

INTEGRITY

PROFESSIONALISM

ACCOUNTABILITY

RESPECT

MARCH
2012

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Youth-made valentines surprise and delight

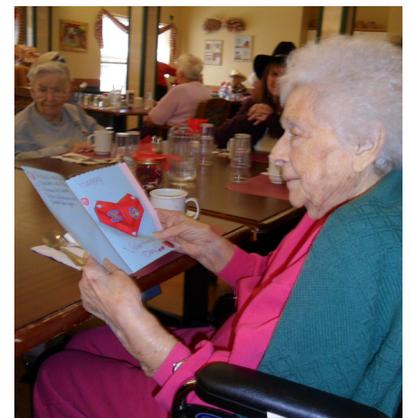
For several dozen residents of an adult foster home and assisted living facility in Burns, Valentine's Day probably doesn't call for a big celebration. But this year the day may have had a little more meaning thanks to cards made by youth at Eastern Oregon YCF.

"You should have seen their faces," said GLC Kristina Baker. "They just lit up. Some of them cried, and one lady offered me money. I said no, this is for you, for Valentine's Day."



The cards were Baker's idea. Monroe High School staff members Sandy Cargill and Arlene Simpson worked with the youth who made the cards. Assisted by her daughters and her mother, Baker delivered the cards to residents of the two facilities and other elderly persons in the area. She said recipients knew the cards came from the facility's youth. The school and facility staff contributed materials for the cards.

"One youth went above and beyond and made 10-12 valentines," Baker said. "It was a positive step in showing our community that our youth can be responsible, do nice things, and give back to the community." ■



This month's masthead photo is by Ken Jerin. You may submit a photo for use as an *Inside OYA* masthead by e-mailing your photo to oya.communications@oya.state.or.us.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

SERVICE AWARDS

The service awards listed are for January 2012.

15 YEARS

Steven Mayo
Washington PPO

10 YEARS

Samuel Black
RiverBend YTF

Dan Boleyn
Hillcrest YCF

Dustin Hamor
MacLaren YCF

Damion Jasmer
MacLaren YCF

Steve Mounce
Rogue Valley YCF

Michael Nissen
Rogue Valley YCF

John Remitar
Hillcrest YCF

Karren Selthon
Rogue Valley YCF

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Leading a mindful, values-based life



Fariborz Pakseresht

I believe it is important to lead a mindful, purposeful life founded on clear values and ethics. Many of my personal values align with OYA's core values, and that is one of the reasons I appreciate working here so much.

At OYA, we have agreed on and embraced four values that are meant to guide our decisions and actions every day – integrity, respect, accountability, and professionalism. These values serve as the basis for how we treat others, the behaviors we model for the youth in our care and custody, and the quality of the work we produce.

By understanding what is important to us, we are able to live and work in a manner that is consistent and meaningful. And, when we act on our values as an organization, we are able to make significant and positive changes in the world around us.

I see these changes every day in the progress of the youth in our care and custody. Through your continued dedication and hard work, we are able to help our youth learn accountability, empathy, and respect. We are able to help them see a positive future for themselves, and change their lives in a manner that strengthens their families and communities, and reduces future victimization. Not all youth are able to succeed, but that so many do is a testament to the values you display and teach every day.

These values also are on display in the long-term system changes we are making throughout OYA. When you hear about the OYA Performance Management Sys-

tem, the Youth Reformation System, and Positive Youth Development, you are hearing about living examples of what it means to be a values-based organization.

We chose these core values because they have meaning. We practice them because we believe in them. For OYA, these values represent much more than words on a poster. They reflect who we are and what we stand for.

I am honored to be a part of this agency and to work with such a talented and passionate group of people. It was humbling to receive so many e-mails and calls congratulating me on having been appointed Director, and I thank you for your many kind words and good thoughts.

A common theme among your comments to me was that you were looking forward to working together to achieve our shared goals. As Oregon continues to face difficult economic times, it will be particularly important for us to do just that – to form and maintain strong and effective collaborations on behalf of juvenile justice and public safety.

I am confident we can succeed in addressing the challenges we face and at the same time improve outcomes for youth. I cannot think of a better group of people to get the job done.

