



COLORADO
Division of Youth Services
Office of Children, Youth & Families



ANNUAL REPORT

Division of Youth Services


Colorado Department of Human Services
Office of Children, Youth & Families

January 4, 2021

Fiscal Year **19**
20



Welcome to the Division of Youth Services **Annual Report 2019/2020**



The report highlights youth population and achievements, stories of success youth achieve while in the Division's care and the care of community partners throughout Colorado.

2020

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

“Our work is challenging, yet rewarding. We have a strong commitment to open doors for young people to become all they can be”

Greetings,

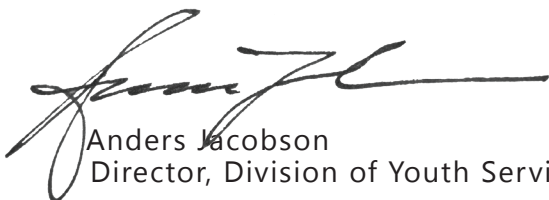
The Division of Youth Services is excited and proud to share this Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2019/2020. The report will provide a snapshot of our youth, programming, challenges and successes. I am honored to share with you how our staff and the youth in our care continue to face challenges head on and prove their resilience time and time again.

Over the year, we saw an increase of nearly 10% in diploma and GED achievements in spite of a reduced total population. Our education programs rose to the occasion in the early months of COVID-19 social distancing and continued to provide youth high quality education services to help the young men and women in our care achieve their goals. This fiscal year there was an expansion of a partnership with Colorado State University Pueblo allowing youth to earn college course credits in a large array of disciplines. This year, we began the process of implementing positive changes to the DYS Treatment Model including hiring new clinical team leads and increasing clinical services to the youth in our care. As we continue to move forward in implementing the expanded treatment model we continue our focus on single purpose youth centers and smaller and more homelike environments. The large Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center was transitioned into three smaller youth centers. In addition, Spring Creek Youth Services Center was transitioned into a single purpose treatment center where we can keep youth closer to their home community, while Zebulon Pike took on the role of detention only services. We are hopeful this will prove to be a successful method of care for our youth’s overall success.

We celebrated these successes in the midst of a global pandemic. Beginning in March, we worked to quickly reduce the youth population by an astonishing 30% to create physical distancing to further protect as many youth, staff, and community members as possible. We highlight the hard work and dedication it takes from our staff members as we continue to experience an ongoing increase in the need for formal mental health and substance abuse treatment needs for youth entering our youth centers. Between FY19 and FY20, we experienced the largest spike in the percentage of youth committed to DYS on violent offenses in the past decade, moving from 31% to 41% of newly committed youth. These increases also include 92% of our youth requiring treatment level services for substance abuse.

These challenges do not diminish the strong passion and commitment to help young people become all they can be. Our work is challenging, yet rewarding. We have a strong commitment to open doors for young people to become all they can be. We collect these moments throughout the year and present them as testament to what is possible and the purpose behind our daily drive to encourage, support, and inspire those around us.

Throughout the year, I am thankful for the continued support, efforts, and unwavering ability to put the needs of youth first. I am incredibly grateful to be a part of this community and the DYS team.



Anders Jacobson
Director, Division of Youth Services

What is the role of the Division of Youth Services?

The Division of Youth Services (DYS) provides for the care and supervision of youth committed by the District Court to the custody of the Colorado Department of Human Services. DYS operates 12 secure facilities that serve youth between the ages of 10-21 who are pre-adjudicated or committed. In addition to residential programming and treatment services, DYS administers juvenile parole services throughout Colorado.

What is the DYS Treatment Model?

In 2015, the Division set out to create a renewed, integrative approach to health services delivery. The behavioral treatment model included a four-phase process that moved from foundational components such as the revision, adoption, and expansion of comprehensive standards of care, to implementing the behavioral health services framework between 2015-2017, and then to operationalization and phased implementation including a pilot model and the beginning of implementation at youth centers in 2018-2020.

The Division of Youth Services moved to a trauma-responsive treatment model in 2015 as a part of a movement towards serving the youth in DYS care while considering all socio-ecological domains. The implemented changes to the DYS Treatment Model have shown remarkable progress and improvements over the last several years. Specifically, in fiscal year 2020, the division successfully initiated the following:

- Increased clinical services to the youth, even in the midst of COVID restrictions and precautions.
- Hired new Clinical Team Leads to ensure cross-system implementation and oversight.
- Laid out new curricula and training processes for direct care staff.
- Developed specific action plans to best implement the strategic plan, integration of trauma-responsive practices, behavior change programs, and the DYS Treatment Model within youth centers.
- Set the date for full implementation (January 2021), with certain tasks being phased in.

This four-phased approach combines researched and best practices and strategies for the positive development of youth. The expansion of behavioral health services refined the process for easier implementation across all DYS youth centers. By adjusting caseloads and management requirements and increasing oversight to ensure consistency across youth centers within DYS. The full implementation of the planned treatment and service changes is on schedule to be completed at the end of fiscal year 21.

What are the DYS Mission and Vision Statements?

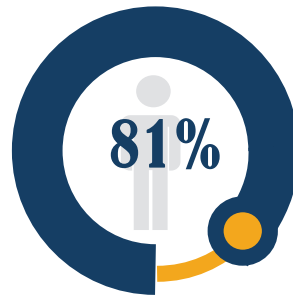
Mission: to protect, restore, and improve public safety utilizing a continuum of care that provides effective supervision, promotes accountability to victims and communities, and helps youth lead constructive lives through positive youth development.

