



George Junior Republic

# 2019

## ANNUAL REPORT

# LETTER FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In July 2019, George Junior Republic celebrated its 110th anniversary that included staff and student events, ice cream socials, and community engagement activities. This celebration also marked my seventh month on the job as the organization's new Chief Executive Officer. Having had several months of orientation and onboarding, I am well prepared to lead the organization as it writes its next chapter.

The journey ahead is marked by changes in laws (e.g., Family First Prevention Act) and treatment shifts in residential and community-based programming practices. These changes will provide the organization opportunities to expand programming, enhance outcome-based decision-making, develop more specialized treatments and services, and strengthen staff education and training.

With mental health, evidence-based practice, and trauma at the forefront of my mind, George Junior Republic and Affiliates is working on finalizing its three-year strategic plan. The plan, developed in partnership with the Board of Directors and OPEN MINDS (a market intelligence and management best practices firm), will support these aforementioned focus areas and define new objectives and key organizational strategies that will support enhanced treatment and services for the persons we serve.

Underlying each administrative decision is what is in the best interest of those we serve and the long-term outcomes and financial implications of these decisions. Established to complement decision-making is a Campus Advisory Board, that will assist in guiding the organization into the future (based on what is seen through the lens of our most important constituents) – our youth. In the early days of the organization, George Junior Republic had a student-led government. In many ways, the development of a Campus Advisory Board takes us back to our roots of group decision-making.

Serving George Junior Republic and Affiliates brings with it many possibilities, and I look forward to building on our past successes. As I look to the future, I am excited about the role each of us can play in affecting the persons and families from across the United States that we serve. Understanding our role is based on a continuum, I would be remiss in this letter if I did not formally thank those assisting us in this journey.

- The board members who selflessly volunteer their time to support the organization. Their knowledge and hard work behind the scenes are much appreciated.
- The administrators and staff whom day in and day out believe and highlight our mission in action.
- The donors who have assisted us over the past 110 years of service. Their charitable giving has helped us realize our mission.
- The communities supporting the work that we do in Grove City and beyond. They have embraced our programs and those we serve. We appreciate the partnerships and guidance.
- The many state and county agencies that have entrusted George Junior Republic and Affiliates with the care of their youngest residents. We do not take these responsibilities lightly.

Thank you all for your support, and I look forward to our work together in the coming months.

Sincerely,



Nathan M. Gressel  
Chief Executive Officer



**NATHAN M. GRESSEL**

# LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

It has been an exciting and challenging year at George Junior Republic. Fortunately, the boards, administration, and staff are comprised of people with exceptional skills and a deep commitment to the mission of this important organization. Among the six Boards of Directors which make up our corporate structure, many professions are represented, including the judiciary, law, finance, business, human services, education, and politics. We are grateful for the time and talent they generously share. We are also very fortunate in our administration and staff, the people who manage and oversee the operations every day. Many of them have been here for years and they are truly the heart and soul of George Junior Republic.

The past year's challenges included the retirement of our longtime CEO, a search for a new CEO, beginning the process of becoming a Commission for Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facility-certified organization (CARF), and developing a new strategic plan.


Rick Losasso retired at the end of 2018 after 44 years at George Junior Republic, 16 of them as CEO. George Junior Republic is a better place as a result of his leadership, and we are tremendously grateful for his years of service. Following a comprehensive nationwide search, we were fortunate to hire Nate Gressel as our new CEO in January 2019. Nate's education, experience, understanding, and appreciation of George Junior Republic's traditional purpose as well as his focus on future possibilities provide us with the ideal skill set as we move forward.

CARF certification is an extensive and exhaustive process aimed at strengthening and improving the quality of the services provided by George Junior Republic. Every aspect of our mission and every level of the organization will be affected and improved. The CARF mission "is to promote the quality, value and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process and continuous improvement services that center on enhancing the lives of the persons served." Our goal is to be approved for certification by the end of 2020.

Our strategic planning efforts began in March 2019 and were completed in September. Working with consultants from Open Minds, team members from throughout the organization, including board members, administration, and staff are reviewing best practices and future trends from across the country. Through self-examination, we want to improve our current methods and understand better what new areas of service might be open to us.

As we celebrate the 110th anniversary of George Junior Republic, we are proud of our history, we continue to believe in the importance of work we do today, and we look forward to the opportunities ahead.

Sincerely,



Richard Stevenson  
Board President  
George Junior Republic and Affiliates





THE FACT THAT OUR ORGANIZATION HAS GROWN FROM A SINGLE ORGANIZATION TO A CONGLOMERATE OF SIX AFFILIATED NON-PROFIT ENTITIES SPEAKS TO THE AGILITY AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE MANY MEN AND WOMEN OVER ALL OF THESE 110 YEARS.

We are on the cusp of many changes within our organization. The work being done to seek and obtain CARF accreditation will strengthen our delivery of residential services and position our organization for future programming.

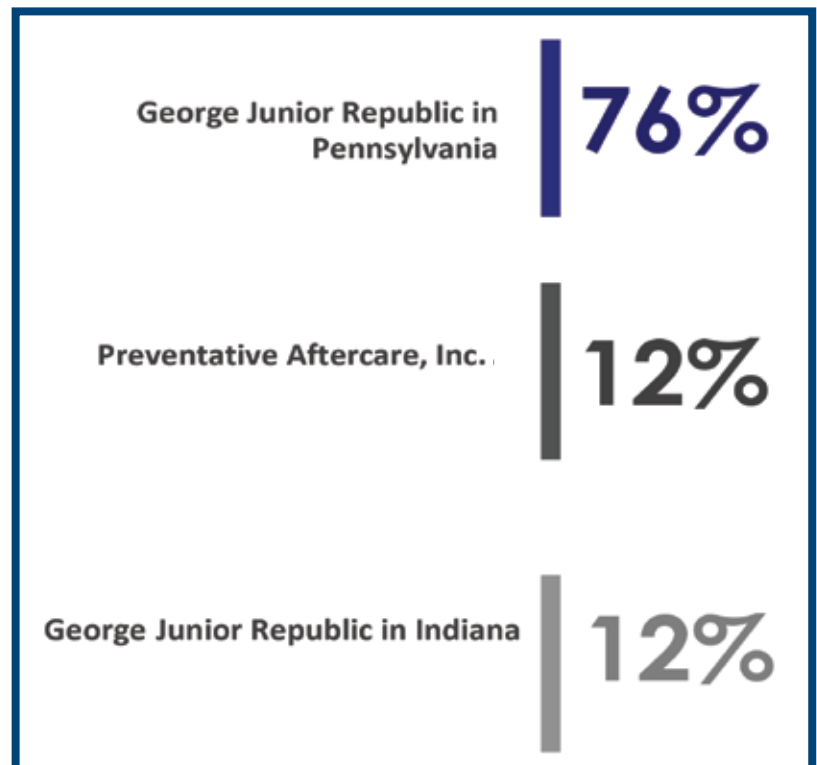
Prevention and aftercare services continue to be in demand as evidenced by our continued growth in Ohio and Pennsylvania. Many resources will be needed to develop new infrastructure to meet those needs, including information technology and finance. Recently, the finance department developed a new partnership to build its infrastructure to better manage Medicaid billing. Our team strives to be cross-trained in as many applications and functions as feasible to keep business moving in a forward fashion.

