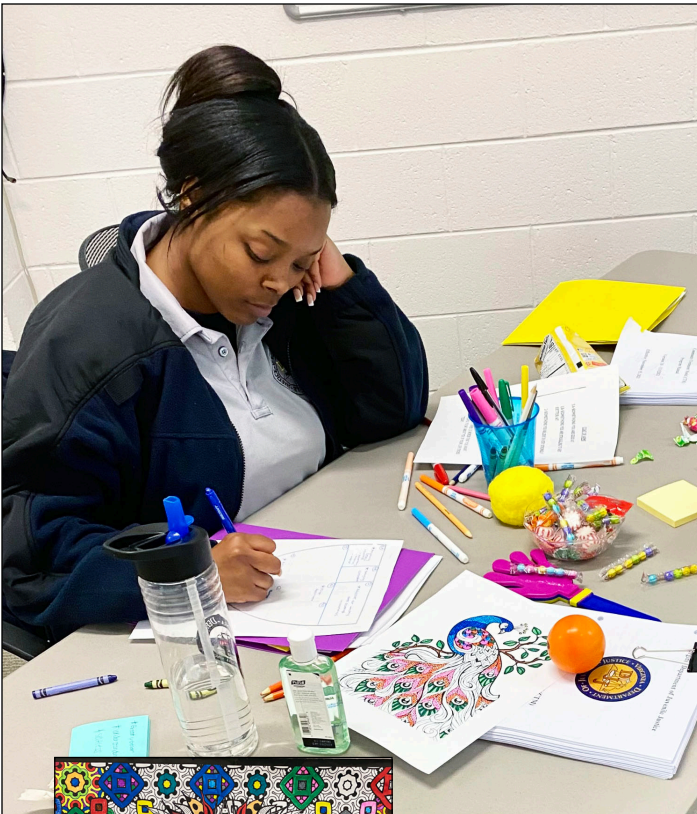
The Residential Practice Improvement Coaches (RPICs), Pam Williams and Rukiya Bellamy, continue to host CTM-specific training for new hires and veteran staff. The RPICs are dedicated to bringing fidelity to the CTM by providing engaging trainings that incorporate many of the therapeutic strategies staff will employ with the residents in their unit.

The RPICs also incorporate video clips from popular shows and films like “Remember the Titans” and “Gomer Pyle USMC” to demonstrate the do’s and don’ts of leadership. This provides new hires with an understanding of how to recognize good leadership as well as opportunities for growth. It also supports the development of their own leadership styles as they consider their new roles and promotional opportunities for the future.

Jairod Barnes, a new community coordinator, said he would be taking away and implementing “an understanding of the intentionality behind therapeutic engagement with residents and collaborative efforts of a multidisciplinary team including BSU, RS staff, and Counselors.” He also noted that he appreciated learning and understanding the “why” behind the ways we keep our residents engaged.

Another important facet of the RPIC CTM training is creativity. They incorporate this into structured learning activities to demonstrate how this may be used with youth in the units, but they also provide creativity breaks. During these breaks, the trainees may choose to color at their stations or contribute to a community art piece that several cohorts add to until it is complete.

“This is the most fun I’ve had in training,” said newly hired RS-I Briyana Bey. “Being able to color when we get tired is really effective. They make it easy to pay attention.” The RPICs continue to impact new and even existing staff to ensure we are all providing our residents with the best services and care possible. These sessions help staff understand the importance of the therapeutic model and relationships by having the staff experience them firsthand. As long as the RPICs continue to provide quality training to enhance and maintain the fidelity of the CTM, our residents will continue to benefit from their time at Bon Air JCC.



Above: “Being able to color when we get tired is really effective,” says RS-1 Briyana Bey. Below: Counselor Justin Woodley.