Vision: Achieving youth success and safer Colorado communities

Population Review

Detained Youth Services

Gender Distribution
Detained



DYS is responsible for the operation of Colorado’s juvenile detention “continuum.” The continuum consists of community-based screening to determine detention needs, community supervision strategies, and secure detention in youth centers operated by or contracting with DHS.

22.4

Average Number of Admissions/Releases per Day



223.5

Average Count of Youth Served Each Day



19.6

Average Length of Stay (in Days) for Detained Youth

4,083

New Detention Admissions



31%

of Detention Admissions were for a Violent Charge



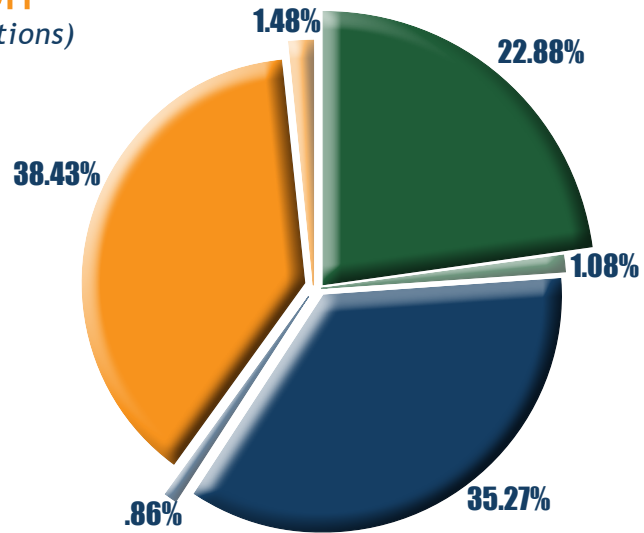
224

Average Daily Bed Count Maximum

Ethnicity Distribution

(across all youth centers and populations)

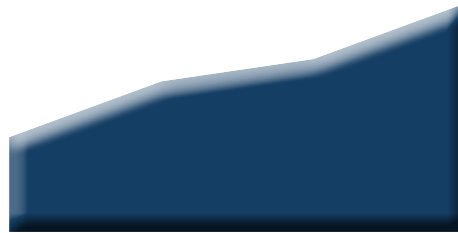
- Hispanic/Latino - 38.43%
- Asian American - 1.48%
- African American - 22.88%
- Native American - 1.08%
- Anglo American - 35.27%
- Other - .86%



Committed Youth Services

Key Finding: Violent Offenses on the Rise

Between FY19 and FY20, the division experienced the largest spike in the percentage of new youth committed on violent offenses in the past decade. During the year, 41% of youth were committed for a violent crime (vs. 31% in FY19). The percentage of youth committed on violent offenses has increased year-over-year for the past 5 years. Moving from 22.9% in FY15, to 41% in FY20. Aggravated juvenile offenders, violent offenders, repeat and mandatory sentences were either higher in FY20, or remain higher than previous fiscal years.



Trending Upward

There was a 32% increase in FY20 in the number of youth served with the committing offenses of homicide/manslaughter. Youth served with these offenses over the last four fiscal years has increased 141%, moving from 17 youth in FY17 to 41 youth served in FY20.

FY17: 17 youth served
 FY18: 27 youth served
 FY19: 31 youth served
 FY20: 41 youth served

Gender Distribution Committed



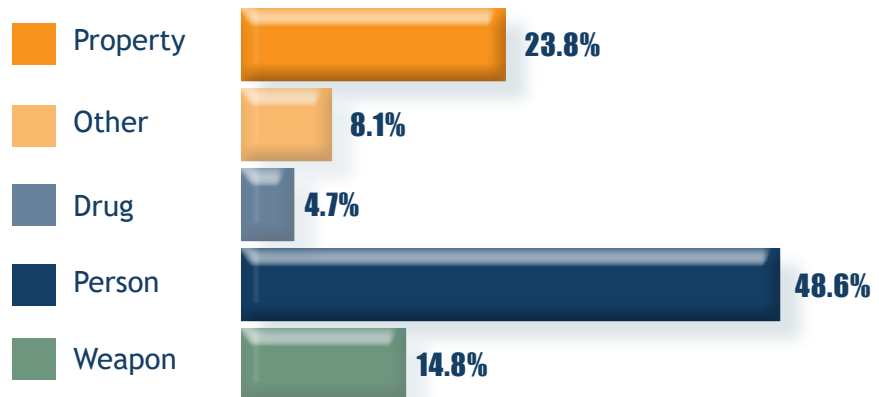
Population Review

Committed Youth Services

The commitment distribution by offense type spiked in FY20 in the person offense category moving from 39% in FY19, to 49% in FY20. During the same period of time, the remaining categories did not fluctuate more than 4% from FY19 percentages (between 1-4%).