Another facet of change is the increasing need to work with multiple funding streams from state and county governments as well as behavioral health dollars channeled by managed care organizations. George Junior Republic has a seat at the table in working on state-level initiatives. Our voice is important so that we, as the provider, can make impact on the processing of state and county level dollars invested in the care of the youth and families served.

## PERCENT REVENUE BY OPERATING ENTITY



**CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
MICHELLE GERWICK**



## A YEAR OF TRANSITION

Despite nationwide and statewide pressure to reduce out of home placements, GJR in PA has continued to thrive. With a capacity of 380, the organization has a complement of programs including seven general residential homes utilizing the Counselor Parent model, three general residential homes with the Counselor Parent model licensed as nonhospital inpatient drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities, fifteen Special Needs units, two Special Needs residential treatment units, three Intensive Supervision units and two Diagnostic units.

### 2019 RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- The addition of a second Diagnostic unit, bringing the total diagnostic bed capacity to twenty-three.
- Building capacity for the incorporation of data analytics into the management process. Data analytics will integrate and link various information and financial systems in order to support youth outcomes with fiscal responsibility.
- The implementation of root cause analysis in order to advance problem solving and continuous quality improvement.
- Restructuring of our special needs program to include the addition of a new residential manager position. The residential manager is responsible for the supervision of the milieu and case management duties in the Special Needs program.
- The development of various committees, including:
  - ☐ Compliance - Focused on regulatory and program standards to ensure adherence to those standards and identify areas in need of improvement.
  - ☐ Policy and Procedure - Focused on the review and revision of all agency policies.
  - ☐ IMPACT (Improve Monitor, Plan and Act) - Focused on reviewing key performance indicators and data to impact the youth served in the residential program.
  - ☐ Restraint Elimination – Responsible for the creation of an agency-wide restraint elimination plan.
  - ☐ CARF Accreditation Oversight – Ensures that the CARF accreditation preparation is progressing and works with the subcommittees to overcome obstacles.



**VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS  
JOHN HORGAN**

ALTHOUGH THE ORGANIZATION CONTINUES TO EVOLVE,  
OUR DEDICATION REMAINS FOCUSED ON THE YOUNG  
MEN FROM ACROSS THE UNITED STATES SERVED IN THE  
RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM.



**VICE PRESIDENT OF ADMISSIONS AND  
COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS  
ANDREA DONATUCCI**

The program philosophy of Preventative Aftercare, Inc. (PAC) is to provide services to youth, young adults and their families in the least restrictive environment. Beginning in 1992 with one full-time staff serving 21 families, the program has grown to employ 64 full-time staff in 54 community based prevention and aftercare programs. Collectively, these programs serve over 1,175 youth/families per year in counties across Pennsylvania and Ohio.

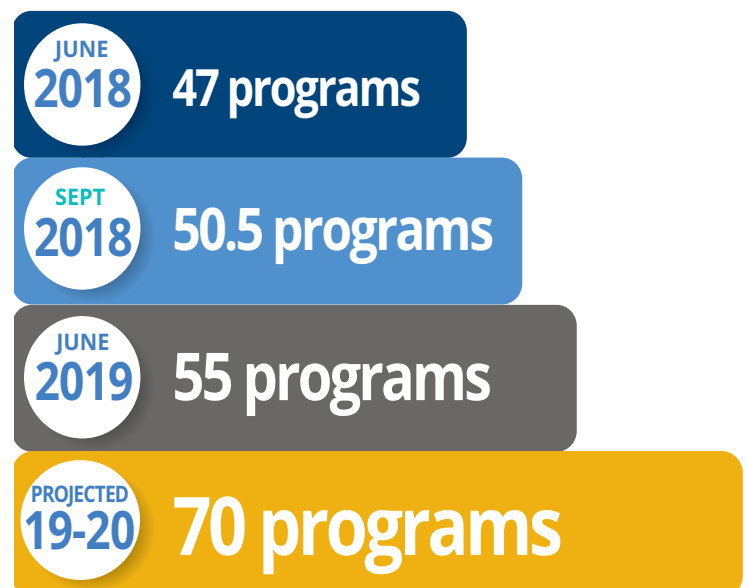
PAC employs therapists with various backgrounds and various degrees and certifications who are required to live in, or near, the geographical location of the contracted services. This facilitates their ability to connect with community resources, have direct personal contact with the child/youth on an intensive basis and visit with the child/youth as they participate

in various aspects of his/her program at school, work, home, recreation, and in the community. PAC staff will meet with family, teachers, counselors, employers, and others involved in the various aspects of the youth's life and make minimum weekly contact with the referring agency, attend case conferences and court hearings whenever necessary. These contacts will be made at various times of the day and night with crisis availability 24 hours/day. The intensive programs utilize incentives, along with activity funds, as a tool for positive reinforcements in motivating clients and to further enhance treatment goals identified in collaboration with the referring agency.

## GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Due to the success of the PAC programs, services within PAC are rapidly expanding. The continued growth of PAC is the catalyst for reorganization and restructuring of the current programs with the addition of seven new supervisors since 2018 and the reorganization of the Montgomery County Family Based Mental Health Services to increase the clinical supervision available to staff.