I look forward to all that we will be able to accomplish together for our youth and for all Oregonians. It is a delight to be a part of the Oregon Youth Authority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fariborz Pakseresht". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Fariborz Pakseresht
Director

Nine recognized with Director's Service Awards

Nine OYA employees were recognized in February with Director's Outstanding Service Awards, which were presented by Fariborz Pakseresht and Colette S. Peters. The award is made annually to a staff member or team who has demonstrated outstanding and exemplary service.

Recipients of the 2012 awards were:

Marshal Bixel, who retired from MaLaren YCF last year after 35 years of service, for displaying integrity and character that supported exemplary work with youth and earned the respect of youth and staff alike. He was recognized for assisting youth offenders with values and skills that enabled them to pursue productive, crime-free lives.



Marshal Bixel



Ken Jeske

Ken Jeske, PSO Chief Investigator, who was described as a person of integrity who understands the balance between corrections and treatment, delivers clear direction with high expectations, and always asks how PSO can help a staff member or youth. Jeske supported the youth phone system, using video cameras during room removals, and PREA-compliance outcomes that are leading the nation.

Danny Hernandez, a JPPO in the Marion office, who was described as a consistently reliable employee who works evenings and weekends, as needed, to ensure parents are able to attend family counseling and to visit youth. He also was acknowledged for service on OYA's Hispanic Advisory Committee and for his advocacy for bilingual and bicultural services.



Danny Hernandez

Denessa Martin, Camp Tillamook Director, who was recognized as a role model who leads by example with personal and professional integrity. "She covers the floor, she answers the phones, she covers the school when the need arises, she gets in the trenches," one nominator wrote. She also was recognized for creating youth transitional opportunities, putting a positive face on OYA in the community, and leading the facility in a consistently high PbS rating.



Denessa Martin

SERVICE AWARDS,
continued

5 YEARS

Audrey Adams
Oak Creek YCF

Curt Brennan
Oak Creek YCF

Matthew Clarno
Oak Creek YCF

Anthony Kenney
Hillcrest YCF

Susan Lee
Hillcrest YCF

Jesse Mushaney
MaLaren YCF

Tony Richmond
RiverBend YTF

Angela Tiller
Eastern Oregon YCF

Jason Ward
Eastern Oregon YCF

Kacie Yutzie
Oak Creek YCF

DEPARTURES

Robert Bailey
Community Services

Bryan Fitzgerald
MacLaren YCF

Andrew King
Eastern YCF

Diana Strong
Eastern YCF

Kathleen Twist
Health Services

Samuel Walker
MacLaren YCF

John Weaver
Business Services

Michael Widerstrom
MacLaren YCF

ARRIVALS

Kelly Daniels
Oak Creek YCF

Josh Dungannon
Tillamook YCF

Cynthia Fetterman
Oak Creek YCF

Sara Gaut
Oak Creek YCF

Tifini Linford
Oak Creek YCF

Chemika Winzer
Oak Creek YCF

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Youth learn from varied Black History events

African American food, history, novels, music, movies, and motivational speakers were featured during OYA facilities' February observances of Black History Month.

Working with Johnny Demus, Office of Minority Services Transition Specialist, several North Coast YCF youth created a month-long menu that served up traditional African American meals weekly. Pastor Robert Richardson, chair of OYA's African American Advisory Committee, spoke about African Americans' accomplishments.

At Rogue Valley YCF, youth learned and wrote essays about the Tuskegee airmen; read about Booker T. Washington and obstacles faced by former slaves; and watched videos about Black Indians, an African American debate team that beat Harvard in 1935, and the African American who pioneered modern cardiac surgery. They also created business cards about famous, pre-1950 African Americans.

MacLaren YCF youth danced, rapped, played music and spoke during Can't Stop, Won't Stop: The Progression of the African American Movement. Youth told about the history of music and entertainment from 1920s blues to modern-day hip hop. Youth showcased their talents with poetry, rap, song, and spoken word. The keynote speaker was John G. Canda, long active in preventing Portland-area gang activity.

Hillcrest YCF and Camp Florence youth heard keynoter Carlos Jermaine Richard, a DHS employee who talked about continuing down the right path to achieve success. Youth enjoyed Jeopardy with black history questions, played a basketball 3-point challenge, and competed in African dance to the beat of African drums. A Eugene group entertained with West African dances.

At Eastern Oregon YCF, youth learned about the struggles of African Americans through a 50-year-old classic, "To Kill a Mockingbird," and a modern novel set in the 1960s, "The Help."

