WE ARE ANDRUS

December 2019 Edition

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Nurture Hope

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Dear ANDRUS Community,

As we head into 2020 and the next decade at ANDRUS, I look forward to a year filled with hope, promise and great accomplishments. All of which, I know is possible because of all of you and your commitment to ANDRUS. I am proud of what we achieved together in 2019 and I am eager to continue our vital work in the coming year.

This year was filled with growth and new opportunities but also with tradition and memories. Our Fall Festival, our Annual Gala, and all of our Holiday events brought joy and excitement to our children and families throughout our programs. It was clear by the laughter and smiles that our children had an incredible holiday season thanks to donors, supporters, friends and staff. Seeing the way our children and families lit up during the holidays was humbling and reminded me of just how important our work here is.

Through our Orchard School, residential programs, sensory therapies, community based initiatives, mental health clinics and the Sanctuary Institute, ANDRUS delivers an unparalleled level of care in supporting children and families on their journey to successful futures. We encourage our friends and supporters to visit our main campus and satellite sites to embrace the magic of ANDRUS.

Thank you for your continued friendship and we look forward to growing with you in the coming decade.

We are ANDRUS.

Gratefully,

Bryan R. Murphy
President & CEO

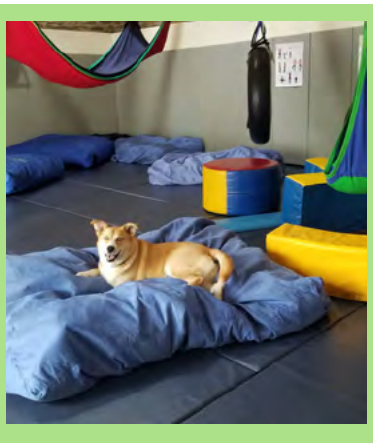
We are CARING

PETS AT WORK FOR SANCTUARY

What can possibly be better than a dog? Four more dogs! ANDRUS would like to welcome four new therapeutic dogs to our PAWS program: Anna, Luna, Bronnie and Tully.

Anna, a 2 year old greyhound rescue, works with our Librarian Ingrid Sutherland to help our children stay focused in the Orchard School Library. Luna, a 4 year old Husky/Australian Shepard Mix works with Ashley Majeski in the Graf Sensory Barn and assists with OT and sensory activities. Bronnie, a 1 year old French Bulldog, works with clinician, Fabiola Abreu, at our downtown Yonkers satellite location as well as with clinician, Samantha Miller, in our Orchard School. Tully, a darling 7 month old yellow lab, is based in Dyckman Hall with Executive Assistant, Victoria Baldini. Tully assists our Admissions Team with welcoming new students and helps provide self-care to our administrative staff. Our PAWS program is now at its largest in its history with a total of 11 dogs providing therapeutic services to our community. Our four new dogs are joining their PAWS friends, Teddy, Rocky, Loula, Oliver, Remy, Leo, and Niko.

Allison Ratner, M.S.e.d., Animal Therapy Coordinator, Campus Division.



PAWS SUCCESS STORY- MENTAL HEALTH DIVISON

John*, a teen receiving services in our Mental Health Division, has made a special connection with ANDRUS Therapy Dog, Loula.

John was very reserved and quiet in his initial screening interviews but after interacting with Clinic Manager Danni Lapin Zou and Loula he began to relax and open up. John began to ask for Loula in the waiting room on his visits. On one visit, John was able to lure Loula out of her hiding spots by gently talking to her and offering her a treat. In his session that day, John beamed as he mentioned that he was able to give Loula a treat even though she is very shy. Talking about his experience with Loula seemed to make him more comfortable; he sat at the chair next to the psychologist's desk, whereas most teens chose to sit in the far chair in the room; he answered most questions during the interview whereas he stayed silent in previous interviews; he remained calm and composed throughout the interview, allowing him and the psychologist to discuss appropriate limits and approaches to dealing with frustrating situations.

Loula truly helped him to feel supported and calm in what otherwise may have been an uncomfortable situation for him. We are eager to how his relationship with Loula will progress and how she can help him to overcome any future obstacles!

Lillian Fernandez - Supervising Pychologist

Pictured: PAWS Therapy Dog, Loula with her handlers, Danni Lapin Zou, LCSW-R and Leani Spinner, LCSW-R

We are GROWTH & CHANGE

Join us in congratulating Vivian Ko-Rocchio, Chris Kehr, and Ashna Vohra on their new roles here at ANDRUS.

