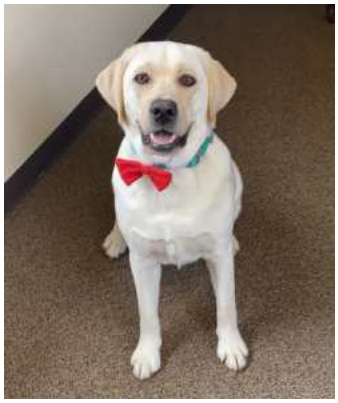
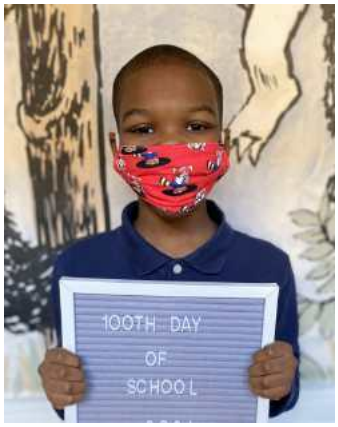
WE ARE ANDRUS

Winter 2021 Edition

www.ANDRUS1928.org

Nurture Hope





Dear ANDRUS Community,

Undoubtedly, 2020 required more of ANDRUS employees than ever before, and I am so proud and thankful for the manner in which staff have been able to adapt and accommodate to change. Our dependable frontline employees continue to demonstrate their commitment and dedication, providing continuous care to our youth and families. Our supportive in-direct care employees continue to move the agency operationally forward as they balance the needs of working remotely and in-person. As individuals, we have all gone through personal and professional challenges. However, collectively, we have turned those challenges into opportunities in the only way we know how: the ANDRUS way.

As the pandemic impacted all that took place, the holiday season looked quite different but the holiday spirit prevailed. Agency efforts focused on celebrating the joys that are a part of life by making sure the holidays felt as normal as possible for the youth and families we serve. Although we did not hold our typical large parties and events, holiday celebrations were safely scaled down to smaller parties and gatherings in the residential cottages. Children and families received heartfelt donations from staff, board members, and external stakeholders to ensure that wish-lists were fulfilled, families had additional resources, and our youth had presents to open. Such generosity from our committed donors, partners, and friends allows us to continue to build hope and promising futures for our children, families, and communities.

We remain driven to fulfill our mission as we had prior to the pandemic in meeting our children's' and families' needs. However, as we look to the future, one of our largest challenges continues to be the navigation of our "new normal" and the provision of exceptional services for all of our clients. In the year to come, ANDRUS will remain committed to providing and creating a safe and protected work environment so staff can continue our mission's work.

I am very proud and grateful for everyone who has answered the call during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the toughest hurdles may still lie ahead but ANDRUS is ready, resilient, and committed to our success as a beacon of hope for all. As you read this newsletter, please allow these pages to illuminate and share my sense of appreciation and gratitude for the selfless ANDRUS workers I see each and every day.

Here's to a new year, with new goals, achievements, and exciting new beginnings. Thank you to each and every one of you for your continued support of the ANDRUS mission and vision.

Respectfully,

R. Tito Del Pilar
Interim President & CEO

Orchard School Updates!

Dear Orchard School Community,

It is hard to believe that we are halfway through the 2020-2021 school year. We are looking forward to the exciting things that happen during the last semesters of the year.

We started out this year with our first virtual Orchard School Open House. Ms. Sutherland, our Library Media Specialist, held our first virtual Scholastic Book Fair. This wonderful event exposes and permits our children, staff, families, community, etc. to the joy of reading and book ownership. Mr. Fabrizio, our Music Teacher, held out first virtual Holiday Concert where our students performed their talents and were fantastic. Please continue to pay close attention to alerts and correspondences from ANDRUS/Orchard School, so that we may adequately inform you of any changes. Remember, we are here for your child and for your family and are only a phone (or video) call away!

Most importantly, be safe, healthy and well! We miss seeing/having all our students together dearly and hope to come back to "normalcy" soon.

The ANDRUS Community has demonstrated throughout this year that as long as we take on the challenges together, we will remain ANDRUS strong! Together we are all better!

