

From The Corner Office

Peace...the Perfect Present

The turkey has been devoured and Thanksgiving is in the rear view mirror. December is here with all of the hustle and bustle that comes with preparing for the Christmas Holidays. Lurking behind the holly and jolly of this season of light, there are many struggling with the darkness of despair.

Try as we might to bring good cheer, there will still be many who are challenged to find quiet in their broken spirits this holiday season and there will be many justifiable reasons for their unrest. We've shared the fable below with our newsletter readers many times in the past and yet...the message within never grows old and is always relevant. I invite you to read below and see if you don't agree:

The Picture of Peace

There was once a king who offered a prize to the artist who could paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The king looked at all of the pictures. After much deliberation he was down to the last two. He had to choose between them.

One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for the peaceful mountains that towered around it. Overhead, fluffy white clouds floated in a blue sky. Everyone who saw this picture said that it was the perfect picture of peace.

The second picture had mountains too. These mountains were rugged and bare. Above was an angry gray sky from which rain fell. Lightening flashed. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not appear to be a peaceful place at all. But, when the king looked closely, he saw that behind the waterfall was a tiny bush growing in the rock. Inside the bush, a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest. She was the perfect picture of peace.

The king chose the second picture. "Because," he explained, "peace is not only in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace is in the midst of things as they are, when there is calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."

And that fabled King from long ago was and is absolutely correct. May our children, our families, the young, the old, the prosperous and the poor find their way to peace in even the most trying circumstances. Wishing all the gift of peace... the perfect present.

Laura Cooper,
Executive Director



BLESSINGS TO...

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 10/2 Argentina Harris
- 10/2 Dakota Nguyen
- 10/3 Teresa Demunn
- 10/4 Cayla Huffman
- 10/5 Lamar Harris
- 10/12 Dentry Perkins
- 10/13 Latoya Lockhart
- 10/14 Debra Witherspoon
- 10/15 LaShonda Thomas
- 10/21 Sandra Blackmon
- 10/21 Jessica Bradford
- 10/29 Shuntonya Bullard
- 10/29 Jacqueline Jordan
- 10/30 Sha'Ron Scott
- 10/31 Darryle Powell

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 11/1 Belinda Roby

- 11/1 Mariah Williams
- 11/3 Jessica Hudson
- 11/4 Terry Woodall
- 11/6 Jaquana Brown
- 11/6 Norma Jackson
- 11/14 Lorraina Buchannon
- 11/23 Cynthia Kilgore-Berry
- 11/29 Kayla Bates

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 12/4 Mary Todd
- 12/5 Shanquetta France
- 12/12 Alexis Steward
- 12/14 Eriquel Florence
- 12/19 Nadia Jenkins
- 12/22 Sefako Tidwell
- 12/23 Omolara Ojewole
- 12/23 Mitzi Rogers
- 12/29 Amy Tatum
- 12/29 Hosea Watkins
- 12/30 Jenea Whitaker
- 12/31 Iesha Dunn

NEW HIRES

- Belinda Roby – Consultant
- Broderick – Residential Specialist Journeys
- Chamaya Kelley – Residential Specialist Detention
- Charday Olan – Director of the Bethesda Learning Academy
- Dentry Perkins – Residential Specialist Detention
- Jacqueline Dawson – Residential Specialist Detention
- LaQuanda Nystrom – TFC Social Worker
- Lauren Langley – Administrative Assistant (IIHS)
- Rafyel Lewis – Teacher's Aide
- Stanley Garrett – Coordinator of Security and Surveillance
- Venisha Cunningham – Residential Specialist Detention



CENTER SCENES...



A SUNSET

A long serving former Board member and stalwart of the Opelika community has passed. Mrs. Ozell Preston served on our LCYDC Board of Directors with dignity, conviction and compassion for over a decade relinquishing her Board service only when her health became compromised. Her passion for children extended deep into the community as she found ways to organize functions that uplifted and provided for those in need. The sun has set on a life well lived. However, the many good works continue - our community is better because Mrs. Preston lived. **Photo: Mrs. Preston is pictured in 2003 second from the left during the dedication of the LCYDC Charles Edward Smith Central Administration Building.**



SPECIAL THANKS TO YOUTH FOR CHRIST

East Alabama's Youth for Christ, YFC, reaches out to young people everywhere and from every walk of life, by networking with local religious institutions and like-minded community partners. This organization makes a tremendous effort to

promote both the Word of God and social responsibility.