Vivian Ko-Rocchio

Principal of the Orchard School

In her previous capacity of Assistant Principal, Vivian has been a hard-working and dedicated leader in our efforts to unite the campus and advance the educational and social-emotional goals of all the children we serve. She has devoted 15 plus years with ANDRUS and will continue to support the Agency's Mission and Vision through advancing family engagement, curriculum development and implementation, and staff cultivation.

Chris Kehr

Director of Residential Services

In his previous role as the Assistant Director, Chris brought to our Residential program his attention to detail, commitment to supporting and empowering our children, families, and staff, his ability to build teams, and a deep commitment to the Sanctuary model and TCI. Chris is a graduate of East Carolina University with a Bachelors in Recreation Therapy and is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist and Certified TCI Trainer. He brings over a decade of experience in Residential environments working in varying capacities with increasing responsibilities. In his time here Chris has demonstrated an exceptional ability to model our Sanctuary commitments and agency values, embodying a leadership style that brings teams closer together in true ANDRUS spirit.

Ashna Vohra

Clinical Director of Day Program

Since joining ANDRUS in 2013, Ashna has lent her insight, candor, and dedication to improving the lives of children and families in our Day program at the Orchard School. In her new role, Ashna will be responsible for overseeing IEP-based clinical services for students at the School by providing support, leadership, and supervision to the Day clinicians, and working closely with her new colleagues in the Campus Leadership team to strengthen the clinical lens we view all that we do here on Campus.

SEASONS CHANGE

Fall is a season that represents change, growth, loss, transitions, and new beginnings. It is a season that has a tendency to trigger an array of emotions such as hope, gloom, sadness or gratitude. The seasons change our mood. In knowing this, it is important that we take charge of our emotions, when possible, by intentionally engaging in actions that will boost our mood. Here are a few tips to help you do so:

1. Let There be Light: "bright light usually correlates with heat and heat is linked to emotional intensity," writes the authors in the Journal of Consumer Psychology. "If you are feeling good, bright light amplifies those good feelings. But, if you are feeling depressed or fearful, angry or uptight on a bright sunny day or in a brightly-lit room, the lighting can make you feel worse. The intensity of the light influences the intensity of our moods. So change the light to change your mood."

2. Be Nosy: Certain aromas can have a powerful influence on our moods. Citrus scents can invoke happiness and alertness. Vanilla promotes happiness and relaxation. Check out *https://mindbody.io/blog/wellness/heres-how-essential-oils-can-boost-your-mood* to learn more and find out what scents boost your mood.

3. Get Physical: Moving your body on a regular basis has positive effects on your physical and emotional health. You don't need to train for a marathon or workout for three hours. Walking around your neighborhood, doing push-ups, running around outside with children—these all have the same benefit.

4. Mood Food: Dietary changes bring about changes in our brain structure, chemistry, and physiology, which lead to -- changes in behavior! Research shows that our mood can change by eating certain foods like dark chocolate, cashews, or fish. Check out *http://www.eatingwell.com/article/141652/7-foods-to-boost-your-mood/* to discover right meal for your mood.

Lindsay Jackson - Assistant Director of Training

Remembering

Dr. Joe Benamati

"A Life Well Lived"

It is with a heavy heart that we share the sad news that our friend and colleague, Dr. Joe Benamati, passed away.

He was a leader and long-time senior faculty member and ambassador of the Sanctuary Institute and supporter of ANDRUS. We value his contributions to our efforts and will honor his memory as we continue to carry on the work he so believed in.

He will truly be missed by all, and in many ways, he is irreplaceable within the Institute.

We are SPOOKY

This fall, our children, families, and staff celebrated the spooky season with creative costumes, treat or treating, a haunted hike, and tons of fun at our events and parties. See below for some of our favorite heroes, characters, and creatures on Halloween!

ANDRUS Residential Halloween Party celebrated in the most Spooktacular way! From pink flamingo costumes, to homemade Uno cards, and many more impressive outfits; Halloween was a day where students, along with staff, could let their imagination be free in the form of costumes.