## PREVENTATIVE AFTERCARE GROWTH





# TWO PAC PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHT SCOPE OF SERVICE

## TRUANCY PREVENTION PROGRAM:

Increasing numbers of truant youth and the new truancy legislation and definitions signed into law during the 2017-18 school year have many counties and school districts exploring more specific programming targeting just these behaviors. Westmoreland County, York County, and Susquehanna County were a few of the first to request specific programming. Many of the current PAC programs in PA and OH actively address truancy behaviors through the intensive services provided. However, truancy has become an ever-increasing community and school concern, which has been the catalyst for the development of the PAC Truancy Prevention Program.

The PAC Truancy Program was developed from the perspective that truancy is a symptom and/or indication of many factors/issues occurring within a youth's life and family environment with the primary objective of the program being to reduce/eliminate behaviors associated with school avoidance and truancy. This PAC Truancy Prevention Program addresses truancy from a systems approach and as a multi-layered, family, and community-based issue that requires a collaborative and organized effort from all involved parties including the family, school, and community resources. To address the truancy concerns, PAC applies our intensive community-based, in-home services, which allows accountability, case management, and therapeutic intervention to occur simultaneously through immediate, interactive, and practical interventions to ultimately impact school engagement. While truancy is not a unique issue, the rising concern over truant behaviors has led to an increase in the request for this program.



## PRISON VISITATION PROGRAM:

Another unique program to PAC is the Prison Visitation Program designed to assist with therapeutic visitation of youth with an incarcerated family member in a safe and welcoming environment designed by the referring agency, PAC, and the prison. The overarching goal of this program is to strengthen the parent-child relationship by addressing any trauma prior to the incarceration, the incarceration period itself, and

the separation of the family unit. Services include interventions, parenting classes, interactional role modeling, and visitation. In addition, if age appropriate, individual counseling will be provided to the youth to address any issues as a result of the visit or due to the current family status. Collaboration with the non-incarcerated parent regarding youth's behaviors and experiences pre and post prison visit are essential. For families who are focused on reunification, Preventative Aftercare Intensive Services may be implemented post release.

For more information of Preventative Aftercare, Inc., please contact Andrea M. Donatucci, Vice President of Admissions and Community Based Programs, at [adonatucci@gjr.org](mailto:adonatucci@gjr.org).

# CEOs AGAINST STIGMA

George Junior Republic has partnered with NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania in support of the CEOs Against Stigma project. This three-year campaign has the goal of addressing mental health in the workplace by providing executives and employees with education, resources and support. With the support of Chief Executive Officer Nate Gressel, the organization has partnered with NAMI to educate supervisors and staff on mental illness and best practices in the workplace.

## THE CEO PLEDGE

Change starts at the top. By joining this initiative, CEOs pledge to:

**UNDERSTAND** the impact of mental illness on the workplace.

**EDUCATE** themselves and their staff about mental illness and best practices in the workplace.

**ENCOURAGE** open dialogue for employees who are dealing with a mental health concern or who have family members with a mental health condition.

**PROMOTE** a stigma-free environment.



“George Junior Republic is excited to participate in the CEOs Against Stigma campaign. The organization looks forward to providing our workforce of over 700 staff (working in multiple states) with the mental health education and supports needed in order to decrease stigma and increase worker productivity at work, home, and in the community,” states Gressel.



George Junior Republic celebrates National Mental Health Awareness Month in May.



# 110TH ANNIVERSARY

SEVERAL EVENTS TOOK PLACE ACROSS CAMPUS IN JULY IN RECOGNITION OF THE ORGANIZATION'S 110 YEARS OF SERVICE TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.



Visitors received tours of the 500-acre Grove City campus.



Persons served and staff received hand delivered ice cream bars.



Staff from across campus celebrated the week with a friendly game of softball.



Youth and staff cheered for their favorite team during the campus wide tug of war match.



## 900 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVED ACROSS INDIANA.

George Junior Republic in Indiana (GJR in IN) believes that at risk children and adolescents should be treated in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their needs and safety. Many youth can be maintained in their homes with individualized treatment, a structured routine, and support systems.

Currently, comprehensive home-based services are implemented in 31 counties across Indiana. This program is designed to avoid or prevent out of home placement using the evidence-based approach of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and/or Motivational Interviewing. Each family is assessed to determine the most effective treatment plan for both the youth served and his/her family. In addition, the program can be utilized as aftercare following residential placement with the goal of transitioning and integrating successfully back into the home, school, and community.

Comprehensive home-based services are offered under a singular referral and can vary in frequency, type, and duration throughout the life of the case. Treatment can adapt to include therapy, casework, parent-aid, substance abuse education, Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing, supervised visits, transportation, and parent engagement.

Over the last 12 months, the organization started a new program in Cass County that will be expanded in 2019-2020 to three more counties. This program provides both comprehensive home-based and community based services to youth who are expelled or kicked out of school, in addition to alternative schooling for the youth. The services are individualized for the youth and may include therapy, skill development, anger management, parenting, budgeting, and other case management services.



(L – R: Older Youth Services Supervisor Ginny Hardin, Vice President Brandy Stark, Clinical Supervisor and Director of Possibilities with OYS and Addictions Janna Mallay, Regional Clinical Supervisor Daniel Vinson and Senior Regional Clinical Supervisor Shannon D. Smith)

In addition, a newly developed program line is WeCovery, a substance abuse prevention group. This program has been in operation since May 2018 and is offered free of charge to youth currently participating in other GJR in IN programs. The group is currently led by a licensed clinical addiction counselor, as well as two case managers. The ever increasing need for addiction services will support expansion opportunities in this area into the future.

## OLDER YOUTH SERVICES

GJR in IN's Older Youth Services (OYS) program provides youth in foster care, aged 16-23, with opportunities to gain skills required to live healthy, productive, and responsible lives as self-sufficient adults. Based on a contract with the Indiana Department of Child Services, OYS services are provided in 21 counties throughout southeastern Indiana. The primary focus of the OYS program is helping youth who are expected to turn 18 in foster care to develop successful skills that will transition them into adulthood. These skills may include planning for education, housing, and employment. OYS services are designed to help youth successfully transition to adulthood regardless of whether they age out of the foster care system, are adopted, enter a guardianship, or are reunified with family.

