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Contact: Eileen Corson or Kim Parsell
614-466-9854 / 614-395-2122 / 614-623-2209
Kim.Parsell@dys.ohio.gov / Eileen.Corson@dys.ohio.gov

Volunteer to Improve the Lives of Youth!
Consider Mentoring a Youth in the Ohio Department of Youth Services
National Volunteer Week is April 21-27

Columbus, Ohio — Currently 600+ volunteers work with youth involved with the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS). Last year volunteers across Ohio provided 29,739 hours of service to youth in DYS facilities and on parole. The agency offers opportunities for mentoring and volunteering for a variety of time commitments and levels of service. Volunteer training is provided, and volunteers can reap great rewards knowing that they have made a positive impact on the life of a youth.

“The value of a committed volunteer is immeasurable for youth when it comes to personal growth and development,” said Harvey Reed, director of the Ohio Department of Youth Services. “Mentoring is a key to realizing our vision of a *Safer Ohio: one youth, one family and one community at a time.*”

All youth committed to DYS will eventually return to their communities. DYS volunteers and mentors engage youth in a variety of meaningful activities in an effort to teach life skills and aid youth in successful reentry back to their community.

Individuals, community or faith-based organizations interested in making a difference in the life of a youth are invited to call the DYS Volunteer Hotline at (614) 466-9318. Information is also available on the DYS webpage at www.dys.ohio.gov.

Some volunteer opportunities include:

- *Tutoring/Education
- *Youth Group Programming
- *Sports/Physical Fitness
- *Career Exploration
- *Mentoring
- *Teaching Music

DYS is the juvenile corrections system for the state of Ohio and is statutorily mandated to confine felony offenders, ages 10 to 21, who have been adjudicated and committed by one of Ohio's 88 county juvenile courts. DYS operates four juvenile correctional facilities, provides parole services from five regional sites and funds and supports over 610 direct service programs throughout the state.

The mission of the Ohio Department of Youth Services is to improve Ohio's future by habilitating youth and empowering families and communities.

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Editor's note: National Volunteer Week, April 21-27, is about taking action and encouraging individuals and their respective communities to be at the center of social change – discovering and actively demonstrating their collective power to foster positive transformation.