With over twenty one trick or treating locations students got to explore the beautiful campus, and connect with the wonderful staff handing out treats and candy. After trick or treating the true Halloween Spooktacular began. Facilitated by the amazing recreation team and volunteers, McGee Hall was turned into a Haunted mansion. From Creepy-Musical Chairs, to a Mummy-Wrapping contest and Sensory Fear Factor, residents and staff had an endless amount of enjoyment participating in all the activities and showing off their costumes. The night could not have been as successful as it was without the help of DJ Manny, introducing everyone to unique style of music!

Thomas Ceballos - Recreation Therapist- Foster Hall

Self Care

TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS

The irony about stress is that when you are most stressed, you forget to do the very things that help. "I'm too overwhelmed to exercise," or "I can't meditate, I don't have the time," are things we say to ourselves. But those are mind sets, not reality, right? If we admit it to ourselves, do we not have 30 minutes to exercise when we might spend the time venting or worrying anyway? Do we not have even ten minutes to meditate, when we wind up wasting time spinning because we can't think? No, but once we get into a stress response, it can feel like we're on a rollercoaster, and we can only wait until we get off. One of the reasons for that is that if we get stressed a lot, our bodies do, in fact, go into automatic pilot because we're practiced at stress.

Research over the last two decades has been able to demonstrate what stress management techniques work, how they might work, and how positive stress management strategies impact not only your long-term mental health but your physical health as well. Researchers, such as Dr. Richard Davidson at University of Madison, Wisconsin, have been able to study the impact of meditation using sophisticated brain imaging. The team at the Benson-Henry Mind Body Institute has continued to study the best practices to increase well-being and reduce stress, demonstrating which practices have the best positive impact on major health conditions such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome, asthma, heart disease and other costly and painful problems exacerbated by stress.

The field of research in stress management and resilience is growing rapidly. Here are some major takeaways we know so far:

1. Your brain can change and adapt until the day you die. Neuroplasticity, the idea that your brain is able to grow and change, is hope for any of us who want to develop new ways of being in the world.

2. Practice, practice, practice. If you want to get good at the piano, you practice until it's second nature. The more you do something, the better you can learn it and be good almost automatically. The same concept is true for social and emotional well-being.

3. Similar to the piano, learning stress management and resilience practices takes learning them one step at a time. If you don't teach a child the steps, how are they supposed to learn them? Similar to math skills, these skills build on each other.

4. Some stress management strategies are better than others. There is research to show which behaviors are the best "bang for your buck." And the research being done, includes testing of your blood, MRIs in real time of your brain, and other amazing ways to track changes in your body. Here are some of the best ones:

5. Meditation, ideally 20 minutes a day or 10 minutes twice a day, is one of the best things you can do for stress reduction.

6. So is exercise, and 30 minutes or more of exercise daily can produce multiple, long lasting positive effects on anxiety, depression, physical ailments, and stress response.

7. Another very important strategy is learning how to savor and notice what is going right. If you can think about three positive experiences that happened during the day, for 20-30 seconds, it can "dose" your body with relaxation response, which is basically the opposite of the stress response.

8. Learning how to "reappraise" or consider a different way of thinking about something is also a very important skill, with documented benefits. Cognitive behavioral therapy is based on the idea that our thoughts impact our feelings and responses, and if we think in all or nothing terms, or imagine the worst-case scenario, it can trigger a stress response. Learning how we think in unproductive ways and then changing our thoughts can help.

9. There are other really important strategies, many of which are available on line and are also part of the SMART model. SMART stands for Stress Management and Resiliency Training, and was developed by the Benson Henry Mind Body Institute. ANDRUS is aiming to provide SMART groups to staff members and even to parents in the coming year!

Siobhan Masterson
Associate Vice President of Strategic Initiatives

We are THANKFUL

Sanctuary Commitment Tree

The Sanctuary Commitment Tree project was the first of upcoming quarterly Sanctuary events that are being worked on with the intention of strengthening our commitment to the Sanctuary Model.

For this project, all of our teams across ANDRUS created paper leaves on which they shared thoughts and wishes on how they will strengthen the way they practice our Sanctuary values. This collaborative project has helped us strengthen our connection to Sanctuary and provided the opportunity to learn about ourselves as a community.

Shirley Capa- Bilingual Clinician

Giving Thanks This Thanksgiving

This year ANDRUS celebrated Thanksgiving the best way we know how, by showing our gratitude for our families, friends, and community. ANDRUS' main campus hosted their Annual Residential Thanksgiving Dinner for our children and their families, the Clinical Department held a drive for staff and friends to sponsor a Thanksgiving dinner for a family in need and ANDRUS' Community Division held a food drive to support the families in our programs.