GJR in IN uses the Broker of Resources Model focusing on connecting youth with services provided in the youth's community or through a natural, unpaid connection to the youth. This model promotes youth developing into productive individuals within their community by the acquisition and maintenance of gainful employment, the achievement of educational/vocational goals, and the receipt of financial skills training. Youth are given the opportunity to build and strengthen their social capital through interactions with

family, peers, caring adults, and communities. The building of social capital gives youth the opportunities to achieve relational permanency resulting in heightened positive brain development and a chance at a higher level of success after leaving foster care. Youth are encouraged to participate directly in designing their program activities, accept personal responsibility for achieving interdependence, and have opportunities to learn from both positive and negative experiences.

The OYS program has 229 youth. The results of this program are significant. In 2019, the high school graduation rate was 100 percent, representing 37 youth. In addition, the program provides multiple learning and pro-social activities by which youth can participate. In 2018, the fifth annual Christmas party for youth participants was held, with over 120 people in attendance and over 200 donated Christmas gifts distributed. This year, OYS held its fourth annual graduation party and its first Moving Forward conference. This conference was a resource fair with educational breakout sessions created specifically for older youth. Sessions and education included parenting and pregnancy prevention information, budgeting, meal preparation, healthy living, and understanding career options.

## GROUP HOME OVERVIEW

The community based group home houses eight adolescence males, ages 14-21, who have been adjudicated as delinquent or children in need of services. Currently, the group home is going through significant changes and increasing the use of evidence based treatment and family and group therapy. The group home also has an independent living program which provides youth with weekly independent living skills needed to assist them in adjusting to successful adulthood.

# EXPANSION

Indiana is in high need for community and home-based service providers. To that end, GJR in IN is expanding services and plans to have an 11 percent increase in staff over the next 12 months.

As organizational services expand, so does the need for contracted services. Recently, contracts were signed for substance abuse assessments and parenting assessments.



# THE CAMPAIGN FOR HEALTHY CHILDREN

ACCORDING TO THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS, “YOUTH IN THE JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM ARE A HIGH-RISK POPULATION WHO, IN MANY CASES, HAVE UNMET PHYSICAL, DEVELOPMENTAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS” (DECEMBER 2011).

With youth admitted from across the country, many come to us with limited exposure to healthcare, uncontrolled chronic conditions, and poor overall health. Recognizing these issues and turning to national healthcare standards, we at George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania are working to broaden our medical scope in order to provide all youth in our care with health services based on best practices and the education needed to experience a healthy lifestyle today and in the future. As part of the 2014 strategic plan, the organization prioritized the health and psychiatric care of youth.

## A LOOK AT THE PRESENT

George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania established the on-campus health center in 1997 and has since been providing a wide array of medical services for youth who reside on the campus. The director of health services oversees a team of nurses and various other subcontracted medical providers including a pediatrician, dentist, and optometrist. The medical team is responsible for medication management, immunization, care coordination, diabetes management, and acute condition care management. In addition, the medical team coordinates the care of youth traveling off campus for orthopedic, physical therapy, occupational therapy, radiology appointments, and brief hospitalization. In addition to the care provided to the youth, all employee physicals are completed on-site.



A wide array of psychiatric and psychological services for youth are also provided on campus. Two child and adolescent psychiatrists complete comprehensive evaluations and assessments, prescribe medication as needed, and complete mental health status exams in coordination with master's level therapists. As valuable members of the team, they contribute to treatment team planning and implementation, and the review of individualized youth treatment goals.

## A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

**The new Wellness Center will provide for the following:**

- Physical health and psychiatric collaboration across all disciplines
- An additional chair for dentist and dental hygienist
- A physical therapy suite on-site
- Expanded eye care on site services
- Co-located Campus Directors/Supervisors
- Admissions suite
- Conference room for staff meetings and group education sessions

## PROVISION OF COORDINATED CARE

On-campus physical health care is provided under the direction of Dr. David Hefner and his physician assistants, Dr. Joseph Skoff (oral health) and Dr. Jeffrey DeSimone (vision). Child and adolescent psychiatrists Dr. Jason Rock and Dr. Mark Demidovich provide mental health treatment oversight. The new Wellness Center will be fully operational by May 2020 and will also include on-site physical therapy services and co-located admissions and treatment supervision.

“Our donors made the Wellness Center possible,” states Director of Development Susan Boland. “It is wonderful to work with foundations and private donors. By sharing in our vision, the new facility will be operational in the spring. George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania looks forward to inviting both donors and interested parties to campus for the dedication.”

## SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Any time there is abrupt change, there is an urgent need. In hiring replacements or bringing in someone for a new position, the age-old battle of what is urgent versus what is important comes into play. It is urgent that you fill the positions but it is important that you find the right person and provide the right training. As such, this past year was marked with another transition brought on by the retirement of long-time Staff Development Director Linda Houari. We appreciate Linda's many years of service, and we were pleased to transition Jenn Mertz into the position of Staff Development Coordinator. Jenn is tasked with the job of enhancing staff training as we continue to adapt to a changing landscape.

While recruitment and retention continue to be the biggest challenges facing most employers, including George Junior Republic, looming changes in staffing patterns should bode well for the organization.

A revamping of responsibilities in our Special Needs programs, including the addition of a residential manager, will go a long way toward enabling our Treatment Team Coordinators to do what they do best – provide the necessary therapy to the persons we serve.

New avenues for recruitment such as Applicant Pool and PA Career Link Veteran's Program are also being pursued. These new avenues, coupled with the new internal staff portal, My Hub Intranet, and the organization's website, continue to be extensively used to support recruitment efforts and to inform staff of new job opportunities.

Turnover is a very costly part of doing business. The good news is that we continue to attract talented associates, and we continue to invest in them through our training department and our tuition reimbursement program, which both truly afford people the opportunity to learn and grow. In the long run, this investment in our staff pays off in many ways.