From these and other activities, youth are able to gain valuable and lasting understanding about the African American experience in America. ■



MacLaren YCF youth were among youth throughout OYA who participated in a variety of Black History Month events.

Library grant prompts work for literacy center

The school library at Oak Creek YCF has received a \$5,000 Laura Bush Foundation grant it is using to purchase books of interest to youth. The award also supports the goal of Three Lakes High School to develop a literacy center to encourage youth to read.

Principal Kevin Hunking said youth have requested mysteries, fantasies, and other young-adult titles as well as books on managing money and supporting drug and alcohol treatment. "Reading and literacy are a high priority," he said. "Our goal is to get them reading things they're interested in."

The school's library, which had been displayed on shelves against the walls of a classroom, now is in a larger, partitioned area of the career-technical education room. Hunking estimates it is about twice its original size.

Hunking said the school hopes to raise funds to develop a literacy center as a relaxing place where students can enjoy reading, similar to what was developed at Portland's Donald E. Long Detention Center.

School Librarian Barb Daniels applied for the grant, one of four awarded to Oregon schools. Superintendent Lory Humbert confirmed Daniels's hard work, and said Oak Creek also has drop boxes in its lobby where the public may donate books. "This grant has helped tremendously, but we are a long way from the dream of a literacy center with an atmosphere that will inspire our youth," she said. "The fundraising efforts of Mr. Hunking and his staff will be essential."

The Laura Bush Foundation's Web site says the 2012 round of library grant applications will be solicited next fall and be due Dec. 31. ■

Eastern youth boost Harney readers to win

After the Lake County Library accepted the Harney County Library's million-page reading challenge, students at Eastern Oregon YCF's Monroe High School began turning pages.

When the six-week competition ended Feb. 29, the students had read a combined 408,078 book, magazine and newspaper pages. "It's amazing the kind of literature some of these youth were reading," said Reading Specialist Sandy Cargill. "We've had some request Shakespeare, Dante and Homer."

Besides reading classics, Cargill said, students also showed a diversity of reading interests such as popular titles for teenagers, mysteries, Debbie Macomber, Stephen King, Zane Gray, and the popular Japanese manga readers. Some youth read "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "The Help" in observance of February's Black History Month. She also obtained Spanish-language books for Hispanic students.

An ice cream party is planned for the youth at which Faith Baptist Church of Harney County members, who regularly volunteer at the Burns facility, will provide sundae toppings and support for young readers. Harney County Library Director Cheryl Hancock has ordered 10 T-shirts for Monroe High School's winning readers, as well.

Benefits for the students? "That's a lot of knowledge going into these young minds," Cargill said. "I'm hoping this will make some of these kids lifetime readers." ■

COIN AWARD RECIPIENTS

The following individuals received Coin Awards during 2011.

Alex Contreras
Danny Hernandez
Frances Howells
Carolyn Lemhouse
Lisa Parker
Debbi Pillsbury-Harvey
Janie Richards
Daniel Sifuentez
John Vogel
Cliff Walker
Bart Wilmouth

YOUTH POETRY

An anthology was published recently of writing by Monroe School students at Eastern Oregon YCF. These are among the poems and narratives of the youth, who participated in last summer's Harney County Writer-in-Residence Program.

Dreaming

I'm tired of dreaming and not doing,
I'm tired of others taking my dreams,
Others making their lives
From what I dream.
Why must I stay when others go.
Why must others prosper when I struggle.
I dream a day when I no longer dream –
A day when my dreams become my actions
And others dream to be like me.
— Josh

Medical eligibility analysts seek happy endings

Linda Minden went to work for the Public Welfare Division right out of college, so she understands what it's like to carry a caseload. "We know JPPOs are trying to help the youth," she said. "We're doing what we can to help them too, just in a different way."

Because the eligibility determination process must be completed by an employee of the Medicaid agency, which in Oregon is the Oregon Health Authority, Minden is an OHA employee who works at OYA's Central Office. Lienna Bui, who recently joined the Federal and State Benefits Team, works with Linda to ensure Oregon Health Plan benefits are available to youth when needed.

Minden and Bui determine medical eligibility, coordinate and problem-solve health plan enrollments, and provide technical assistance for providers for youth in placements such as BRS programs and foster care. "We are problem-solvers for the field offices, the programs, and foster parents," Minden said.