Sincerely,
Ms. Ko

Click here to view the full Orchard School Newsletter!

Orchard School Newsletter

The Orchard School Gazette

Winter Edition

In this Edition:

- Letter from the Principal
- OS Honor Roll
- Orchard School Events
- Instructional Shout-Outs
- CHAMPS/PBIS
- Related Services
- Student of the Month
- Important Dates

A letter from Principal Vivian Ko:

Dear Orchard School Community,

Please enjoy the Fall/Winter 2020-2021 Edition of the Orchard School Gazette. Thank you to Ms. Harrow, our ELA Coordinator, for making this possible.

It is hard to believe that we are halfway through the 2020-2021 school year. We are looking forward to the exciting things that happen during the last semesters of the year. We started out this year with our first virtual Orchard School Open House. Ms. Sutherland, our Library Media Specialist, held our first virtual Scholastic Book Fair. This wonderful event exposes and permits our children, staff, families, community, etc. to the joy of reading and book ownership. Mr. Fabrizio, our Music Teacher, held out first virtual Holiday Concert where our students performed their talents and were fantastic.

Please continue to pay close attention to alerts and correspondences from ANDRUS/Orchard School, so that we may adequately inform you of any changes. Remember, we are here for your child and for your family and are only a phone (or video) call away!

Most importantly, be safe, healthy and well! We miss seeing/having all our students together dearly and hope to come back to "normalcy" soon.

Please continue to reach out to your child's teacher, Assistant Principal and/or social worker with any questions or ways they can help your child adapt to the classroom/remote learning. Please also feel free to e-mail CampusCOVID@jdam.org and we can help address your questions or forward your message to the person who can assist.

The ANDRUS Community has demonstrated throughout this year that as long as we take on the challenges together, we will remain ANDRUS strong! Together we are all better!

Sincerely,

Ms. Ko

February 2021

We are CELEBRATING

REC TEAM ENSURES HAPPY & SAFE HOLIDAYS

COVID-19 has interrupted treasured traditions, celebrations, and communal gatherings across the world. Despite our need to maintain precautionary COVID-19 measures for the safety of our community, the ANDRUS Rec Team came together with fun, creative, and adaptive holiday plans despite our limitations!

Our Halloween celebration featured a "Spooky Distant Parade," mini-Halloween parties with mummy wrapping contests, pumpkin carving contests, Halloween cupcake decorating, and more. Additionally, the pandemic didn't prevent the fourth annual Haunted Hike in the woods- complete with live costumed actors, special effects on our Ropes Course, spooky sounds from Bluetooth speakers, and a whole lot of brave children and teens!

For Christmas, the "Ugly Sweater" catwalk in Andrus Hall stole the show and drive through holiday light show trips added perhaps more splendor than usual.

To ring in the New Year, each cottage enjoyed making New Years' resolution vision boards, 2020 time capsules, hot chocolate ball drops, and welcomed 2021 with sparkling apple cider toasts!

Stephan Spilkowitz,
Assistant Director of Therapeutic Programming & Youth Development

We are CARING

UPDATES FROM OT!

Wow! How this year has zoomed by! The speech and occupational therapy team have zoomed through this past year (literally and figuratively) with all of their students. We have become pros at all things telehealth! From the creation of interactive PowerPoints, using web based games allowing therapist and students to play together, and even using a green screen to make telehealth sessions come to life!!! We have spent countless hours brainstorming and creating endless paper and virtual resources to have at the ready, creating and recreating schedules, laminating, and distributing.