Additionally, beginning in February 2019, Chief

Financial Officer Michelle Gerwick, board members Dale Perelman and Roger Towle, and I began our participation in the Robert Morris University Cohort Program, which was designed to help non-profit organizations enhance their operations.

The decision was made to focus on human resource functions, specifically improving organizational performance via a yearlong plan for managers from all departments and affiliated companies to hone their management and supervisory skills.

The "Mastering Management" program consists of a book club component as well as informational meetings focused on topic areas such as the legal aspects of human resources. The book club commenced with "Eat That Cookie" by Liz Jazwiec, a nurse by trade who details her exploits at Holy Cross Hospital on the South Side of Chicago. Through monthly group meetings scheduled for the next 12 months, there has been a great deal of enthusiasm and interest in the program. It's an opportunity for everyone involved to learn and grow.

I look forward to the coming year and hope that this program will continue beyond for those who wish to participate.



**VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
TOM JONES**

## DOCUMENTATION REVIEW SUPPORTS PERFORMANCE DELIVERY

### GEORGE JUNIOR REPUBLIC IN PENNSYLVANIA (GJR IN PA) COMPLETED THREE LICENSING REVIEWS DURING 2018-2019.

These visits were conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and the Office of Children Youth and Families. The results were full licenses for all child residential facilities, the outpatient mental health clinic, and the two residential treatment facilities. The drug and alcohol inpatient non-hospital rehabilitation program was granted annual licensure without the need for an on-site licensing visit this year.

During this fiscal year, one behavioral health managed care organization completed monthly records audits of the residential treatment facilities and provided feedback. One Pennsylvania county conducted monthly audits surrounding all youth that they placed with GJR in PA. This included records reviews, youth

interviews, and physical site tours. In addition, there were eight Pennsylvania, two California, and one Ohio county that completed on-site audits. Finally, the states of California, Maryland, and West Virginia conducted annual on-site reviews of the facilities and records and completed youth interviews. No significant compliance issues were noted during these reviews; however, feedback provided was used to improve operations as indicated.

During 2018-2019, compliance at GJR in PA has expanded to bring together oversight activities for the three operational companies; GJR in Indiana, Preventative Aftercare, and GJR in PA, under a single core team. This has supported sharing of expertise and expansion of training opportunities. Training has consisted of a common core of compliance mandates and expectations supplemented by program and/or job specific requirements. Each company continues to operationalize independent work plans that are designed to address and mitigate potential areas of compliance risk.

### ACCREDITATION

GJR in PA began 2019 with full focus on achieving accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Four teams reviewed every standard in the five sections of the CARF Child and Youth Services manual in order to assess readiness for the initial, on-site accreditation survey planned for the spring of 2020. Findings from the teams have paved the way to systematic planning for preparation to successfully achieve the distinction of accreditation.



**VICE PRESIDENT OF COMPLIANCE AND  
TREATMENT SERVICES**  
**SANDY DILLON-DICK**



Accreditation is vital to the successful operations of GJR in PA as we move into the future. The federal Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 (FFPSA) requires that residential programs meet clear expectations in order to receive funding for payment of services for dependent youth. One of these expectations is that the facility becomes certified as a Qualified Residential Treatment Program or Q RTP. This certification requires accreditation with a national accrediting body such

## ACCREDITATION IS VITAL TO THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATIONS OF GJR IN PA AS WE MOVE INTO THE FUTURE.

as CARF. Further, the state of California will require that residential programs serving their youth be designated as Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs and also has an accreditation requirement.

Beyond fulfilling mandates such as the FFPSA, achieving CARF accreditation offers professional recognition for meeting quality standards above licensure. Accreditation demonstrates a commitment to strong governance, programmatic consistency, outcomes measurement, and continuous quality improvement.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

With a workforce of 725, efficiency is important. One of the biggest drivers of productivity, efficiency, and the documentation of the treatment provided to the persons served across all George Junior Republic entities involves the use of information technology. With a team of four full-time and one part-time staff members, the information technology department is continually monitoring risks, assessing for resource needs, and answering helpdesk tickets submitted by employees working across several states.

One biggest areas of focus on the Grove City campus is security, safety, and risk management, as well as data storage and the user experience. Over the past several months, Bryan Redfoot, Director of Information Technology, has been working to develop a new virtual private network (VPN) solution. The role of the VPN is to serve as a secure tunnel for each user as they work on systems internally and access systems externally. This, coupled with thirty plus servers on campus, and 50 to 60 virtual servers, serve as the back-up to campus wide data. On a

regular basis, the data systems are securely tested for vulnerabilities.

Another key focus area of the department has been the management and monitoring of all fire safety systems and the client electronic record, Client Center. With over seventy campus buildings, a high level of coordination and logistics occurs in order to make certain all systems are tested per regulatory guidelines, and repaired as

needed. Client Center serves as the record of each person served and is the documentation portal for mental health care documentation. Developed in 2005, George Junior Republic has proprietary rights to the system. After several months with developers, Client Center II will soon be released as a web-based version that will be accessible both on campus and through the VPN. As the web-based version is implemented, the user rate for the system will increase from 70 users to over 300 users.

“Although technology is ever-changing the organization looks forward to utilizing more technology tools over the next 12 months to help drive efficiency and quality,” states Redfoot.



**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
DIRECTOR BRYAN REDFOOT**

# A THERAPEUTIC APPROACH TO CARE

CLINICALLY, GJR IN PA CONTINUES ITS FOCUS ON EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICES AND THE NEED TO IMPLEMENT THESE PRACTICES WITH FIDELITY AND CONSISTENCY. MANY THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS USED ARE BASED ON TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES, AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE PRACTICES WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE INTO THE FUTURE.

In order to meet the increasing number of youth with complex mental health needs, clinicians have attended a variety of trainings this past year.

- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Advanced Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Attachment Based Family Therapy
- Applied Behavioral Analysis

As the organization works to develop more measurable goals and objectives in alignment with a strength-based approach, a team has been established to support the documentation requirements and implementation of this work. Additionally, a team has been established to develop baseline trauma trainings for all staff hired by GJR in PA. This team will develop a Trauma 101, 102, and 103 series of trainings, which will help staff establish and maintain a more trauma-sensitive approach in intervening with persons served both in crisis and everyday interactions. The goal is to integrate this style of case formulation in team meetings in order to aid individuals in managing crisis situations more effectively and to reduce vicarious trauma for both staff and clients. In addition, GJR in PA has its first certified trainer in Youth Mental Health First Aid. This training will be provided to all current and incoming staff to help them learn effective strategies and action steps to use as an intervention to assess if a youth is in crisis and to know what action steps to take for prevention and early intervention strategies.

