

August 2015 An Extraordinary Year

It was an extraordinary year for the Ohio Department of Youth Services.

Our staff worked diligently to improve the agency during the past Fiscal Year (FY) and is continuing to do so in FY 2016. Although some of the changes have been challenging, we are emerging as a stronger, more efficient operation.

Today, DYS has a reduced facility population, increased safety and security, improved programming and treatment and enhanced educational services. All of these improvements support lasting change in the lives of youth through rehabilitation, education and treatment and ultimately make Ohio a safer place to live.

During FY 2015, DYS hit the lowest facility population ever. The year started with an average daily population of 491 youth in July 2014 and ended with an average daily population of 440 youth in June 2015.

Our efforts to make Ohio a safer place is connected to our Path to Safer Facilities. I introduced the Path in 2014 with the goal of reducing violence, increasing meaningful activities, and engaging family partnerships.

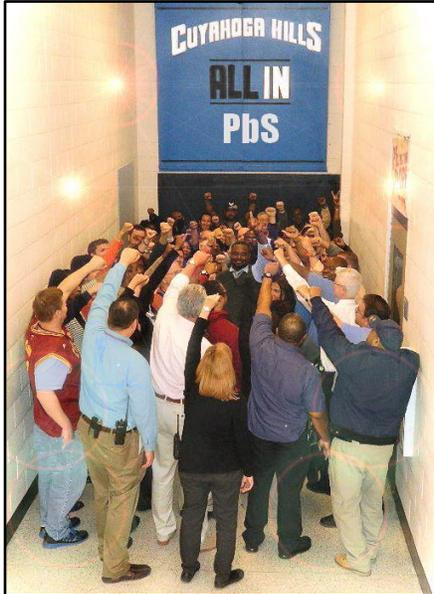
We expanded the Path in FY 2015 to also include the Path to Safer Communities. We are concentrating on preparing our youth for a lifetime of success through heightened reentry efforts with the goal of every youth leaving our care with a solid plan to complete education and/or secure employment.



Keeping youth engaged and active is essential to our Path to Safer Facilities. In January, we dedicated a new activity center at the Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility to longtime volunteers Peg and Bob Warren. The 16,000 square foot Warren Youth Activity Center houses a new gym, chapel and offices.

It was exciting to roll out a new program in FY 2015 called Competitive RECLAIM. A total of \$2.2 million is invested annually to fund programs preventing youth from going further into the juvenile justice system, reducing the likelihood of future offenses and, therefore, the need for more serious interventions, such as out-of-home placement and commitment to a DYS facility.

Our efforts to support community programs are bolstered by the reinvestment of \$650,721. In accordance with a provision in H.B. 153 to realign agency savings, the funds were reallocated in June 2015 to support existing court programming by providing evidence-based training and technical assistance for implementing best practices.



We wrapped up our extraordinary fiscal year with news from [Performance-based Standards](#) (PbS), announcing that the Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility was a finalist of the Barbara Allen-Hagan Award, recognizing excellence in data-driven improvements and enhancing conditions of confinement and quality of life.

Winners will be announced August 14. The facility won this prestigious honor in 2012.

These are just a few of our extraordinary achievements of FY 2015. While there is much to celebrate, there is still much work to be done.

Our sleeves are rolled up as we continue to tackle other challenges in the year ahead: exploring new options for instructing youth in our classrooms so they become lifelong learners, continuing to focus our efforts to retain social workers

and youth specialists, and designing individual treatment and education plans for youth so they are better prepared for successful reentry into their community.

Please take a few moments to review the [FY 2015 Annual Report](#).