

Please consider this nomination for the “Central Bucks Family YMCA/Bucks County Youth Center Normal Opportunities for At-Risk Minors Program” for the *2018 JDCAP Special Event of the Year Award*.

The Bucks County Youth Center (BCYC) Residential Services Unit (RSU) is a non-secure, residential program for adjudicated delinquents. The facility has twelve licensed beds for male offenders and eight licensed beds for female offenders. Since 1998, the facility has maintained membership with the Central Bucks Family YMCA (CBFYMCA) to provide programming for residents’ physical health, recreational, and competency development needs. As a community-based program, the RSU recognizes the need to provide normalization opportunities for residents consistent with both federal and state best practices regarding institutional care.

In 2017 the RSU was approached by Rachel Mauer (Director of Corporate & Foundation Giving) about creating a grant-funded project to train RSU residents to participate in completing annual CBFYMCA “Y Run 5k Race/Walk” on May 18, 2018 at Delaware Valley University, Doylestown, PA. The model of the program was to utilize a “Couch to 5k” training program on a weekly basis from February, 2018 until the race itself. While program staff accompanied residents to the facility, and participated in the program, the training itself was effected by a dedicated group of volunteer members from the CBFYMCA community led by Mrs. Sharon Schanbacher. The program was supported by a grant from a community, non-profit foundation Today, Inc. of Langhorne, PA.

The objectives of the program were to provide opportunities for RSU residents to engage in an active healthy lifestyle activity, to teach residents appropriate and healthy options for stress and anger management, to create a sense of normalcy by engaging youth in volunteer activities within the CBFYMCA community, and to develop and nurture a sense of accomplishment and pride by creating and obtaining a fitness goal. The program’s success was measured by using pre and post fitness testing at the CBFYMCA and by participation/completion of the “Y Run 5k Race/Walk” on May 18, 2018.

Ten residents of the RSU completed the goal of 100% participation in the “Couch to 5k Training Program” from February, 2018 to the completion of the CBFYMCA “Y Run 5k Race/Walk” at Delaware Valley University on May 18, 2018 along with program staff members and our community volunteer leaders. The event was so successful that we have renewed the training program with the goal of having RSU residents complete the “2018 Travis Manion Foundation 9/11 Heroes Run” on September 23, 2018.