Commitment Distribution

By Offense Type

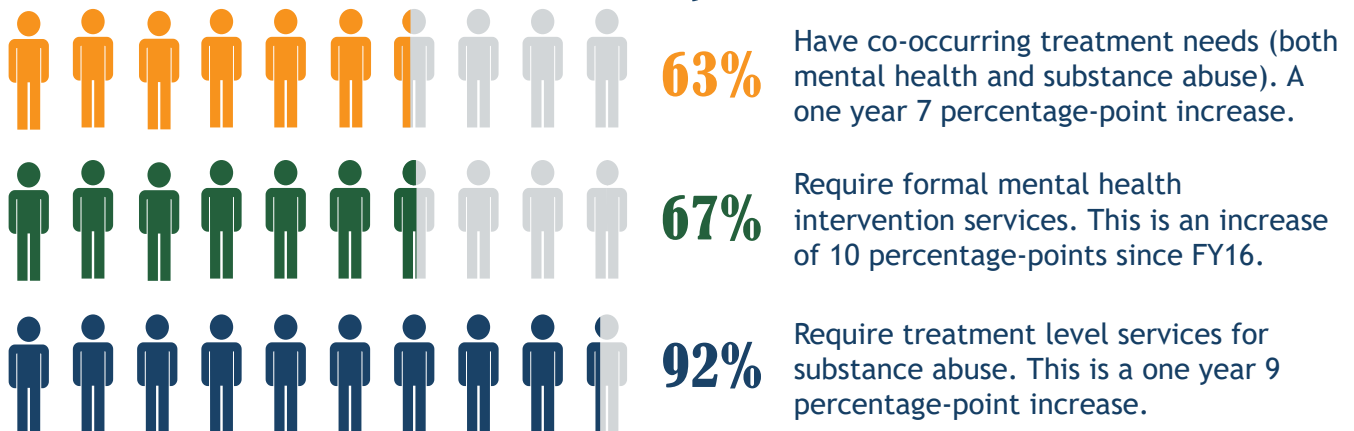


455.3
Average Daily
Population

Treatment Needs

The treatment needs of newly committed youth continue to increase in complexity. In comparison to FY19, the categories of co-occurring treatment needs (increase of 7 percentage-points) and treatment level services for substance abuse (increase of 9 percentage-points) experienced the largest jumps. Additionally, the need for formal mental health intervention services has increased 10% over the last 4 years.

Treatment Needs of Newly Committed Youth





Sharp increase in new commitments for violent offenses - 41% (vs. 31% in FY19).

Average length (in months) of all residential placements

Percentage increase in person crime offenses between FY19 and FY20

Parole Services

Every committed youth exiting DYS must serve six months of mandatory parole. Cases may be extended by 15 months. The Colorado Juvenile Parole Board hears the cases of each youth preparing for parole, sets terms and conditions and has the authority to modify, suspend or revoke parole.

DYS is responsible for the operation of the juvenile parole system. This includes providing parole supervision to each committed youth. A youth's parole officer is also their "client manager" and is assigned to the youth throughout their commitment, ensuring the youth receives the services that meet their specific needs.

Number of youth served



7.2
Average Length of Parole (in months)

207
Average Daily Population of Youth on Parole

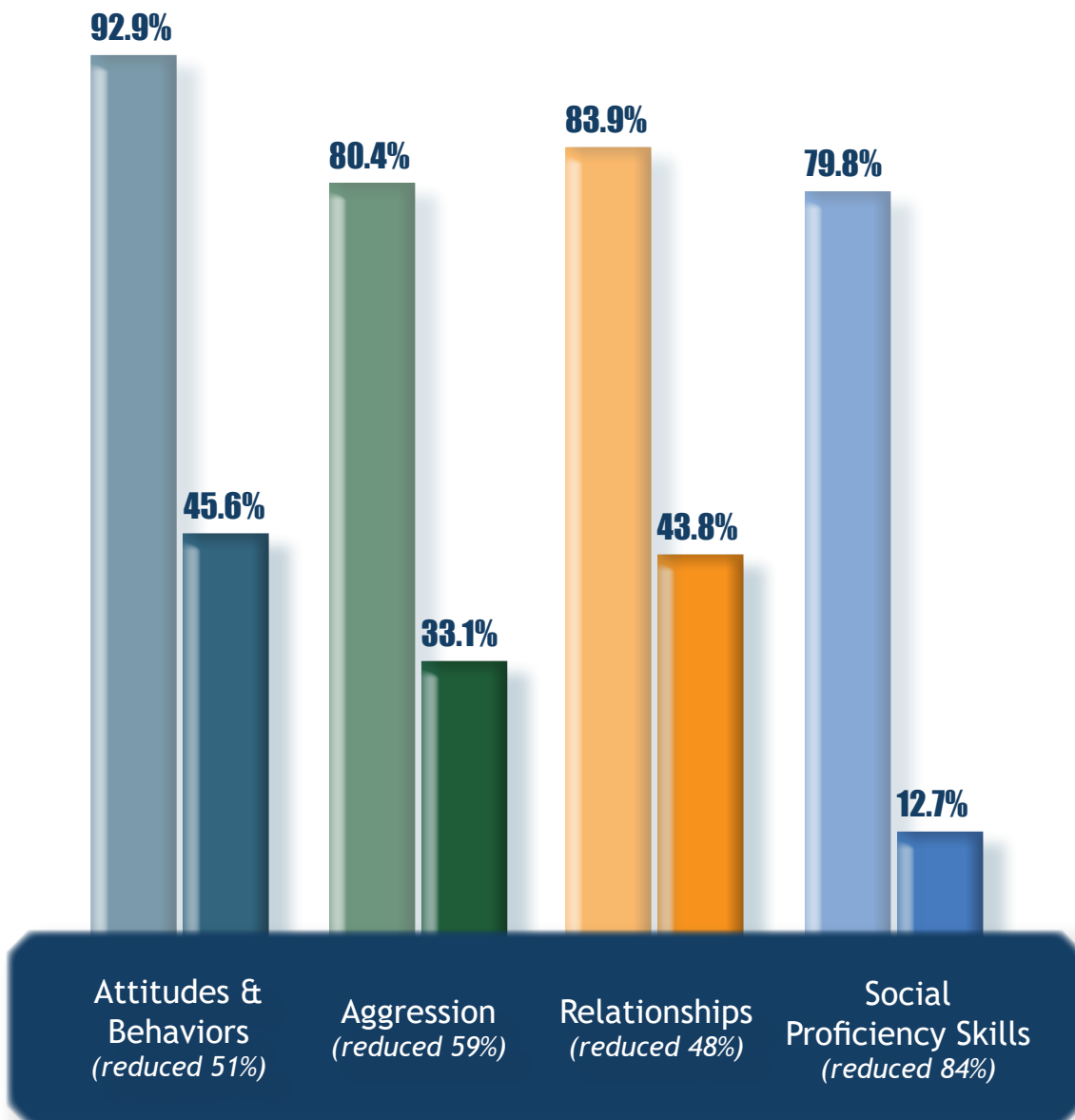
41%
One Year Recidivism Rate*

*Includes all youth that are convicted or adjudicated of new crimes, not just those that return to the system.

