

Rookie Staff Person of the Year

Nominee Name: Jennifer Beck

Detention Center: Chester County Youth Center

Start Date: August 27, 2007

Current
Position/Title: Youth Center Staff

Nominated By: Gary Blair, Director

Chester County is very proud to submit Jennifer Beck's name for "Rookie Staff of the Year" for 2010. Jennifer has been a welcome addition and also an outstanding employee in our center since she was hired.

Jennifer time and time again demonstrates a positive and professional attitude when working with the residents. Her high energy and spirit encourages others to display a positive attitude while working with our residents. Jennifer contributes to the team by displaying sound leadership qualities during training and shadowing period for new staff to help them understand policies and procedures. Jennifer is capable of working not only with the female population in detention and shelter but has worked on the male unit when needed for coverage. During the two snow blizzards this past winter, Jennifer worked the units and stayed two straight days to cover shifts for staff that couldn't make it into work.

Jennifer communicates well with staff, teachers, and residents. Her positive attitude is appreciated by residents and staff. Jennifer is always looking for ways to better herself through training and has been proactive not only in mandated DPW 3800 Regulation Training but also through outside training sponsored through Juvenile Probation Office and other outside agencies. Jen is always eager to attend training and is always at the top 10% of staff to complete her required 3800 training for the year within six months.

Jennifer is currently enrolled in the Juvenile Court Judges Commission (JCJC) Master's degree program through Shippensburg University and has one year left remaining to finish her degree. She will be the first staff in our center to be accepted and complete the program. Jennifer is also a member of Chester County's Vision and Values team. This team is made up of members from the Human Services organization. Throughout the year they are responsible for events to promote collaboration and recognition of employees within the Human Services department.

Jennifer's high energy and zeal have been infectious throughout the center to those residents and staff she comes in contact with. She possesses a "can do" attitude with dealing with the residents and she can be relied on to complete assigned task. Her desire to become a better role model to the residents coupled with her increased knowledge through the JCJC Master's program will enhance her ability as a Youth Center Officer. I will be expecting more from her in the future. I am proud to submit her name for "Rookie Staff of the Year".

Staff Person of the Year

Nominee Name: Matt Howard

Detention Center: Chester County Youth Center

Start Date: August 14, 2006

Current
Position/Title: Youth Center Staff

Nominated By: Gary Blair, Director

Chester County is proud to submit Matt Howard's name for "Staff of the Year" for 2010. Matt was hired in 2006 and a year later he was hired as a full time staff. He has made great strides within the organization and has become an ultimate team player.

Matt has made a tremendous impact with the staff and also the residents during his time at our center. He is a very modest and hard working young man who has the residents best interest in mind at all times. Matt is active both inside the center with our year round school program and also within the community. Matt was instrumental this year getting employees to participate in a fund raising program for a local restaurant that burned down. He passed out flyers and also helped set up the event. Matt also helps coach Little League football and baseball with his father.

Matt is an acting supervisor on the weekends and if needed during the week. He carries himself in a professional manner and maintains positive interaction with residents and staff. Matt worked 56 days straight at the center to help out due to limited staffing this year. Matt was acknowledged by the administration this year for staying at the center two straight days during a snow storm to provide coverage for staff who couldn't make it in. Matt can be called upon and be available to cover a shift if needed without much notice. He is extremely reliable and doesn't hesitate to ensure the safety and security of the residents of our facility.

This year, Matt was the recipient of the Visions and Values award. This award is presented to a human service staff member who goes above and beyond in their profession. Matt was nominated for this award by his peers which made the award that much special. He was nominated over much senior staff in our facility.

I have had the pleasure of watching Matt mature as a Youth Center Officer. Matt is a confident leader who pushes others to do better. He understands the importance of communication and shares information in a timely fashion. Matt is a bright, intelligent young man who can be counted on in crisis situations to maintain composure and make the right decision. He is part of the future nucleus of staff that will have a positive impact within our facility. Through his dedication and commitment he has made a safer environment for the resident of the center. He exemplifies the true spirit of this award and I am so proud to nominate him this year.