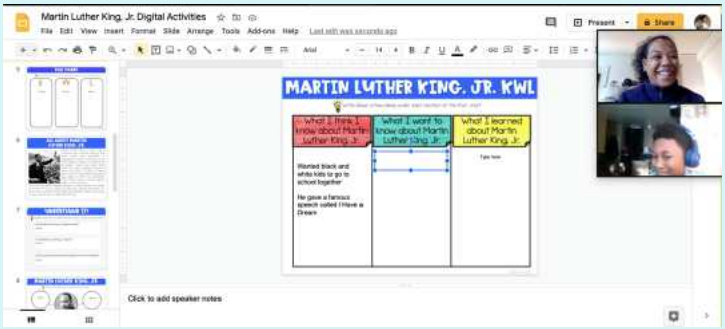
Through the use of the Chromebooks, Therapists are able to facilitate movement breaks in the student's home, utilizing YouTube yoga videos and items within the student's home environment, burning off that excess energy and helping to focus them for their distance learning sessions. Sometimes siblings and parent's join in too!! We have seen dramatic improvement on student's ability use of technology and the assistive features to help with sentence completion and spelling.

As the seasons changes, so did our method of service delivery. The beautiful weather of the late spring and summer months allowed us to shift with working students virtually, outdoors and in the cottage, acting as traveling therapists. Each in-person day, we prepared out backpacks full of as many diverse activities and necessary materials, and of course our PPE and cleaning supplies to provide safe and developmentally appropriate options for the various age groups, interest, and the abilities of each individual student. In person sessions were a breeze and the connection with students and staff provided necessary hope and reminders of the good ole days.

The hybrid school schedule required us to provide sessions in person and virtually. There has been an overwhelming amount of communication with the stellar school staff in the cottage working with our students on those good, and not so good days. It was and continues to be a HUGE collaborative effort across all departments, as well as the collaboration with parents to cajole students into signing into virtual sessions!

When fall arrived, we had gained some sense of new normalcy being like chameleons each week and gained new insight as therapists knowing we are not only taking care of our students' school goals, but also their mental health along the way. As occupational and speech therapists, we are trained to be flexible, adaptable and creative with whatever obstacle is thrown our way, but no-one was prepared for providing therapeutic services virtually at such a short notice. As a team, we persist, providing a high level of support to our students and families we serve. We continue to nurture hope in our students, reminding them that that one day we will get back to full in person sessions, facilitating growth, providing consistency and having lots of FUN!

- The Speech and Occupational Therapy Team



We are SANCTUARY

Updates from the Sanctuary Institute:

The Sanctuary Institute continues to be innovative and strategic with the support, services and online learning we provide to our Network Members, which includes but is not limited to Needs Assessments, Retreats, Train-the-trainer, Certifications, and our Sanctuary Five Day Training on both a domestic and international platform. We completed 16 certifications in calendar year 2020!

Since the fall of 2020, we have successfully conducted virtual Sanctuary Five Day Training at ANDRUS with attendees from various States. We have also delivered several virtual Five Day Trainings to Network Members at their own agencies, both in person and virtually.

Like the rest of the world, we are adapting, learning, and growing through these forever changing times and we are all being pushed to be flexible, creative and compassionate. As a result, we recently held our first virtual conference: H.E.A.L (Helping Everyone Adapt to Lead) Together this past October. We offered pre-conference workshop bundles led by our own Sanctuary Faculty followed by wonderful workshops provided by Sanctuary Network Members.

Providing Services Virtually:
Danisha Bonner, MA, LPCC-S

Creating a Culturally Responsive Environment Through Sanctuary: Jaye Holly, MS

At the conference we also featured three Network organizations that each presented workshops using the Model: Villa of Hope-Red Flag Re-tooled | Sarah Reed- S.E.L.F on the Shelf | Cornerstones of Care-Navigating Rough Seas.

We continue to host our new virtual series: **Community Conversations**, featuring Network organizations. Our recent conversations were led by Sarah Reed Children's Center and Orchard Place. Each organization shared how they have continued to practice and implement The Sanctuary Model throughout the Coronavirus pandemic and social injustices. Our next **Community Conversations** will be held **April, 14 2021**. Connect with us on the Events page at the Institute to learn more.

Other notable highlights at the Institute include that we have recently reinstated our Faculty Fellows Program and look forward to onboarding new ANDRUS staff to expand our pool of professional development and technical assistance trainers.

Upcoming Events:

Check out the info below for upcoming events hosted through the Sanctuary Institute.