Impact in Numbers

When studying the overall scope of services offered to youth by DYS, the potential for long-term impact and positive change is evident. Mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, education, special education services, vocational training and transition services are all a part of the transformational support provided to the youth within DYS.

Changes in Risk Scores from Assessment to Discharge *(for Committed Youth)*



Education Services



264

High School
Diplomas and
G.E.D.'s Awarded



336

Career and
Technical Education
Certifications
Achieved in FY20.



CSU

New Partnership
with CSU Pueblo
to receive college
credit

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) and Colorado State University-Pueblo announced that youth involved in the Division of Youth Services (DYS) will be able to enroll in college courses while they are in DHS care. This partnership will allow youth to pursue higher education beyond vocational programming and into college coursework after attaining their high school diploma or GED. The first classes available include courses such as Psychology, Principles of Management, Sociology, English Composition, and Principles of Macroeconomics. These college credits will be transferable when the youth leave, giving them a head start on completing a degree.

“This partnership is another step in treating and supporting the whole person,” said DHS Director Anders Jacobson. “We are committed to providing youth a range of educational and vocational opportunities that motivate and create excitement about the future. Not only is the division thrilled about this new partnership, the youth in our care are eager to jump into this opportunity to learn and further align themselves for success in the community.”



Transformations

DYS Culture in Action



Supporting Positive Change

During the height of community protests nationwide, the staff and youth of the Adams Youth Services Center (AYSC) along with members of the Brighton Police Department came together in solidarity for a peaceful protest. The goal was to demonstrate that, now more than ever, we need to come together as a community to support positive change in our country and celebrate our diversity.

During a three day process, staff facilitated a group discussion with the youth on how to appropriately and safely express emotions around injustice and reform. The youth created poster boards to voice their thoughts and feelings. On the final day, everyone engaged in an AYSC community “blackout” in support of the George Floyd protest for positive change. During that time, the group took a moment of silence, on one knee, to honor those who have suffered as a result of racial injustice.

“The message allows and teaches youth how they can express themselves. It also shows relationship building between youth and staff, because there are common interests that we share, believe in, and will stand up for. Our staff and youth find ways to work together on these issues, teach appropriate ways to advocate for themselves, and do it in a safe manner,” said Director Anders Jacobson.

Gender Specific Programming

February 2020 was the official start of Gilliam Youth Services Center Gender Specific program with their female youth. The girls participated in great discussion groups and started identifying their short term and long term goals. During their first week, two of Gilliam's staff, YSSI Dow and YSSIII Berger, painted the girls nails. They had many different colors and sparkles that they could choose from. On Fridays, there is an "incentive hair day" based on group participation throughout the week. YSSI Parker, YSSI Medina, and YSSIII Ramirez style the girls hair for them. They were able to choose between straightening, curling and braiding their hair. This is a great example of how to build healthy relationships with youth and has been an awesome experience for both the girls and staff. The positive feedback received has been outstanding.



Moving Obstacles Using Theatre

A youth at the Campus at Lookout Mountain (CALM) had the original idea of writing a play that showcased two sides of himself, one that was involved in drugs and gangs, and the other that was looking toward a pro-social and successful future. He recruited peers and teachers to help with the acting. As the rehearsals began, the team realized they needed help with the curtain and the lights so additional youth joined in to help. The team practiced a total of 12 hours in rehearsals, plus all the additional work to put into writing the words that were spoken throughout the play.

The youth that put together his story for the play reported that this task was one of the toughest things that he has done and that he was the obstacle that most stood in his way. The whole crew supported him throughout the process. During the play, this youth opened with his memorized poem--a poem he could not even read out loud when he first began practice--and walked through the audience up to the stage without an issue. He took the audience through a journey of his life, showing his crime, the impact he had on his victims, his time at the Campus at Lookout Mountain, and what he envisions for his future. The most powerful moment was when he went to walk back to the stage and he thought everyone was leaving, but his team told him to turn around, because behind him was a standing ovation.



Transformations *(continued)*

Second Chance Scholarships Awarded

The Second Chance Scholarship (SCS) was awarded to five youth applicants in June 2020. These youth had to demonstrate personal growth, development of future goals, and be interviewed by the SCS Advisory Board. The youth were able to participate in a virtual ceremony to receive their awards due to the pandemic procedures. Each of these youth received \$10,000 in scholarship money that was sent directly to their school of choice along with a professional portfolio as a part of this award. These youth are pursuing degrees at The University of Colorado Boulder, The Community College of Aurora, The Emily Griffith Technical College (two youth), and Red Rocks Community College. Unfortunately, the funding for the Second Chance Scholarship did not survive budget cuts for the next fiscal year. DYS and the SCS Advisory Board hope to resume the scholarship opportunity in the future.



Teen Health Week

At Adams Youth Services Center (AYSC), the goal of Teen Health Week was an opportunity for youth to learn more about taking control of their own health and to encourage healthy choices. The week kicked off with youth making collages on specific areas of teen health and presenting them to each other. Midweek, the youth center hosted a Health Fair where local health professionals set up booths with information on their specialties. Each booth had a specific focus and kept youth engaged with activities, games, and conversations with the specialists.