They ensure that eligible youth are enrolled in managed care plans for medical, dental, and mental health, and refer OYA youth to the Oregon Health Authority to allow eligible youth to continue to receive Medicaid for a period of time after leaving a substitute care placement. Depending on income and assets, these youth may be eligible for Medicaid or General Assistance on an ongoing basis, even after they leave OYA care and custody.

Obtaining medical care involves working with JPPOs to get information – obtaining birth certificates, asking about private insurance, and requesting other needed information. They work on issues such as youth being assigned to the wrong managed care plan, discrepancies in Social Security numbers, or working with a pharmacy that can't locate a medically eligible youth in the Medicaid computer system.

They work extensively with people at DHS and OHA to resolve these types of problems and don't stop until the problem is solved. When they run into barriers, they try something else. Sometimes it's a misunderstanding, sometimes it's the computer system, and sometimes it's just not getting the right person on the line.

"'No' isn't a good answer when a youth needs services," Minden said. "There is usually something that can be done. It's always good to build bridges with people. Someday that bridge may help you out."

Minden has worked at OYA since 2004. Bui, a state employee for 14 years, joined OYA in 2003.

"It's rewarding knowing you've actually helped someone," Bui said. "There are so many resources out there. When you know a parent or youth isn't getting the information they need from the system, you want to assist in any way you can."

"We like happy endings," Minden said.

Related stories: An overview of OYA's Federal and State Benefits Unit and a story about its Child Support work (January 2012) and a story about the work of the unit's Disability Analysts (February 2012). ■

OPMS continues to cascade throughout OYA

Introducing the OYA Performance Management System to all employees is a big undertaking. It is so big, in fact, that just the introduction has been broken into four phases.

The first phase was completed February 22 with the presentation of the precepts of OPMS to a third of the agency's staff, both represented and management. That date also marked the beginning of Phase 2, cascading OPMS to the balance of the agency. Phase 1 students will become trainers in Phase 2.

The contents of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 trainings are practically identical, but Phase 2 is designed to be rolled out in monthly team meetings, led by participants who were trained in Phase 1. The second phase training comprises seven small modules that will take employee teams about an hour each to learn, discuss and absorb. Phase 2 will conclude when all employees have completed each of the modules, ideally by the end of the summer.

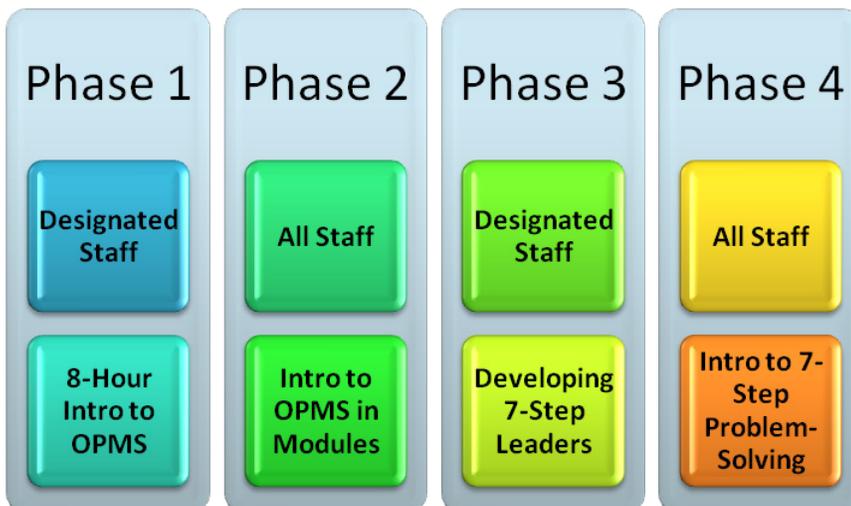
Concurrently, Phase 3 of the roll-out is under way: Introducing 7-Step Problem-Solving to represented and management staff designated by their managers. This is an eight-hour class that includes a real-life problem that employees will run through the problem-solving process. The commitment for some may be much more than the one-day training, as they remain engaged in developing and implementing process solutions.

Additionally, these staff members will turn around and teach the basics of 7-Step Problem-Solving to all other employees during team meetings. Although no training is required to participate in a 7-Step workgroup, it is important that everyone in OYA attains a basic understanding of how and why 7-Step works. That effort comprises Phase 4 of the OPMS roll-out.