Educator of the Year Award

Name of Nominee: Frank Thompson
Current position: BCIU #22 Instructor (Social Studies)
Detention Center Name: Bucks County Youth Center
No. of Years at Facility: 2
Submitted by: Brian Boger, Supervisor Special Services

Please consider this nomination for Frank Thompson of the Bucks County Youth Center as 2010 JDCAP Educator of the Year. I believe that Frank exemplified the criteria for selection during the two years that he served as an instructor in the BCYC secure detention program, as an employee of the Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22. Frank retired from teaching at the end of the 2009-2010 school year.

Frank taught at an allied agency, the Middle Earth alternative school for over thirty years. At that facility he taught primarily adjudicated delinquent adolescents who were court-ordered to that institution. He started a tradition of awarding each graduate of the program with an uncut key. He would explain to them that the key represented their high school diploma. He told them their life experiences would cut the key "but you have to start on your future because you've got the key to success in your hand." When Middle Earth closed in 2008, we were fortunate that the BCIU #22 transferred him to an open position at BCYC teaching social studies.

Primarily Frank is known for the energy he brought to teaching students about history and current events. Even our most "reluctant learners" were unable to avoid being infected with Frank's passion for his subject. No student was allowed to put their head down, or read other material when they were in Frank's class. His motto was "You're here to learn!" Frank worked hard to tie whatever American or world history topic he was teaching to the news of the day so that students would see relevance. Frank always found ways to expand his topics to educate students about science, math, law, economics, philosophy, religion, etc. From a restorative perspective it is clear that all residents at BCYC who were exposed to Frank's class left our facility more academically competent than when they arrived. When Frank's fellow teachers describe him they use words like generous, supportive, great listener and master teacher. Outside of the classroom Frank was always seen in playful banter with his students letting them know that he knew them well and cared about their situations. Parents at visits would frequently inquire about "the teacher named Frank that has my child more interested in school than he ever has been before."

The staff members in secure detention use the words "team player" to describe Frank. He's a guy who made coming into our facility and making connections with staff, supervisors and program look effortless. Frank organizes a three day "Olympics" event at the end of each school year participated in by all of our staff and residents. It is a program we think so highly of that we have nominated it for the JDCAP Special Event award. Probably the most interesting thing about Frank's tenure in detention is that the staff persons themselves vie to trade assignments to attend Frank's class because they enjoy it so much. One of the best compliments I've heard was a staff person say that they enjoyed Frank's class "because I learned more about social studies than I did in high school."

Nurse of the Year Award

Name of Nominee: Tawanda Roberts

Detention Center: Shuman Juvenile Detention Center, Allegheny County

Number of Years Employed: 3

Current Position: Registered Nurse

Ms. Tawanda Roberts, R.N., has been working as a part of the Shuman Center Medical Department since 2007. In addition to her duties at Shuman, she is also employed full-time as an R.N. at The Veterans Administration Hospital, where she serves as a Unit Manager.

Her commitment to nursing and the health of the young people at Shuman is well-known and respected by her peers in the medical department and by the staff of the center.

During a transitional period here at Shuman, when there was no Nursing Supervisor on staff, Ms. Roberts worked closely with Shuman Administration and was instrumental in keeping the Health Services Department running and providing quality service until that position was filled. She received a special commendation from Deputy Director Lynette Drawn-Williamson for her outstanding efforts and leadership.

She is currently pursuing her Masters Degree in Nursing at Waynesburg University. And with all that she has going on; she still makes the time to be a devoted wife and mother.

Tawanda was selected as the Nurse of the Year at Shuman Center's 2010 Employee Recognition Awards Banquet. She evidences a strong commitment to the health and well-being of Shuman's residents. She has been especially active in addressing the needs of Shuman's female residents.

Her professionalism has been recognized by others outside of Shuman. In 2010 she was the recipient of the University of Pittsburgh's Cameo Award and recognized as a "Distinguished Registered Nurse."

Her outstanding performance and pleasant demeanor are critical in reducing the anxiety that many residents feel about seeking medical care. We, at Shuman are proud and honored to have Ms. Roberts as a part of our medical staff.