Each booth had a specific focus and kept youth engaged with activities, games, and conversations with the specialists.

Throughout the week the youth carried a “Health Passport,” earning stickers for every event attended and booth visited. Each youth had opportunities to earn extra stickers for behaviors that demonstrated going above and beyond to help make Teen Health Week a success. At the end of the week, the youth were able to choose a prize based on the number of stickers they received.

Thank you to the dedicated AYSC staff, the internal and external DYS partners, and the many community partners that made Teen Health Week such an educational, stand-out event!



Cultural Competence

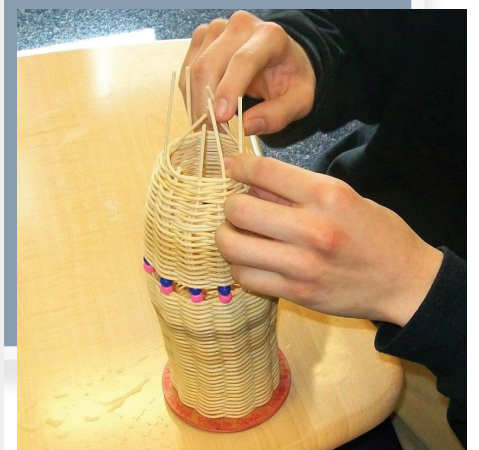
It is important for individuals to fully understand their own culture along with the cultures of others. Doing so provides youth the ability to not only understand, but also communicate and effectively interact with individuals across cultures. Developing an understanding and positive attitude about different cultures is the key to cultural competence.

In the Humanities courses at Mount View Youth Services Center (MVYSC), students are learning about just that: cultural competence. The students at MVYSC studied and learned about

four different cultures in January: Abenaki from the Northeast, Sioux Indians from the Plains, Ute from the Rocky Mountains, and Navajo from the Southwest.

MVYSC students gained knowledge on different key aspects within each culture and had the opportunity to explore the traditions and attributes of these cultures in order to fully grasp the importance of being culturally competent. Specifically within each culture, students studied the cultures common way of life, one or two mythologies that define the cultures world-view, and the current state of the culture in today's modern society.

To dig even deeper into the topics, students created their own baskets using old weaving techniques. This project allowed the students to get a hands on experience of the historical practices within these cultures while also gaining knowledge about different people and their way of life.



Giving Back

Alfred Andrews, Correctional Trades Supervisor II, and Candice Berger, Behavioral Health Clinician, accompanied a youth from Zebulon Pike Youth Services Center to deliver meals and hand out clothes to homeless individuals in the community. They spent the rest of the afternoon preparing food for the soup kitchen at the Mission Culinary Academy. The youth participating stated that the days activities opened his eyes to homelessness and never wanting to be in a similar situation as he gets older. He was proud that he was doing something good to help others in need.





Sienna's Story

A Young Life Renewed

Sienna has experienced more in her 21 years than most her age. She was committed to DYS at 16 and spent a large part of her formative years within DYS centers. In this story, Sienna shared her own experiences and the impact that the Division of Youth Services has had on her life and her future.

“Let me tell you ladies something” our supervisor’s voice echoed through the unit, “when I was at the academy, training for this job, I was told that only one out of every ten kids I work with will be successful. One.” At this time, I had been at Mt. View for about ten months, detained. At that moment, I made a decision. I remember letting that statistic sink in and I thought to myself, “I’m going to be that one.” This turned out to be the first of many steps I took to change during my time in DYS. This is my story of how being incarcerated saved my life.

Like many other youth that come into DYS, I didn’t come from the greatest background. From ages 13 through 15, I was living a hopeless and reckless lifestyle. I was taking refuge in drugs, violence, self harm, and other high risk behavior and in December, 2015 shortly after I turned 16, I was arrested for serious felony charges and brought to Mount View Youth Services Center. I was charged as an adult and was originally facing 48 years in prison. Accepting that

brutal possibility and the overall situation was a struggle I wrestled with and I could not wrap my head around the circumstances I was facing and what I had done. However, as the weeks turned to months, there was no denying or escaping my new reality. Not for a long time. I began to realize that I had a lengthy journey ahead of me with challenges that were too far away to even be in the picture yet. I had to learn to take it one day at a time.

I started to focus on the positive aspects of the situation I was in; I was relieved and grateful for having a safe place to sleep every night, for every meal I received three times a day, and for the opportunities I never had during my childhood. I found a love for sports and exercise, I worked in the facility kitchen, did well in school, formed connections with staff, and thrived on routine and structure. I discovered a lifestyle I didn’t even think was possible and that is what ultimately led me to choose to change my life.

A year and a half later, when I was 17, I was finally sentenced. I took a plea deal for five years committed in DYS (with no time served) followed by four years on adult probation. When I signed the plea, I decided that I was not going to resist the time I had ahead of me but instead, take advantage of the chance I had to become a better person. One month later, I left Mt. View, the place I called home, and was transferred to Grand Mesa Youth Services Center in Grand Junction. When I first arrived, I struggled to adapt to the new environment that was very different from where I was in Denver. I was originally hard headed and close-minded. However, when I started to settle in, I began to open up and get involved with the program and I excelled in everything I did. I was in the culinary arts program and spent thousands of hours working in the kitchen (literally). Grand Mesa’s culinary arts program offers youth numerous certification opportunities and real life kitchen and cooking experience. Working in the kitchen at Grand Mesa was one of my favorite things to do where I found a passion and learned some incredible skills and gained valuable experience. I earned two culinary arts certificates as well as ServSafe certification training. Outside of the kitchen, I was often chosen to clean, lead treatment groups, help staff, and assist with tours of the facility. I grew to be responsible and mature and continuously strived for my goals. I earned my high school diploma and enrolled in college- two things I never thought I was capable of doing. I received several outstanding achievement awards and vocational certificates including OSHA-10 and fire safety. I became determined to stay out of trouble and for the first time, my environment allowed me to focus all my time and energy on self-growth, improvement, and nonviolent pursuits. I spent my free time reading self-help books and autobiographies, drawing, working out, running, and writing slam poetry. I was almost always doing something productive which made me feel like the time I spent incarcerated was not wasted.