We are CELEBRATING

Yonkers City Hall Tree Lighting Ceremony

On December 4th, the young ladies of Andrus Hall got to be a part of the first Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony of the season at Yonkers City Hall. We were given the honor of the "tree lighting countdown" by Deputy Parks & Recreation Commissioner Steve Sansone in recognition of ANDRUS' fifth consecutive year of environmental community service at the Annual Yonkers Aqueduct Trail Cleanup. What a wonderful way to kick-off the season! They were greeted with luminous smiles, and genuine handshakes. Our young ladies were smiling from ear-to-ear, excited to meet Mayor Spano and to be a part of an event where they were being honored. They could not stop speaking about it. "I want my grand-mom to see me on TV," one of our girls mentioned. With candy cane lights in hand, they sang along to the Christmas carols, and cheered their fellow youth participants on. Though it was cold that evening, the holiday spirit that resonated through the crowd kept everyone warm. The evening culminated with everyone gathered together in the warm hallway of City Hall - where they enjoyed hot chocolate, gingerbread cookies, churros and conversed enticingly with the other attendants.

Ginelle Talbert - Recreation Therapist - Andrus Hall

ANDRUS Annual Gala

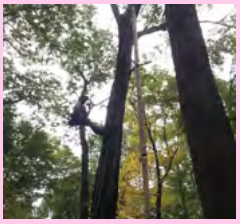
ANDRUS hosted its Annual Gala at The New York Botanical Garden on Friday, October 25th with the generous support of sponsors, donors, and friends, who helped raise critical funds to benefit the agency's numerous therapeutic programs. A special focus of the funds will be devoted to updating and modernizing our programs' technology infrastructure, providing the resources necessary to best serve our children and families. This year we were pleased to honor Dr. John Castanaro of Castanaro Dental in Yonkers. Dr. Castanaro has dedicated his time and energy to help build a better future for those we serve.

In addition to recognizing the incredible support given by Dr. Castanaro, the evening celebrated those who make our work possible including ANDRUS employees, long time donors, new friends, supportive vendors and many more. From our cocktail hour to our dinner and program to the much anticipated after party, it was a wonderful night of community, hope and celebration. Thank you to those who attended and supported this event. We hope you will all join us at our Annual Gala on Friday, October 23, 2020!

Juliana Fondacaro
Director of Donor Cultivation & Community Outreach

We are BRAVE

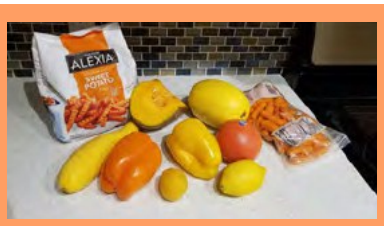
ANDRUS Ropes Challenge Course Grows to New Heights!

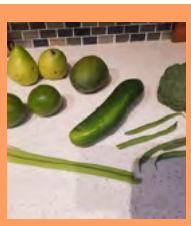


Exciting things are happening in the ANDRUS forest on our main Campus! This fall, builders from Project Adventure came to our campus to undertake the largest repair and improvement project since the initial building of our Ropes Challenge Course over 10 years ago. We are proud to announce the addition of seven new Ropes Course elements, which have brought our course to a total of 27 high, low, and specialty elements. The new additions to our course include low-element group problem solving challenges such as the Spider's Web, Team Triangle, TP Shuffle, and 6-section extended Mohawk Walk. Our new high elements The Burma Bridge, High Multi-vine Traverse, and Centipede offer a more daring personal challenge up in the forest canopy. In addition, much needed repairs to previously existing elements were completed and our course is now 100% operational. While the season for the Ropes Challenge Course has wound down for the winter, teams such as the Ropes Course Facilitators, Clinical Department, Speech and Language Department, and Occupational Therapy Department had an opportunity to connect, problem solve, team build, and have fun on our new elements. Looking ahead to the spring season, our Ropes Challenge Course will be in full swing for clinical group therapy groups, family engagement days, community recreation, physical education, afternoon programming, youth leadership development groups, and more staff self-care and team building. Many thanks are due to all involved who helped make this hope into a reality for the children, families, and staff of the ANDRUS community!