Submitted by:

Marc A. Booker, Training Manager
Shuman Juvenile Detention Center
412-665-4133

Program of the Year

Name of Program: Youth Yoga

Detention Center: Shuman Juvenile Detention Center- Allegheny County

Name of Staff Involved: Joanne Spence, Raymond Robinson, Nicole Gartz, Rhonda Carpenter, James Adams, Denise Downey, Lisa Stevenson, Tyrone Norman and youth care workers

Ms. Joanne Spence, executive director of Yoga in Schools, approached Shuman Center with an idea to introduce yoga into the detention setting. The aim of the program was to lower the number of incidents of aggression by teaching the staff and residents the benefits of yoga, while creating a more peaceful environment on the living units. This would be accomplished through decreased stress, better sleep, more energy, and better mood management.

In order for the program to succeed, staff buy-in would be critical. Accordingly, all staff attended a yoga course during their monthly training prior to any work with the youth. Through the training, all staff gained an understanding of the youth yoga program because they had the opportunity to experience it for themselves. Staff were encouraged to utilize the yoga techniques during their workday as a way to manage their stress.

The youth yoga program was implemented as part of our regular recreation schedule three days a week. Each week every unit would have 45 minutes of yoga instruction. All residents were given the opportunity to participate, but the program was not mandatory. Recreation staff and youth care worker involvement encouraged many youth who were hesitant to participate. Yoga mats and blocks were distributed and soothing music was played in the background. The sessions involved a brief discussion of the benefits of yoga, instruction on the yoga postures for that day, and then a relaxing cool down. On numerous occasions, youth who initially refused to participate, would eventually join the group after witnessing how the other youth were enjoying the program. Many of our most disruptive youth welcomed the program, with some even coaching other youth to participate.

After each session, the youth were given surveys to complete. An overwhelming majority of responses indicated the youth felt better after the sessions, had a better understanding of their physical and mental health, and would continue to participate in the program. Most of the youth also stated the program led to a better atmosphere on the unit.

Since the program ended, we have had two of our recreation staff trained as yoga trainers so we can continue the program on our own. An independently funded documentary is also being produced about the program to show the benefits of introducing yoga into detention centers.

Submitted by:

Raymond Robinson, Social Services Manager
Shuman Juvenile Detention Center
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SPECIAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

Detention Center: *Bucks County Youth Center*
Name of Event: *BCYC Olympic Games*
Staff Involved: *Staff from Intermediate Unit #22 and Bucks County Youth Center*
Submitted by: *John Corr, Deputy Director, 215-340-8300*

As the grand finale to our 2009-2010 academic year in June, BCYC held a very special two day event for our residents called the 2nd Annual BCYC Olympic Games. The event was once again organized by Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22 teacher Frank Thompson who previously ran a similar event at his former school for 30 years. The event encompassed two days of Olympic -style events and created participation by each and every resident in detention and our residential program. It helped to foster self-esteem for individual residents who either did very well in events or who tried something new that they never had done or thought they could do. It also inspired teamwork and camaraderie amongst the residents because there were awards for team accomplishment and for team spirit.

The structure of the days included three different event stations set up in our outdoor courtyard, gymnasium and "mall" area. Residents rotated through each station at timed increments and completed events that were either timed or counted by Intermediate Unit teachers or BCYC Youth Counselors. The list of events over the two days included the following: Long Jump, Jump Rope, High Jump, Push-ups, 3-Point Shooting, Free Throw shooting, Hot Shots, Ping Pong, Football Throw, Weight lifting, Tug-of-War and Shot-Put. There were also two food contests: Watermelon eating and Pie Eating. Individuals received points for finishing 1st, 2nd or 3rd in an event. There were also points issued for participation amongst our dorms which created residents encouraging other residents.

The event was a great overall success on many levels, mostly because the kids had a couple of fun days to end the school year. As individuals, many of them shined by showing off their physical abilities and being rewarded for it. As teams, the residents pulled together, cheered each other on and displayed great sportsmanship. Prizes that were awarded included candy bars for individual event winners; Gatorade for all participants; hoagies & cheese steaks for overall winners in total points (male, female, under and over 16 years old). There were also awards for the individual displaying Most Spirit and a pizza party was awarded to the dorm with most overall points. More importantly, event winners had their names added to the BCYC Olympic Wall of Fame!