Moving forward in 2019-2020, many changes are being made to improve our clinical interventions. We look forward to implementing Feedback Informed Therapy principles into our sessions in order to assess the



outcome of the clinical services provided to our clients. A two-day LGBTQI training specific for clinicians and a one-day LGBTQI training specific for direct care staff have been set up to integrate more specific policies and procedures in helping clients with these specific concerns. Additional information regarding family therapy integration will be pursued to help both the clients and their families. At this time, Brief Strategic Family therapy and Family Systems Trauma has been of interest and will be further explored. Additional digital trainings have been secured and will be provided to clinicians to enhance their knowledge and implementation of various treatment modalities. GJR in PA will collaborate with Community Care Behavioral Health Organization to develop psychiatric residential treatment facility vision and mission.

The clinical staff at GJR in PA continues to pursue the highest quality, evidence-based interventions available to enhance the experience of the person served and ensure that they have a successful return to the community.

# FACILITY FOCUS

IN ORDER TO CONTINUE MAKING CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS AND MEETING THE ONGOING NEEDS OF THE PERSONS WE SERVE, SEVERAL FACILITY-BASED PROJECTS WILL TAKE PLACE THROUGH 2020.

These projects include various building renovations, paving in order to maintain the quality of the campus roadways, upgrading HVAC systems from electric to gas, replacing generators that are beyond their useful life, locating “old” utility lines across campus, completing a storm water retention pond at the Visitation Center, and responding to various requests for maintenance calls across campus (totaling more than 500 per year).

In addition to these “standard” work orders, the organization is moving towards with development of a new Wellness Center on campus. This project will be complete in 2020, with the center slated to serve as a home to a full range of medical and psychiatric services. In addition, with generous support of the KaBOOM! Foundation, a playground will be installed in March 2020 outside of Special Needs 17/18.

“AS FACILITY DIRECTOR, I AM COMMITTED TO PROVIDING THE HIGHEST QUALITY IN INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE TREATMENT NEEDS OF THE YOUTH ENTRUSTED IN OUR CARE.”

~HAL CLARK

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

One of the first volunteer opportunities will be to work together to install a playground for the youth at Special Needs 17 and 18 on the Grove City campus. The average age of the persons served in these two buildings is eleven years old. As noted as part of the KaBOOM! grant, community members, employees, and stakeholders will work together for the playground design and build.

If you are interested in hearing more about any of these upcoming programs, please feel free to reach out to Charity Saunders, at 724-458-9330, x2170.



# FINE ARTS PROGRAM

## 2019 PROVIDED A MULTITUDE OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF TO PARTICIPATE IN PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMING RELATED TO THE ARTS.

In order to more fully engage the youth this year, classes have been redesigned so that students could learn and create on a more independent level, thus allowing them to create artwork that holds a special and more personal meaning to them. Community projects continue to flourish and support the restorative justice component of treatment and teach students how art can serve as a platform for social justice.

Beginning in June 2018, George Junior Republic was selected to serve in a two-year cohort program sponsored by the Americans for the Arts and the PA Council of the Arts. The cohort focuses on marketing strategies and community development in the arts. The cohort has been a great opportunity to learn how art can serve as a bridge to community engagement. With education as the background for this project, there have been excellent learning opportunities related to the marketing design and creation of the future of the arts program. We were also recognized and awarded the PA Council of the Arts 2018 Best of the Best Projects for the Pointing the Way project. This award provided Fine Arts Director Glen Sanders the opportunity to attend a weeklong conference in Denver on public art. Based on the growth and recognition of the program, the fine arts director served as a speaker at the 2018 PA Arts Education Association Conference and will also serve as a speaker at the conference this year to be held in Penn State.

The Fine Arts program values the importance of partners and collaborators. This year we have been able to see growth in this area and understand that these people, groups, organizations, and communities help make this program a success and greatly impact our students. Not only do we partner and collaborate with many groups within the organization, such as the BARJ Program and the Grove City Area School District, but we have worked with or have received either donations



***"YELLOW DOG" SCULPTURE***

and grants from Erie Arts and Culture, PNC Charitable Foundation, Artist Jim West and the Wild West Studios, River of Steel Arts, The Hoyt Art Center, Cray Youth and Family Services, D.O.N. Services, ELG Metals, The Barber National Institute, Sharon and Mercer School Districts, and ten additional local organizations and companies. These collaborators provide great opportunities to show the importance and value of services that George Junior Republic provides to the clients and the families we serve.

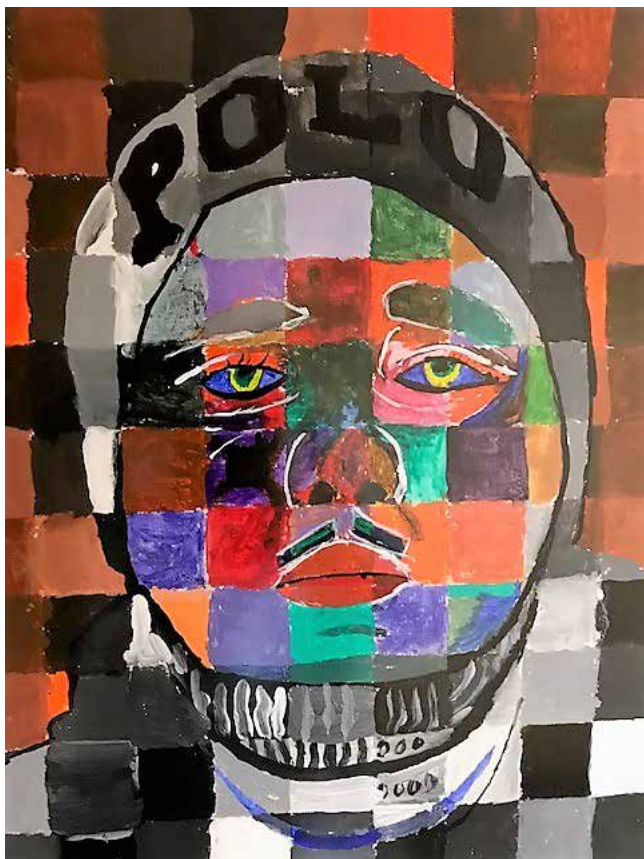
The Fine Arts program is focused on creating an art culture that will: 1) help heal and better equip our students; 2) help create and promote an environment that continues to improve morale and foster growth for our staff.; 3) Seek new partners and collaborators to show the benefits of George Junior Republic in the communities we serve.