New Ventures-with the success of our **Community Conversations**, we recently created a new virtual series, titled **TIC (Trauma Informed Care) Talk**. TIC Talk is a free 30 minute virtual lunch series for professionals to gather, build a community across industries, share information and create a safe space for learning. Visit us at www.thesanctuaryinstitute.org for info on upcoming events.

To our own Growth & Change, we are launching something new. Our **March Sanctuary Five Day Training** will be delivered over a two week-period. Join us: **Wednesday-Friday, March 31-April 2 and Monday and Tuesday, April 5 and 6.**

Network Days 2021:
May 5th-7th Keynote speaker, Dr. Vincent Felitti. Visit our site for more info.

For more information and details on the Community Conversations, Virtual Forum or Virtual Trainings please us at www.thesanctuaryinstitute.org

Finally, considering our team was unable to meet in person for our bi-annual retreat, in December we gathered on Zoom to connect with our team members near and far.

We here at The Sanctuary Institute wish everyone a happy and healthy 2021.

SELF CARE

TRAIN TO BE AN OPTIMIST

Everyone knows me as the positive person, the one who can always find the "good" in any situation. I bring the energy and I use my energy to help people experience joy and love. Often I'm asked "how do you stay so positive?". I never really thought about it until I was in the face of curious individuals. A lot of my buoyant energy is innate; I naturally love being around people, connecting, teaching, sharing, listening-it's the exchange of our frequency that keeps me going and fills my cup. In full transparency, accessing that vibration hasn't been the easiest thing to do; I've struggled. In the beginning of the pandemic, it wasn't so bad for me, I had my family, the workload seemed manageable, and remote learning, well, that was always treacherous. Overtime, I noticed a shift. It was quite the challenge to remain hopeful, cheerful, patient, and full of intense energy while being in the cocoon of a pandemic. I knew it didn't serve me or the people in my world (family, employer, and friends) to remain in this space that was blocking me from using my gifts to spread love and be the light for myself and others. Being intentional about my optimism has helped me make improvements.

Perhaps you can relate to my experience and you need a boost of optimism. If so, try out one or all of the tips below to help maintain your flow of optimism.

1. Experience a Shift with Gratitude: This recommendation reappears because IT WORKS! When we put attention to what is going well, we feel better and we also partner up with the universe to attract more experiences to have gratitude for. Start or end your day with a few words of gratitude; you can even write it down, do it with your household members, or tell it to your pet. Gratitude has the power build your immune system and allows you to experience more positive emotions. "Thank you!"

2. Practice Dialectical Thinking: Dialectical thinking allows two things to be true at the same time; a balance between opposites. Such thinking allows us to view a situation from various perspectives and we then can then choose the perspective that best serves us. "I hate what's happening in the world right AND I am hopeful things will get better". "I am feeling overwhelmed and I really love my job."

3. Give Grace: Sheri Turner of the Sanctuary Institute once said in a Safety Plan Workshop, "We are having a normal response to an abnormal experience." We never experienced a pandemic before and our brain & body is having a natural response to the amount of stress we're experiencing. Be kind to yourself. Forgive yourself and others for the mistakes, for the errors, the raised voices, or the unspent quality time with someone. Each day we have the opportunity to be the observer, learn, give grace, and grow! Remember, we've never been here before, therefore we are learning how to function in this experience each day.

4. Pay attention to your Mental Health: Anxiety is REAL, it affects 40 million adults in the US. For some, the pandemic triggered the onset of mental health challenges and for others it has caused their challenges to reappear. If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health challenges, contact (insert hotline website here). Focus your attention on your behavior, emotional, and psychological patterns.

5. Connect with Hope Keepers: Experiencing the pandemic has caused many of us to feel down, uninspired, or even cynical. Though these are all natural emotions to experience, it's not where we want to live. Make a conscious effort to surround yourself with people who speak with words of hopefulness, kindness, and possibility. Choose to be exposed to people, places, and spaces that inspire love, motivate action, and influence compassion. Remember "surround yourself with people who reflect who you WANT to be and how you want to feel; energies are contagious."

Training to stay hopeful may not be easy and it's worth every attempt.

Stay Safe. Be Well. Spread Love, Not COVID!