Stephan Spilkowitz - Sr. Manager of Therapeutic Programming & Youth Development

Food Experiments





Our staff are developing methods for encouraging some of our picky eaters to try new foods. Our "Food Experiments" are a fun way for our children to try new things with their peers. Each Friday, staff choose a color of the week and have the children taste a variety of foods within that color family.

So far our students have tasted:

Purple: figs, blackberries, plums, grapes, and beets

Green: broccoli, string beans, celery, cucumber, lime, pear, and grapes

Red: cherries, tomatoes, raspberries, pomegranate, nectarine, radish, red pepper, red kidney beans, and red cabbage

We are so proud of our students for being open and courageous to trying new foods. Even the most picky students have been trying nearly every option!

Ashley Majeski, MOT OTR/L
Manager of Occupational Therapy Services

We are Fun

2019 ANDRUS Fall Festival

ANDRUS' 2019 Fall Festival was a huge success! The beautiful day was filled with energy as children and families from all of our divisions came together to enjoy a day of fun and festivities! The day included, horse drawn hay rides, trackless train rides, a moving petting zoo, tons of games and prizes, bouncy houses, obstacle courses, a BBQ lunch, sweet treats, arts and craft, pumpkin painting, face painting and glitter tattoos, and live music from Larger than Life!

A special thank you to all who came, all who volunteered, and everyone who helped make this event such a success!

Cooking Groups

ANDRUS serves children on the autism spectrum using best practices, occupational therapy expertise, and an integrated team approach!

The residents at Foster Hall really enjoy our cooking groups, especially when pizza is on the menu! The Foster Hall team and residents will go on a trip to the supermarket, purchase the necessary ingredients, prepare their individual pizzas, and finally bake their pizzas. Cooking/making pizzas is not an easy task but the Foster Hall team definitely strives to make it fun and tasty by teaching the residents independent life skills such as preparing a meal. It also encourages great social interactions, thoughtful communication of steps, as well as sharing interests of favorite toppings and other topics to further build lasting friendships.

Jennifer Ho, PhD. - Licensed Psychologist, Foster Hall

We are LEADERS

Leadership Academy Graduation

Congratulations to the graduates of the 2019 ANDRUS Leadership Academy, Ashna Vohra, Mary Morla, Francesca DiMauro, Lisette Moran, Tracy-Ann Bridge, and Narcessa Bryan.

Their hard work, devotion, and collaboration throughout the academy, as well as throughout their careers, have successfully moved ANDRUS forward in our path of growth and change.

ANDRUS' Leadership Academy is a ANDRUS' Leadership Academy is a multi-session course for employees who wish to improve their managerial skills. The course focuses on providing participants with an intensive exposure to the management skills they will need to be successful managers, and provides a foundation for developing the advanced skills required of top level ANDRUS leaders.

Mental Health Division
Graduate Students

MHD is excited to welcome a new class of graduate and post-graduate students for their clinical training year.

Embarking on their Masters Internship Training in the three MHD clinics are Carlos Quispe, Emily De Diago, Lucie Gibson, Michael Kelly, Michelle Latorres, and Yanira Osorio. They are each working toward Masters degrees in either Social Work or Mental Health Counseling. The academic programs from which they will be graduating upon completion of their Masters Internship @ ANDRUS include: Teachers College Columbia University, City College, Pace University, and Fordham University.

Starting their Doctoral Internship Training in the three MHD clinics are Christina Athineos, Frances Bigay-Morales, Megan Sommer, Miri Korbman, Vaschele Williams. They are each working toward Doctoral (PhD & PsyD) degrees in Clinical Psychology and/or School Psychology. The academic programs from which they will be graduating upon completion of their Doctoral Internship @ ANDRUS include: Suffolk University (MA), Nova Southeastern University (FL), Yeshiva University-Ferkauf (NY), Long Island University-Post (NY), Adler University (IL).

Joining MHD for their Post-Doctoral Training in the White Plains & Yonkers clinic are Dr. Daniel Scullington and Dr. Kayla Nelson, respectively. They are each working toward their NYS License as Psychologists. They are recent graduates of Long Island University and California Lutheran University, respectively. Upon completion of their Post-Doctoral Fellowship @ ANDRUS, they will be license eligible and professional members of the field of Psychology.

We welcome them to ANDRUS, thank them for their energy and commitment, and wish them a successful training year.