Overlaying all of the introductory activities are ongoing OPMS events that are becoming part of OYA's culture. The fourth OYA Quarterly Target Review (QTR) was held February 9, during which process owners reported to the agency leadership team about their plans to move measures from the red and yellow zones to the green. In a supportive atmosphere, leadership team members offered suggestions for process improvement to be built into action plans.

Local scorecards to support division- and facility/office/unit-level QTRs are in development. Pilot sites are expected to hold local QTRs in April, which will help inform the next

agency-wide QTR May 10. By year-end, scorecards, QTRs and action plans will become a regular part of team meetings and the agency vernacular as OPMS is absorbed into OYA's ongoing business processes. ■



Dear Life:

I know it's been hard

But these are not the ends of our troubles.

There are still going to be days that we're up

And the next we're down.

Don't get discouraged because we can

Always climb out and not fall back in,

But when we start walking again,

We don't know where the next hole will be.

What I do know:

As long as you and I

Can hold our heads high, we

Can get through anything in life.

— Ian

Becoming a Man

Becoming a man is a constant struggle. Becoming a man is full of pity and shame. Until the day you become a man, darkness and failure will surround you, day after day. For me it was as dark as a night without the moon. I've been through the journey and fell many times. I've got the scars to show what it is like. I lost a lot, number one my family. I became addicted to doing what I want to do. My life was lived from a boy not a man and at the same time my past has taught me a lot. My perception on life used to be when difficulty arose just wait it out until it gets easier. Now I live by a saying I was told by my aunt in a letter. It goes, 'Life is not about waiting for your storms to pass. It's about learning how to dance in the rain.' And my clothes are soaking wet.

— Bradley

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Zeta's first year turns in significant milestones

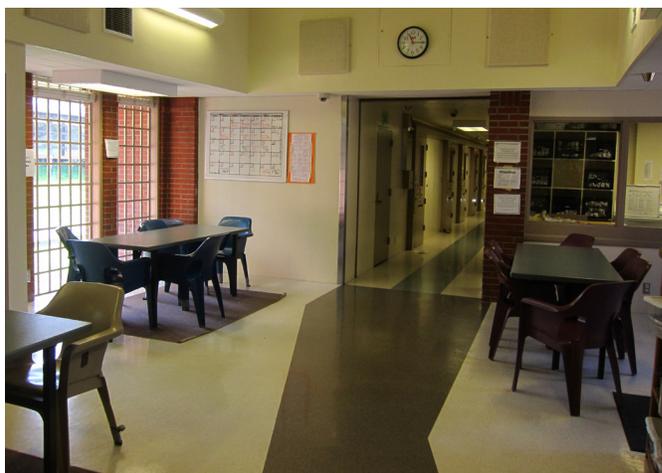
A unique program at Hillcrest YCF is completing its first year with several important milestones. The 24-bed Zeta Unit recorded only one parole revocation in its first year, decreasing numbers of YIRs, and one week-long period with no isolations.

"Although some Zeta youth have transitioned to other close-custody programs, a lot have returned to the community either to residential programs or home," said OYA Treatment Services Director Whitney Vail. "Many youth are leaving Zeta with success in a program for the first time."

Zeta serves adjudicated youth ages 12-16 who present symptoms of severe mental health issues, including mood, anxiety, psychotic, or pervasive developmental disorders, and/or low IQ. Using the EQUIP curriculum and Collaborate Problem Solving, Vail said, Zeta operates somewhat like a well-structured residential treatment program and serves a population similar to that of MacLaren YCF's Holmes Unit for older youth.



Among the Zeta Unit's staff members are (from left to right) QMHP Karol Rhoades, YCUC Rod Green, GLC Eddie Poteet (holding coffee mug), GLC James Earhart, and GLC Jessica Bull.



The Zeta Unit offers an opportunity for special-needs youth to receive individualized treatment.

QMHP Brad Garner said youth meet five times a week in EQUIP sessions, where they learn and support each other with 33 social, anger-reducing, and other skills they can integrate into daily life. "Our focus is to help them learn and practice skills that will enable them to be successful in community settings," Vail said. She said youth learn and demonstrate their ability to apply skills such as problem solving, handling conflict with peers and adults, responding appropriately to peer pressure, developing confidence, asking for help when they need it, recognizing and building on personal strengths, and thinking before they act.