What I wasn't prepared for, however, was that true change is messy. My growth came with many ups and downs. I made several mistakes, messed up, and failed and sometimes lost sight of what I was working for, but it was in the times of struggle and challenge that I built character and learned the most. It wasn't easy to get rid of my bad habits and change my thinking patterns. There were times when I acted out in the aggressive ways that were once my norm, but the difference between mistakes I made when I was out and the mistakes I made while locked up, was that I now had a strong, extensive support system. I found myself surrounded by people who believed in me, even when I gave them reasons to give up.

I was lucky enough to have my dad and step-mom who were there for me every step of the way after I was arrested. They were my biggest cheerleaders and I learned that I could depend on them and confide in them. Our relationship grew significantly stronger with the help of DYS and the division's emphasis on family engagement. I had a supportive and caring client manager, Champaign. She constantly went above and beyond to advocate for me and help me with anything I needed. She was easy to talk to, processed difficult situations with me, and was involved in all areas of my progress. I was given a Youth Advocate Program (YAP) advocate/mentor through Hilltop, Dominique. We spent the 3 years I was committed building a relationship that became fundamental to my success. Dominique was (and still is) like a sister to me. She was the first positive role model I ever had and proved to be reliable, consistent, and trustworthy. She has helped me overcome many challenges by always pushing me to be the best I can be. Dominique's example reassures me that change and success is possible no matter who you are or what your past is.

In addition to those outside supports, I also had 24/7 support from staff who worked with me day-in and day-out. I don't think a lot of people realize that most DYS staff do so much more than just their job; their jobs are to supervise and get youths' needs met, but

the ones I've met and been close to over the years bend over backwards to encourage, teach, lead, and help. Since I've been at Grand Mesa, there are a handful of staff that have been here since day one and they have practically raised me from 17 to 21. I think of them as parents and I admire and respect the time, energy, and effort they have put in me. They have taught me that it's okay to make mistakes but to always bounce back. They taught me to be open minded and compassionate, always saw the best in me, and guided my choices to the right ones. I thrived on the praise for my achievements and their genuine care.

The impact that Grand Mesa has had on my life also goes beyond the walls. When I earned the privilege to go out on community passes, I was introduced to new pro-social activities that I loved like hiking, cross-fit, swimming, and performing slam poetry. I was given opportunities to be involved in a community in ways I never had been before. I participated in volunteer work at Homeward Bound-serving food for the homeless and at the Roice Hurst Humane Society-working with animals. I was able to visit the Colorado Mesa University campus which inspired me to attend college and I was also able to go out with Dominique and my family where we went to the movies, shopping, and out to eat. These were all things I had never really experienced and enjoyed before.

Finally, the most impactful part of my commitment has been treatment. I was blessed to have a therapist like Trish. I worked extremely hard for a long time with Trish, replacing 15 years worth of pain with positivity and resilience and processing my trauma through an intense form of therapy called EMDR. It was a long, difficult, emotional journey that I couldn't have made it through without her. Aside from therapy, I completed every unit and treatment group offered. I learned about the importance of victim empathy, restorative community justice, independent living, and moral reasoning. I also practiced the sanctuary commitments and ART (Anger Replacement Therapy) skills daily. In fact, I still use the SELF (Safety, Emotion, Loss, Future) model and apply social responsibility, growth and change, emotional intelligence, and nonviolence to my everyday thinking and actions.

My time incarcerated in DYS was a life-shaping occurrence. I grew up in facilities and honestly, I wouldn't have it any other way because I would not be the woman I am today. DYS has given me all the tools I need to lead a healthy, successful life - something I would never have if I had continued on the path I was on. I hope to see more youth take advantage of the programs in DYS and use their time to better themselves because it is ultimately what you do with the time that makes you or breaks you. I am forever grateful for my time in DYS and all the firsts they provided me along with the opportunity to live the life I was being denied.



Youth Success

Morgan

Morgan's early life began with many hardships. He was the second eldest of four children growing up in an environment that exposed him to significant early childhood trauma. He learned to cope by turning to drugs and violence as that is what was familiar to him. Since Morgan entered a safe and nurturing environment focused on his success, he has shown a tremendous amount of growth and change in his life. He understands the impact and seriousness of his crimes and continues to find ways to better his path. While in treatment, he earned the opportunity to participate in several activities in the community including working with the Partners Work Crew. This allowed him to achieve one of his goals which was paying his restitution in full. In hopes he could also impact youth on a similar path he was on, he spoke to other high risk youth about making better choices, challenging themselves, and changing their lives for the better.

Morgan has a strong passion for expressing himself through slam poetry. This form of poetry not only includes writing, performance and competition, it also includes audience participation giving it high-energy. This past year, he competed in a slam poetry competition and was awarded the winner and given several accolades including the title, "up and comer" in the slam poetry circles.