Lindsay Jackson

We are Growth & Change

REIMAGINING DISCIPLINE & BUILDING COMMUNITY
THROUGH RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Three years ago, the ANDRUS Campus Division embarked on a journey to reimagine our system of youth accountability and discipline. Our aim was to be more educational, more equitable, and to rebuild damaged relationships through trauma-informed and evidence-based methods. So began our Restorative Practices strategic initiative with our partners in the Yonkers community.

Rooted in Restorative Justice, Restorative Practices represents a growing field of study which focuses on repairing relationships and harm done to others rather than punishing offenders and leaving victims without the opportunity to process and persevere through offense and injury. Addressing conflict resolution through Restorative Circles has been an increasingly effective and popular intervention across schools nationally and internationally. Through the use of informal conversations, circles, and conferences, youth communicate openly to learn how their actions impact others, repair damaged relationships, and engage in productive plans to hold oneself accountable through restitution to their community. The International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP) operates from the model's fundamental hypothesis that "People are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in behavior when those in authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them."

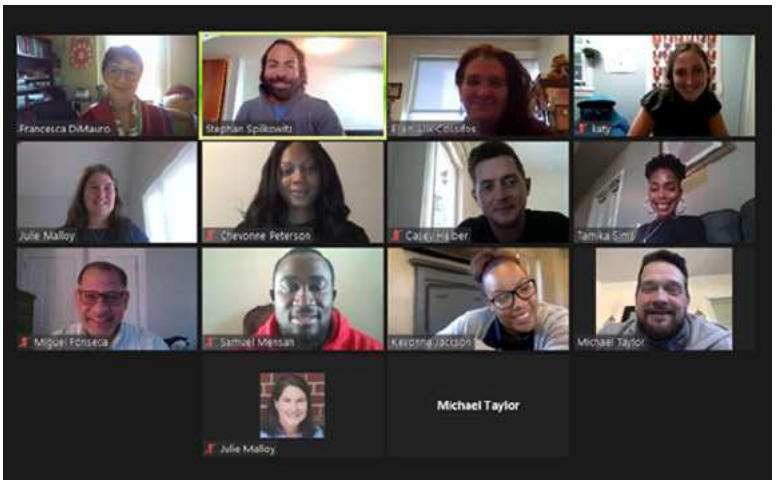
Furthermore, implementation of Restorative Practices drastically reduces antiquated and counter-productive methods of accountability such as suspensions and expulsions which do not take behavioral challenges resulting from childhood trauma or Autism into consideration and which disparately impact students of color and students with disabilities. This modality represents a concrete systemic culture change which has been statistically proven effective in combating the "school to prison pipeline."

Additionally, Restorative Practices is an effective vehicle for building both emotional and intercultural competence, two core competencies essential for educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators who work with special needs students in culturally-diverse schools. While there are numerous benefits of Restorative Practices as a responsive intervention, the modality also serves as a proactive baseline intervention. When effectively implemented, Restorative Practices leads to a stronger sense of school community, greater collaboration, enhanced creative problem solving, and the advancement of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging. (The Restorative Practices Handbook, 2020).

Coincidentally, ANDRUS began a journey towards Restorative Practices implementation at the same time as the Yonkers School District, which was working to revise the school district's Code of Conduct at the time. As hosts to the monthly Yonkers Community Network, a congregation of educators, mental health professionals, and youth advocates from across Westchester, we were honored to aid in efforts beyond our campus community to train and implement Restorative Practices. Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Fred Hernandez, ANDRUS hosted four Restorative Practices trainings for nearly 100 staff and community partners from Student Advocacy, The Compassion Room, Yonkers YMCA, Yonkers Public Schools, NAACP, SPOA, Westchester Department of Community Mental Health, Yonkers PD Gang Special Unit, My Sister's Place, Lower Hudson valley Progressive Action Network, and Family Services of Westchester. This past November, our Restorative Practices initiative took a giant leap forward when we certified 11 ANDRUS staff and community partners as Restorative Practices trainers which will expand the capacity of our organization and Yonkers to strengthen our communities, one circle at a time.