Planning for Zeta Unit began in late 2009. Vail was a consulting psychologist to the unit when it opened in March 2011, and as Treatment Services Director continues to work with Zeta staff. "In the past year we have seen these techniques work with some of our most complicated youth," Vail said. "It's led to decreased isolation and authentic skill development." ■

Director's Award recipients, *cont.*

Continued from page 3



Jamie Robinson

Jamie Robinson, a MaLaren GLC, who was recognized for heroism for potentially putting herself in harm's way after the facility's lattice factory was struck by gunfire. When a colleague was unable to open the building's back door, away from the gunfire, Robinson drove a van into the gunfire's direction and went into the lattice factory to evacuate youth and staff.

Karri Robinson, a Hillcrest YCF Treatment Manager, who led the team that developed the year-old Zeta Unit for special-needs youth. The unit was developed successfully despite budget-related staffing challenges, and has celebrated periods



Karri Robinson

without parole revocations or isolations as well as declining numbers of YIRs. Behavioral Services Director Whitney Vail described Robinson as a leader who models and earns respect, understands the needs of youth and teaches what she knows, and stands up for the rights and best interests of youth.

The team award went to **Willie Rhodes, Lance Schnacker,** and **Shannon Myrick**, members of the Research and Evaluation Team, whom Research Manager Paul Bellatty described as "particularly productive researchers." Among their work products were four Recidivism/Risk Assessment tools, the JPPO time-utilization project, a drug court evaluation for the Criminal Justice Commission, a staff survey and youth culture survey, and national presentations about ORRA tools.



Willie Rhodes, Lance Schnacker, and Shannon Myrick

"All of these award recipients demonstrate not only the meaningful work OYA does, but also the fact that it takes many people working together to help youth succeed," Pakseresht said. "Achieving our mission truly is a collaborative effort, and fortunately we have some of the most dedicated and talented employees in state government."

Peters, who assumed the DOC Director's job Feb. 6, returned to OYA to help present the awards. She pledged strengthened cooperation between OYA and DOC. ■

INSIDE OYA

Fariborz Pakseresht
Director

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Send your stories for the April issue by March 31. Articles received after that date will be held for the May newsletter.



New OYA Nurse Manager named

Cecile Mukandekwe, R.N., has been named OYA Nurse Manager. She brings both corrections and mental health experience to the job.

Mukandekwe most recently was Supervising RN on the neuro-geriatric ward at Oregon State Hospital. She also has worked as corrections nurse for the Marion County Jail and as charge nurse for Mennonite Village Continuing Care Retirement Community in Albany. She immigrated to the United States in 1996 from Rwanda, where she also worked as a nurse.

She earned her undergraduate nursing degree from Gonzaga University in Spokane. She will directly supervise 12 OYA nurses and indirectly supervise another 17. She reports to Medical Director Marcia Adams, M.D., and has an office at Hillcrest YCF. She succeeds Interim Nurse Manager Jan Verser, who is working with Mukandekwe during a transition period.

"Cecile was hired not only because of her background in corrections and mental health," Adams said, "but also because of her ability to learn quickly, her professionalism, and the enthusiasm she showed despite being told some of the challenges of the position." ■



Cecile Mukandekwe

Acting Field Supervisor named

The new acting field supervisor for Linn, Benton, Lincoln, Polk, and Yamhill counties is Tara Williams, who joined OYA in 1997. She had been a JPPO in the Linn office since 2006, and was the acting supervisor there for four months during 2010-2011.

"Tara Williams brings broad experience to the job, having worked for both state and county juvenile corrections and having experience in OYA's facilities and field," said Philip Cox, OYA Assistant Director for Community Services. "She has earned respect for her leadership and professionalism as both a front-line employee and manager."

Williams began her juvenile corrections career in 1995 as a detention worker for the Klamath County Juvenile Department. At OYA she was assigned first to Camp Tillamook YTF as a GLC and acting assistant treatment manager, then as a GLC at Oak Creek YCF. She worked as a JPPO for the Lane field office for nearly six years before joining the Linn field staff in 2006.

She studied criminology at Mt. San Jacinto Community College in San Jacinto, Calif. ■



Tara Williams