Morgan earned his high school diploma and was chosen as one of the speakers at his graduation. He was transitioned to a community treatment center and completed the four month program with honors. He continues to learn new skills and has committed to being an active participant in his future success. He has maintained full time employment, helps with community service projects, and continues to reach out to the slam poetry community to compete and share his talent.



Bryan

Arriving in DYS at a young 14 years old, Bryan set out to work hard in treatment, taking advantage of every opportunity extended to him. He came to understand the impact his actions had on others and worked hard to restore the community he harmed. Whether it was presenting to staff and teachers at the middle school where he committed his offense, or completing hundreds of volunteer hours on projects such as gardening to donate produce to homeless shelters, sewing protective masks for staff and youth during COVID-19, or presenting to over 50 client managers on his journey of growth and change--he was dedicated to giving back.

To focus on improving his path, he received his high school diploma, participated in a construction trades program, and enrolled in college level business courses. During his parole hearing, he had the opportunity to apologize to his victim's mother; handling himself and his messaging with grace and integrity. The victim's mother recognized the changes Bryan had made and offered her support for his parole, which he was unanimously granted early in September 2020.

When asked what he is thankful for, Bryan stated he was thankful for all of the DYS professionals that take their time to work with youth as it made a difference in his life. Bryan is now working for a painting company, continues with his treatment, utilizes his supports, and is actively saving money to purchase his first car.



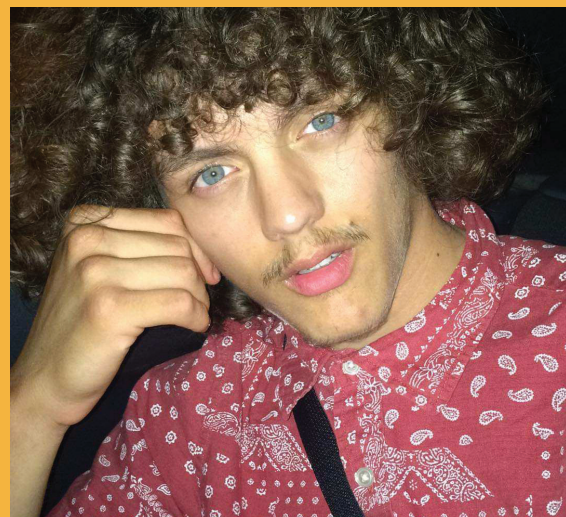
Joseph

At only two days old, Joseph was placed in an orphanage in Russia where he was exposed to an environment of neglect and physical abuse. He was adopted at the age of two and was often anxious in large group settings, struggled in confined spaces, and initially struggled to accept his adoptive mom as a maternal figure--something he never had in the orphanage.

Joseph came to DYS when he was 16 years old. He was a bit of a handful, but was determined to earn his high school diploma, work on his treatment areas, and move towards his goal of independent living. Tapping into his strong work ethic, he achieved his high school diploma early, at the age of 17. While in treatment, he connected with his therapist and together, along with his mom, he was able to work through the childhood trauma that he still carried. While in placement, he participated in the culinary and automotive programs where he developed his enjoyment of food and cars. He also developed a relationship with his mentor, David Ochoa, from Strengthening Lives LLC which he continued while on parole. They regularly met for sessions of chess, coffee, or their favorite activity, fishing, and just catching up on the week. "Joseph has shown he is making a change in his life. He has a strong work ethic and is incredibly determined" said Ochoa. "He has struggled in life but has shown that with patience and determination he has been able to accomplish his goals."

Joseph was able to parole early home to his mom where he continued working with the therapist he had formed a bond with during treatment. He has been working since his second day of parole, and is now attending a technology college to focus on his aspiration of becoming an automotive technician.

Below: Joseph with his mentor, David Ochoa, during a fishing trip



Bradley

Entering DYS at the age of 12, Bradley had already given up. He felt that there was no hope for him and he truly believed he would end up in adult prison. Early on, Bradley accumulated numerous incident reports. He was angry, and maintaining consistent behaviors and regulating his emotions was a struggle. With the support of his mom and his Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT), he began utilizing Tai Chi, Chi Cong, and participating in EMDR sessions with his therapist to decrease distress associated with past traumas. He was awarded his high school diploma and began to establish a network of support with staff at the youth center. He also developed a positive attitude and gained control over his negative behaviors. He was finding success with the alternative treatment methods and expressed the desire to continue them.

When it was time for Bradley to move to a community step-down program, he was apprehensive as he did not want it to impact his progress. His client manager and therapist worked with him on short community outings and processed through his emotions and anxieties. Within five months he completed the program and was paroled out of state to live with his mom, stepfather, and siblings. This was the first time he had lived with his family since he was 12 years old and he found himself surrounded with the family and support system he needed.

Since paroling, Bradley has obtained full time employment, has a supportive girlfriend and contributes to the household. From his first admittance at 12 years old to the young man he is today, Bradley, with the help of his MDT, residential treatment staff, and his family, changed the course and direction of his life.

DYS COVID Response

1

Press Release

On March 4th, Governor Jared Polis issued a press release directing all state agencies to implement the State Emergency Operations Plan. DYS immediately implemented pandemic plans.



DYS Test Staff & Youth

As health officials changed requirements, DYS adapted their models to follow every protocol. This included proper PPE within the youth centers and medical screenings prior to entrance.

2

3

DYS COVID Tracking

The division has tracked every staff and youth test since the State of Emergency was declared. For transparency, DYS COVID data and testing statistics are available on the public facing DYS dashboard located on the division's website.

13

Positive Staff Cases March-June 2020

4

Positive Youth Cases March-June 2020



DYS cleared 494 staff to return to work within the first 4 months of testing through screening, testing, and quarantine practices.