The Graduate Training Program Supervisory Team

We are HEROES

The award honors those who have represented the following in their daily endeavors here at ANDRUS:

J - JOYFUL U - UNIQUE L - LEADER I - INDUSTRIOUS and INSPIRING A - ACCOMPLISHED ACHIEVEMENT

Christopher Riley

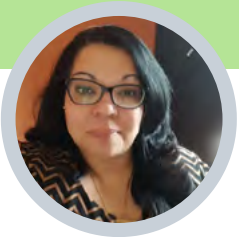
Support Aide, Orchard School, Campus

Chris has a unique way of establishing relationships with the kids. He also has great leadership skills and often takes on task without being asked. He is usually the first person to respond to a crisis and is willing to stay with the situation until it's over

Isabel Shading

School Business Manager - Orchard School

DIsabel fulfils her job requirements and then some! She is my "go-to" person for ANYTHING! She is always willing to offer her help and assistance to those in need. Isabel is JOYFUL in her work and brightens up the office with her smile . She is UNIQUE in the way she handles her position and always makes people feel comfortable when they are asking questions or for things they might need. Isabel is an ACCOMPLISHED ACHIEVER by taking on many roles and responsibilities and always rising to the challenge by being an excellent ANDRUS employee and role model.



Marlene Munoz

Teacher- Orchard School

Marlene is dedicated to becoming a better teacher for her students. She is a leader in the cluster and offers advice for her students and staff to aid them in assisting the students. She is happy, creative, and has great relationships with the students and staff. She has the patience of Mother Teresa-dedicated, loving, and she even takes the time to comb some of the children's hair!

Megan Sewell

Teacher - Orchard School

Megan joined the STARS building and took on the role of cluster leader. She is always offering ideas and is very creative. She is dedicated to her work, a natural born leader who cares for all students and staff. Megan is easy to talk to and she is extremely understanding.

We are ANDRUS

Staff Spotlight

ANDRUS' Facilities Team plays an integral part in keeping our children, families, and staff, safe, healthy, and happy throughout the year. We are so grateful to have this dedicated and supportive team of individuals.

Custodial
Victor Alvarez
Jose Torres
Roberto Rodriguez
Rodney Robertson
Cora Torres

Life Skills
Jorge Espinoza
Jose Tejada
Ingrid Pena
Amber Arroyo
Herbert Oviedo
Rodnel Tejeda

Maintenance
Hector Vargas
Manuel Noguera
Victor Aquino
Victor Escobar
Brendan Whitney
Errol Bent
Lewis Edney
Eric Durrant
Kevin Behari
Matias Aquino
Robert D'Albora

Administration
Karina Pacheco

Food Services
Margaret Walencik
Alexandra Bernabe
Martin Cordero-Viera
Ricardo Barrera
Robert Fields
Claudio Guglielmi

Campus Safety
Christopher Crooms
Ronald Coleman
Vital Valcin
Jason Walton
Everton Pigott
Robert Porter

Staff Updates

2019 Staff Appreciation BBQ

Each fall, ANDRUS hosts a Staff BBQ to show our appreciation to our dedicated and caring team. Each and every staff member across our 4 divisions plays an important part in accomplishing our mission. We recognize and commend their efforts to nurture hope in children, families and our community, but it is also important that we remember to practice self-care and so on this day we came together to play games, enjoy great food, and of course, have fun! A special thank you to our Campus, Community, and Mental Health Divisions, The Sanctuary Institute, and our Administrative Team!

JOIN ANDRUS'

SANCTUARY CORE TEAM

MEETING ARE HELD ON THE 3RD FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH

To apply to the Sanctuary Core Team or to nominate one of your team members, please contact:
Lindsay Jackson at LJackson@jdam.org
or Shirley Capa at SCapa@jdam.org.

DENIM FRIDAYS

Make a $5 donation to help support ANDRUS' children and families with the added benefit of wearing jeans to work on Friday!

I'M GOING CASUAL FOR KIDS

Please see your program areas' Go Casual for Kids representative for more a sticker each Friday!

Mission & Vision

ANDRUS nurtures social and emotional well-being in children, families, and communities by delivering a broad range of vital services and by providing research, training, and innovative program models that promote the standard of excellence for professional performance in and beyond our service community.

Communities where all children and families can thrive.

Join ANDRUS' Social Media Community:

Find us using:

@AndrusChildren

Would you like to contribute to the next newsletter?

If you have a story, idea, or shout-out, please email Brianne Lynn at BLynn@jdam.org

www.andrus1928.org