If you would like more specific information about the Fine Arts program, please feel free to contact Fine Arts Director Glen Sanders 724-458-9330 x2079 or [gsanders@gjr.org](mailto:gsanders@gjr.org) .



FINE ARTS CLASSES AND PROGRAMS HAVE ALLOWED STUDENTS AND STAFF TO PARTICIPATE IN MANY SHOWS AND PROJECTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, INCLUDING:

- Two art displays at the Grove City Premium Outlets
- A show at the Barber National Institute
- Eleventh annual Student Show and Silent Auction (held annually at the end of the school year)
- Twelfth annual Empty Bowls project (held in March each year)
- Third annual Bikes to Pine Ridge Reservation
- Man – Up Project and Show
- Water Collection Project
- “You Lift Me Up” origami campus installation for students and staff
- Annual staff art show
- Three large artworks created by students and staff to be displayed at the Administration Building and the new Wellness Center.





# ADVENTURE BASED COUNSELING

IT HAS BEEN AN EXCITING YEAR AT THE ADVENTURE BASED COUNSELING (ABC) FACILITY! FROM WELCOMING NEW TEAM MEMBERS, EXPANDING OUR SERVICES, ATTENDING ROPES TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, AND WORKING WITH OUR YOUTH – WE HAVE CERTAINLY BEEN BUSY!

This year, approximately 4,527 youth and adults have participated in teambuilding groups at the ABC facility. The ABC staff have facilitated 441 groups with George Junior Republic youth and seven teambuilding events for outside entities totaling over 1,000 active facilitation hours. Specifically, 22 Special Needs Unit group cycles have taken place, which means that every open Special Needs unit has completed one 8 week Behavior Management Through Adventure (BMTA) group cycle, with five units (SN4, SN9, SN10, SN11, and SN14) completing it twice. Campus BMTA groups looked similar with all open campus cottages completing one 8 week BMTA group cycle and four cottages (Forsha, Glenn, WJ, and Patterson) completing it twice. There have also been six Drug and Alcohol group cycles, two Diagnostic group cycles, and five Adventure Club cycles.

This year, the ABC facility has also expanded services to offer specialty counseling groups for youth in SN units and in open campus cottages. Six SN unit specialty groups cycles and four campus specialty group cycles have taken place with approximately 80 youth participating. Groups have focused on a variety of topics, including developing positive leadership skills, peer mentoring, social skills and empathy, social skills and problem-solving, self-esteem and anxiety, sportsmanship, and goal setting.

The current open campus specialty group is focusing on planning skills. This group of six youth is creating a rock climbing competition for youth in SN units and youth on campus. Group members have learned about the sport of rock climbing, designed the bouldering challenges on the rock wall, and created marketing materials. Group members will also facilitate and judge the competition.

Alongside working with George Junior Republic youth, the ABC staff have also had the opportunity to work with seven outside groups. Last summer, Mercer County juvenile parole officers and the George Junior Republic Finance Department visited the course. In the fall, outside groups included 24 participants from the E-Academy of Butler, PA, and 18 members of the West Middlesex Fire Department. During the winter months, the Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce utilized the course twice for “Leadership Shenango,” which provides leadership workshops for 24 nominated community members. Slippery Rock University’s group facilitation class also visited the course as part of their class curriculum. Twenty students had the opportunity to learn about the evidence-based program and the art of facilitating long-term BMTA counseling sessions with clients.

There are also exciting things on the horizon for the Adventure Based Counseling Facility. In the coming year, staff are looking forward to the potential addition of a Leadership Reaction Course (LRC) and becoming a billable therapy site. The LRC will provide countless new ways to engage youth, staff, and outside groups in leadership development. Additionally, becoming a billable therapy site will create an additional revenue stream. The next year promises to be full of new adventures, and we cannot wait to take advantage of the opportunities.

If you’re interested in having an adventure with us, please contact Gillian Martin at [Gmmartin@gjr.org](mailto:Gmmartin@gjr.org).





# ADVANCING THE ORGANIZATION

As the organization advances toward CARF accreditation, there are many youth and family activities taking shape. A Campus Advisory Council was formed in early fall. The council provides youth on campus the opportunity to voice their opinion on a variety of topics. Youth members provide a voice for all campus youth. Recently, the advisory council organized and served as the organizers of a Client Rights Week. During the week of activities, youth had the opportunity to write an essay on, "Why are youth rights important?" In addition, units and cottages across campus developed Client Rights posters that were displayed across campus. Lastly, the Campus Advisory Council developed a Client Rights Week video with the assistance of staff members. The video outlined all rights established in the PA 3800 Regulations. The video was shown to all students across campus.

In addition, the organization is working to develop a formal Parent Advisory Council. The council will provide the organization with input and suggestions to support improving the parent/guardian experience when their child enters the program. With a focus on best practices related to parent/family/guardian engagement and communication, participants will help drive system improvements.