Our Transitional Living and Independent Living Programs, would like to give a warm and sincere thanks to Ms. Tabitha Vasilas, the Juvenile Justice Ministry Director for the East Alabama Chapter of Youth for Christ. On November 15, 2018, TLP and ILP celebrated their Annual Thanksgiving Celebration. Ms. Tabitha Vasilas volunteered to be the keynote speaker for that event.

Again we would like to offer our sincerest thanks and warm holidays wishes to the East Alabama Chapter of Youth for Christ.



CONGRATS TAKIA!

Former President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers gain access to meaningful employment, higher education, advanced training material, and a variety of support services in order to succeed in the current workforce and to sustain a competitive edge in the ever-changing global economy.

Lee County Youth Development Center would like to congratulate one of our very own, Takia. Takia is a young adult residing in our Transitional Living Home and has a strong commitment to hard work, excellence and education. Not only will she be attending Lawson State Community College in January 2019, she is receiving a grant through this fantastic program.

Good Luck Takia! LCYDC is so proud of you!



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE OPELIKA ROTARY CLUB!

As we celebrate the Holiday season, we are so thankful to the Opelika Rotary Club for their generous donation of Halloween Costumes!

The children in our IIHS, TFC, and Project Uplift Programs went Trick or Treating in style

CRADLE AND CROSS

Each year as Christmas nears, our Director of Continuum Services, Mr. Terry Woodall, goes to extraordinary lengths in erecting a holiday scene to remind us all of the reason for the season. As our children, families staff and visitors enter and exit our main campus, all are reminded that had there been no cradle in Bethlehem there would have been no cross on Calvary. Thank you, Mr. Woodall, for this wonderful gift of goodness and light.



HOLIDAY IN THE PARK

Holiday in the Park, one of the most exciting local Holiday attractions of the season, is back for the 5th year in a row at the Six Flags Over Georgia. Filled with holiday cheer and Winter Wonderland themes, this event attracts thousands of tourists from the surrounding area. In appreciation for their hard work and dedication to excellence, our TLP/ILP students were rewarded with this pre-Christmas treat. **Great job everyone! You've earned it!**

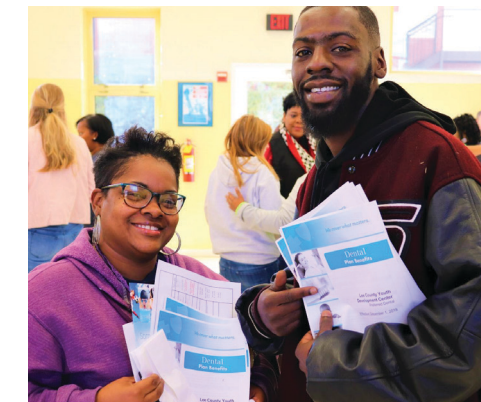


EMPLOYEE HOLIDAY MIXER

Colleagues are invited to gather in our Central Cafeteria on Friday December 14th from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. we will enjoy good food and fellowship and take time to recognize our employee anniversaries. Join us for good cheer!

THANKFUL FOR GIVING

Although Thanksgiving is past, there is never a shortage of things to be thankful and grateful for at LCYDC. We thank the **Quilters Group from Auburn's Trinity Lutheran Church** for the gift of wonderful quilts which have been shared with our TLP teens. We thank the **City of Opelika's 20 Under Forty** group for the giving of their time and talents to install a basketball goal system and donate three lovely benches on our main campus. Our Board Treasurer, **Robert Smith with Auburn Bank** has donated two sets of Auburn University Football tickets so that our clients and staff could enjoy the game day experience while rooting on the AU Tigers. When we pause to count our blessings there are many individuals and organizations that we must count twice – we are continually thankful to those who give, who believe in children and support our mission.



BISCUITS AND BENEFITS RECAP

Lee County Youth Development Center would like to thank all of our benefit vendors, administrators and plan managers for making Biscuits and Benefits a success.

- Frank Weber, Murray Spikings - AIR/TASC Healthcare
- Brad Wilson, Matt Clegg - 401-k Retirement
- Kandy Sasser - BC/BS Healthcare
- Allen Brewer - Life Insurance/Disability
- Opelika Sportsplex and Healthplus Fitness
- Cora McGriff - Student Loan Feasibility Surveys