Finally, in a time when racial justice, communal trauma, and the need for more equitable societies has so much salience, ANDRUS is proud to be a solutions-oriented leader through Restorative Practices.

Stephan Spilkowitz,
Assistant Director of Therapeutic Programming & Youth Development



Tamika Sims, Teacher's Assistant
Samuel Mensah, Senior Milieu Therapist
Francesca DiMauro, Senior Residential Clinician
Katy Leidel, Day Treatment Clinician
Chevonne Peterson, Behavior Therapist
Casey Helber, Senior Residential Clinician

Miguel Fonseca, Full Time Trainer
Kevonna (KJ) Jackson, Morning Shift Leader
Michael Taylor, Senior Program Manager
Stephan Spilkowitz, Assistant Director of Therapeutic Programming & Youth Development

We are EXCITED

Updates from the Community Division!

The Community Division would like to share the introduction of a new department within the Community umbrella and expansion of our current services. The ANDRUS Children and Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS) and Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) will be a new department in the division starting this year. (We are working on shortening the name!) Under the guidance of the director, Dr. Romie Mejalli, LMFT ,these programs will provide services such as crisis intervention, family and peer support, Vocational skills and in home therapeutic services to name a few. The great part of these services is that they allow for ANDRUS to provide these community based services to a wide range of clients making services more readily available for those in need. Please stay tuned as more details and information about these programs are on the way!

We are also pleased to announce that Westchester County Healthy Families has expanded to Mount Vernon, New York, in addition to our current location in Yonkers. We look forward to supporting families in Mt. Vernon and providing high-quality services to all those who engage in our program.

The ANDRUS Campus Clinical team is overjoyed to connect with you through another edition of our newsletter. We hope to utilize this newsletter as a means to offer a sense of comfort and ease as we try to navigate this time of uncertainty and upheaval together. The clinical team is composed of licensed social workers, case managers, behavior specialists, and psychologists who support students enrolled in ANDRUS's Residential and Day Programs. We strive to create a safe and nurturing environment for all of our children through offering an array of therapeutic services such as individual, group and family therapy. We hope that this newsletter will help sustain the strength of our community, despite the physical distance that is currently amongst us all. We invite you to explore our newsletter- learn how to develop your very own therapeutic toolbox, get creative with our creativity corner, and maybe even try some yoga.

Click here to view the Campus Clinical Newsletter!

» Click Here

We are THANKFUL

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- United Way, Emergency Food & Shelter Program for their generous gift of $3,000
- Belson Family Fund for their generous gift of $1000
- Children's Hope Chest for their generous gift of $7,000
- Clark Family Foundation for their generous gift of $10,000
- Deborah Teagan, National Philanthropic Trust for their generous gift of $5,000
- Elizabeth Andrus Fund for their generous gift of $1,000
- Esmond Nissim Foundation for their generous gift of $5,000
- James Campbell Rhind Fund for their generous gift of $3,000
- Marc Weinberg, Fidelity Charitable for their generous gift of $1,000
- Martin Kest, Jewish Communal Fund for their generous gift of $750
- Mother Cabrini Health Foundation for their generous gift of $138,444
- Mother Cabrini Health Foundation for their generous gift of $203,437
- Thorpe Charitable Fund for their generous gift of $2,000
- Todd Ouida Children's Fund for their generous gift of $3,000
- Westchester County for their generous gift of $18,000

Sanctuary Core Team Spreads Wellness & Self-Care

A little bit of wellness goes a long way! In these challenging times, taking a moment to practice Self Care and show appreciation for one another is that much more important. As a gift to our colleagues, an acknowledgment of their daily efforts to support vulnerable children and families amid a global pandemic, the members of The Sanctuary Core Team came together to create "Self Care & Wellness Bundles." These packages were complete with fresh ANDRUS honey, ANDRUS aroma therapy lavender satchels, and ANDRUS hand sanitizer. While the effort took seven weeks and many volunteers, this labor of love resulted in nearly 500 Wellness Bundles for each and every ANDRUS employee!

Stephan Spilkowitz,
Sanctuary Core Team Co-Chair

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