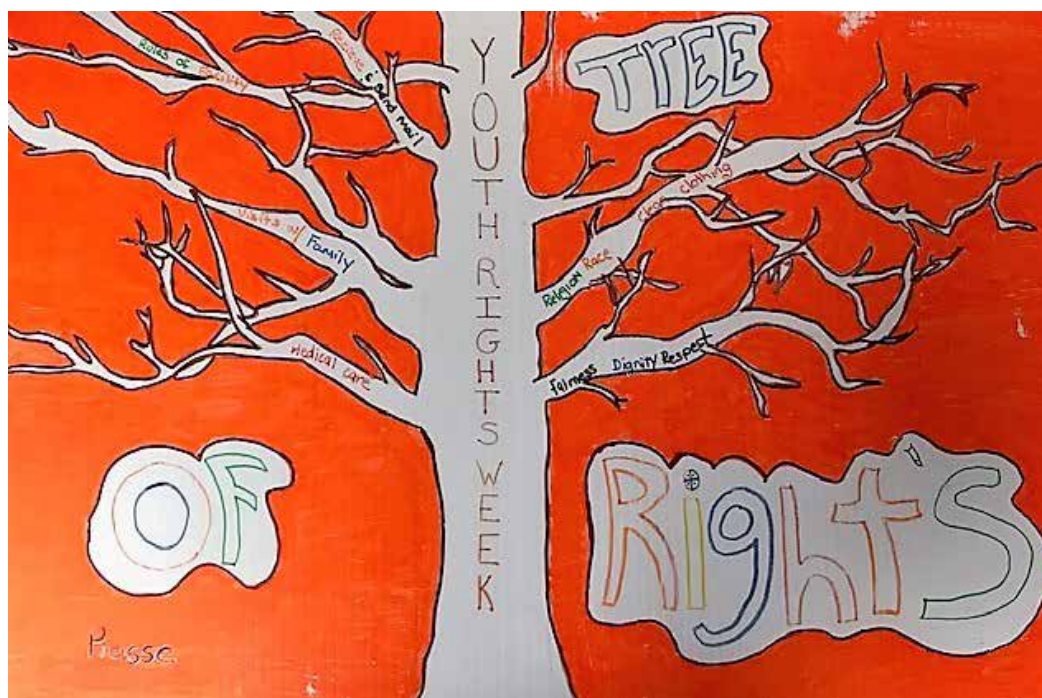
## why are youth rights important?

There are many important things around the world youth should have or be shown.

One of these things is child rights. Child rights are very important. I believe every boy or girl should have equal youth rights. Youth rights are important because it helps all children feel equal to one another. This is important because if one child is being treated better than another the child may think it is because of their skin color or race.

Another reason why rights are important is because children are our future.

*Child Rights Week Essay (as written by a person served)*



After 110 years of service to youth from across the country, George Junior Republic looks forward to further developing relationships and sharing our story. Although the stories shared can bring both happiness and sadness, it is the child and family behind the story that we work to treat and serve. Our work is not possible without the gracious individual, business, and corporate donors and grant makers that make our work possible.

To this end, the organization has many opportunities to get involved.

**WELLNESS CENTER:** George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania looks forward to the dedication of the new campus Wellness Center in early 2020. The Wellness Center will also bring to the forefront the concept of 'discharge begins at intake.' With a team of providers working together to meet the needs of persons served under one roof, we are excited to realize this coordinated approach to care.

**For more information about the Wellness Center or to schedule a tour, contact the Director of Development Susan Boland at 724-458-9330, x2171.**

**PLAYGROUND:** With generous support from the KaBOOM! and Keurig Dr Pepper, the playground will be a space for all persons served on campus, specifically our youngest residents (ages 8 – 12).

**SCHOLARSHIP:** The vision of long-time board member Nannie Jean Hay was to support GJR high school graduates in their pursuit of higher education. Since 1988, over \$1.2 million in funding has gone to support our alumni. The goal of the scholarship remains 'hope for a better future.'

**FINE ARTS:** The fine arts program provides a way for youth to express emotion and feeling in a safe environment through the creation of art. All youth participating in the arts are able to find a renewed sense of hope based on their participation. All donations to this program are used to offset the cost of supplies.

**BOOKS:** The gift of a book to a child has no limits. Donated books must be age-appropriate and in good condition.

**EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT TAX CREDIT PROGRAM (EITC):** George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania is qualified to accept both Scholarship and Educational Improvement Opportunity funds.

**PREVENTATIVE AFTERCARE, INC, AND GEORGE JUNIOR REPUBLIC IN INDIANA:** Donations are needed to support the purchase of bed frames and mattresses for children and young adults in these programs.

All donations in this category will support the purchase of these items for individuals in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana.

# PARTNERSHIP

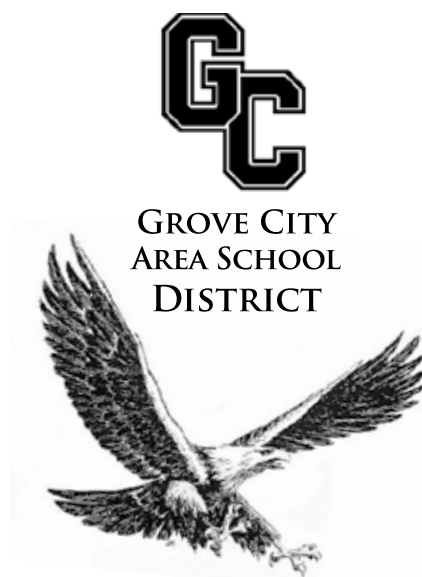
**T**he Grove City Area School District (GCASD) and George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania (GJR in PA) have an education-based partnership that has been maintained for more than 60 years. GCASD along with GJR in PA, provides an equitable public education for the young men throughout their stay at GJR in PA. This public school program is supported with a full complement of school administrators, professional teaching staff, relevant support staff, and learning resources. Students also have access to Career and Technical Center programs that include six vocational shops where they can earn multiple industry-based certifications, participate in internships, and explore career opportunities.

**O**n the campus of GJR in PA, students attend school in various classroom settings and are afforded an excellent educational experience. GCASD plans and delivers a complete elementary through high school curriculum. Typically, one hundred percent of the senior class members complete the GCASD graduation requirements and are awarded a high school diploma.

**T**he orchestration of complementing services between GJR in PA and the GCASD has allowed the students residing at GJR in PA to receive a stable public school experience while also receiving the support services provided by the GJR in PA residential program. This partnership is a point of pride for the GCASD as well as an ongoing collaboration that has significantly strengthened the quality of education for all students in the GCASD. This long-standing partnership between entities is one that will continue to thrive, grow, and contribute for years to come.



**DR. JEFFERY FINCH**



**DR. JOSHUA WEAVER**





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