Photo by Mufid Majnun on Unsplash

30%

Reduction in overall youth population since March due to cap reduction and executive orders to release youth early.

DYS COVID Response

As soon as the State of Emergency was issued on March 4, 2020, DYS began implementing the pandemic plans specific to each youth center and office. Additional supplies began flooding into youth centers, including masks, hand sanitizer, medical supplies, and testing equipment. Systems were set into place through CDC, CDPHE, and CDHS guidelines for screening and testing staff and youth within youth centers. Staff in administrative buildings that were not essential employees reporting to on site work locations were instructed to work from home. DYS leadership met and continues to meet daily to share updates, best practices, and testing results across the division. This communication has allowed youth centers to adapt with changing requirements and data reporting needs.

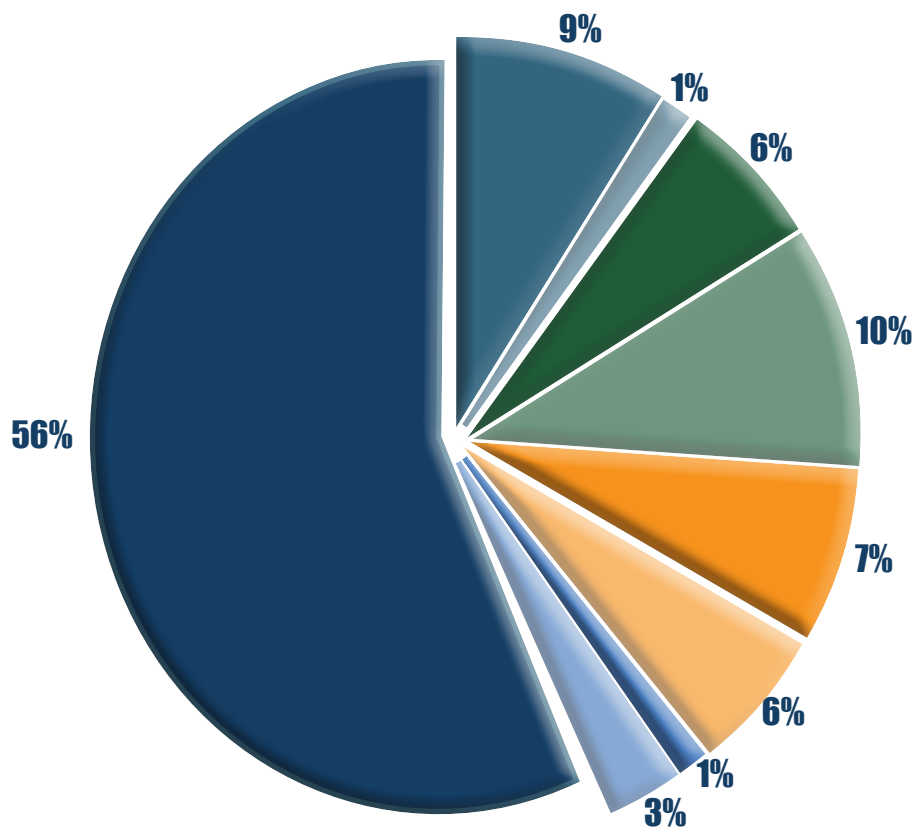
Executive Order 2020 034

On April 11th, an executive order was signed by Governor Jared Polis ordering the “Temporary Suspension of Certain Regulatory Statutes Concerning Juvenile Justice, Regional Centers, and Behavioral Health Due to the Presence of COVID-19.” This order allowed DYS and the parole board to issue early parole releases to juveniles who met the criteria, reducing the overall youth population by 30 percent. Through this executive order, the DYS youth centers were able to reduce possible transmissions within the youth center population. From the initial tracking in March through the end of June 2020, no youth contracted COVID-19 within the youth centers. Four positive youth were found during new admission testing.

Financial Review

DYS Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Expenditures by Category

DYS would like to thank the Colorado State Legislature for their support in 2019-2020. The funding backed DYS in the efforts to continue movement towards smaller, single-purpose youth centers and the expansion of home-like environments for youth. An increase in pay for direct care staff was funded in FY20. Furthermore, funding permitted the addition of 13.5 mental health positions across youth centers which allowed for better ratios, supported single purpose facilities and decentralized assessment.



Behavioral Health & Medical Services - 9%

Boulder Impact - 1%

Client Management - 6%

Colorado Youth Detention Continuum - 10%

Contract Placement - 7%

Education - 6%

Director's Office / Administration - 1%

Parole & Transition - 3%

Secure Youth Centers - 56%

THANK YOU

DYS would like to recognize the following individuals for their time and assistance in making this report possible.

Report designed and produced by:
Heidi Bauer, Director of Communications
and Legislative Affairs
Gail Andrews, Communications Specialist

The DYS Data & Analysis Team, Report Data
Champaign Gottbehuett, Sienna's Story
Ruben Sandoval, Morgan's Story
Mario Villegas, Bryan's Story
Stephanie Fumia, Joseph's Story
La Donna Cruson, Bradley's Story
Vanessa Glasoe-Triplett, Youth Photography pg. 1, 5-7, 11, 16-17
Autumn Sjölund, Photography pg. 23-24

***DYS & COVID:** The Division of Youth Services would like to acknowledge that all COVID precautions and protocols were followed within youth centers. Any stories, photos, or data that does not reflect these guidelines took place prior to the time restrictions were required.

Data Resources

Colorado Department of Human Services. (2020). *DYS Publication and Reports: Monthly Population Report, Management Reference Manual, Education Outcome Evaluation, and Recidivism Evaluation*. Retrieved from <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/publications-reports>





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