The other neat part of the event was the cooperation that ensued, not only among residents but staff as well. In order for the event to be the success it was required teamwork between Youth Counselors, IU Teachers, Kitchen staff and Administration. After two straight year of success, the BCYC Olympics promises to become an annual event.

Distinguished Service Award to an Individual Within the Field of Detention

Name of Nominee: Howard Fleming

Detention Center: Shuman Juvenile Detention Center, Allegheny County

Number of Years Employed: 12

Current Position: Child Care Worker

If one were to try to describe Howard Fleming's service at the Shuman Juvenile Detention Center in one word, I think the most accurate word would be "steady". Mr. Fleming's calm and professional demeanor and his engaging personality provide a steadying influence in an environment that can be highly stressful and unsettling.

Mr. Fleming has served as a Child Care Worker at Shuman for 12 years, and in that time has become one of the most respected leaders among his peers, and has also earned the respect of his supervisors and Administration alike.

Mr. Fleming regularly works directly with Shuman's most difficult residents in the high impact unit. This unit houses most of Shuman's older, more violent residents; and the residents with the most serious charges. Yet even in this difficult environment, Mr. Fleming establishes order and structure while creatively allowing the residents to maintain their dignity and self-respect. He is truly committed and concerned about the lives of the young men and women at Shuman, and is often called upon by his peers to de-escalate angry or upset residents, even outside of his own unit.

Mr. Fleming has been trained as a certified instructor of Safe Crisis Management, and has represented Shuman Center at local and state-wide conferences. Mr. Fleming can always be counted on to contribute good ideas that aid in our efforts to improve life at Shuman for the residents and the staff.

Mr. Fleming is a devoted family man; and one who is motivated by his deep faith to always seek the best in himself and in others.

Submitted by:

Marc A. Booker, Training Manager

Shuman Juvenile Detention Center

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**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD TO AN INDIVIDUAL OUTSIDE THE
FIELD OF DETENTION IN THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA**

SCOTT FEIFER

Scott Feifer has been volunteering his services at the Lancaster County Youth Intervention Center for seven years where he has conducted Writing Circles. Scott Feifer is an English/Literature teacher at Landisville Middle School and has taught there for 21 years. Scott spends anywhere between 6 and 10 hours a week offering his programs to our residents in both the detention and shelter at our facility making sure he gets to meet with each on-level group. Scott has been recognized and awarded both the Jefferson Award for outstanding volunteer service and the Teacher Impact Award given by WGAL News 8. Scott is the kind of volunteer and person that is able to draw out the best in others and we are so very thankful to have him be a part of our team here at YIC.

Scott has a unique ability, during his Writing Circles to inspire residents to openly express their feelings, thoughts and emotions and to begin to deal with some very difficult issues. During a recent time here with our residents, Scott led them through the reading of Walt Whitman's poem "Miracles" and they then used his poem to create their own writing coming up with their own collaborative "Miracles" poem. Residents are given the choice to share their writings with the group. It is at this time that we see the residents open up the most. We are able to hear the residents share traumatic events in their lives without fear of being judged. Even if the residents do not share their writings they were able to write them down and in a sense get their feelings out. Scott will always then respond to these writings that he received with some well thought out comments about what the individual had shared in confidence with him. Sometimes Scott has even had our youth care worker staff join in and the residents are able to hear the staff share different events in their lives and this sharing helps to build positive relationships between residents and staff. This example I've shared of a recent Writing Circle was the inspiration for our Miracles Mural that was just completed and hung in our shelter wing that was done in cooperation with Scott's Writing Circle and the Art Smart program.

Scott also conducts Circles at Manos House a local placement for those youth with drug and alcohol issues, and at the Lancaster Library. Scott will often donate books to our library and has encouraged numerous of our residents toward reading more regularly. This year Scott will be presenting at JDCAP's annual conference and will be able to share his love and passion for why he conducts the Writing Circles so faithfully. Scott has the ability to reach youth in a manner that is hard for many and for this we at the Lancaster County Youth Intervention Center nominate him for JDCAP's Distinguished Service Award to an individual outside the field of detention in the state of Pennsylvania because of the many contributions he has made to the Lancaster community as a whole, but more specifically to those youth he has impacted with his genuine reflections and faithful dedication to being there for them as a listening ear.

Submitted By:
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