Employees, Volunteers, Community Partners and Friends

DJJ and Allen University Propel Juveniles
Five Receive Scholarship While at DJJ

Jakorey, Artasia and Mr. English talk about the program and how it's changing lives at DJJ.

Jakorey, 18, leaned over his notes, studying. Jakorey is a freshman at Allen University. He's working toward a Business Administration degree and dreams of owning a music studio.

A college fair at the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice may have helped to shape Jakorey’s future, along with the lives of several other students.

The perseverance paid off. This past Fall, Jakorey was one of five students awarded a $2500 scholarship from Allen University for the 2018-2019 school year.

Artasia, of Horry County, is also one of those scholarship recipients. She’s 16 years old, earned her GED while at DJJ, and can already call herself a college student.
Jakorey spent more than a year incarcerated at DJJ. While at DJJ’s Broad River Road Complex, he attended the annual college fair hosted by the agency’s school district.

Dr. Mamie Hayes Hartwell, a teacher at DJJ, oversees the college fair and says it’s a way to encourage juveniles to think about post-secondary education and develop a plan for the future.

“In this environment, it is critical for educators and administrators to give our students every opportunity for success,” says Dr. Hartwell. “We may not win with every student, but we give every student our best.”

In 2016, DJJ’s school district partnered with Allen University to offer college courses to juveniles who completed their GED or high school diploma. In Summer of 2017, the first course – English 101 – was offered to a group of five students.

“It was hard. It made me want to quit, but I kept pushing myself. I never really liked school, but I want to do something more with my life,” explained Jakorey.

“I couldn't be prouder of our young students, staff and the efforts of Allen University. I can't wait to one day be at the students College graduation. I will know how hard they worked and it all would have started at DJJ,” said DJJ's Interim Director Freddie Pough.

“Wow! Me, a scholarship? I never thought I could even make it out of high school,” says Artasia. “I'm something nobody would think I would be.”

Artasia is currently in the English 200 course “Intro to Literature.” She’s one of seven DJJ students taking the class.

Jakorey, released in early January, is living at home in Richland County and attending classes at Allen. He arrived on campus with 12 credit hours earned.

“Education is a vital part of the rehabilitative process at DJJ. The agency’s school district strives to empower students through education and set them on a path toward their goals. Our last quarter, more than 40 DJJ students were Honor Roll recipients. Click here to learn more about the DJJ School District.

5 Questions with...

Professor Josh English, Allen University
1) What do you enjoy most about being a college professor?

The most satisfying moments for me are when I see students develop an idea. In particular when they realize they have an interesting idea and why it's interesting.

2) Has anything surprised you while working with juveniles at DJJ's school?

Honestly, I was so unsure of what to expect coming into the DJJ school that I'm not sure if I could have been surprised by anything. Perhaps the best answer is that I was surprised by how much it feels like my other college classes.

3) What is the most valuable lesson you share with your students?

This is a hard question because you never know what lesson is going to be valuable. That said, the lesson that works its way into almost every class I've taught is on what it means for something to be hard versus easy. I think we have this cultural perception that “harder” means “more work,” but that isn't really true. More work might be a drag, but it isn’t necessarily hard. What’s really hard is not knowing what work to do. The way to make life easier, whether it’s in a college class or elsewhere, is to figure out what work needs to be done.

4) Where do you hope the students to be in 5 years? 20 years?

This might be cheesy, but most importantly I hope they’re happy. Whatever happiness looks like for them. In five years, hopefully they’re learning to navigate the fact that adulthood is way more difficult and confusing than you ever imagine. Twenty years from now, hopefully they read a good book every once in a while, vote regularly, and know how to cook. By the time you’re in your 30’s, I think everyone should know how to cook.

5) What were your favorite and least favorite subjects in school when you were a kid?

I liked most subjects. That said, I never particularly liked school. But I liked, and still like, most of the subjects.
SC Treasurer Loftis Helps Teach DJJ Juveniles About Managing Money

DJJ and South Carolina Treasurer Curtis Loftis teamed up to teach juveniles at the Upstate Evaluation Center the importance of budgeting money and long-term finances.

In December, Treasurer Curtis Loftis attended the "Mad City Money Program" at UEC, where about two dozen juveniles learned a valuable lesson about money. The program was provided by Founders Federal Credit Union.

"A big thank you to Treasurer Loftis for accepting my invitation to talk with our juveniles. Financial education is a key component to prepare our juveniles for a successful return to their lives," explains Treasurer Loftis. "Budgeting and financial planning are important issues in South Carolina that directly impact everyone," explains Treasurer Loftis. "I'm proud to help empower juveniles with lessons that will help them their entire lives."

In 2017, DJJ and Founders FCU partnered to teach financial literacy to juveniles. The exercise challenges juveniles to plan out every aspect of their budget. Each juvenile is assigned an occupation and salary, from which they made "life" decisions regarding food, housing, clothes, transportation and more. Surprise situations are also handed out to simulate the unexpected expenses of everyday life.
"communities," said Interim DJJ Director Freddie Pough. More than 240 juveniles completed the program since June.

Interim DJJ Director leads DJJ and DMV Partnership to Issue SC IDs to Juveniles

DJJ Interim Director, Freddie Pough, DJJ and the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) partnered to issue state IDs to juveniles.

In December, the DMV set up a mobile office at the Broad River Road Complex. Juveniles met with DMV staff to receive official state photo IDs.
"These state IDs are a major step in helping juveniles return to their communities and continue on a successful path once released. Photo ID is often required to enroll in post-secondary education or even apply for a job," said DJJ's Interim Director Freddie Pough.

Model airplanes, rocket kits and dreams of being an astronaut are parts of many childhoods. Mistakes, circumstances and other paths often leave dreams in the past.
Juveniles at DJJ are like most kids dreaming of education, a good job and a happy life. Unfortunately, those dreams can feel out of reach for many juveniles.

"DJJ empowers our youth to reach for employment with great companies such as Boeing. South Carolina communities and businesses are a big part of successful juvenile reentry into the community," said DJJ Interim Director Freddie Pough.

Companies like Boeing are helping ignite those dreams once again and propel juveniles into the future they once imagined.

Juveniles at DJJ's Upstate Evaluation Center recently learned about careers in the aerospace industry. A Boeing engineer who works in the company's IT Department visited with more than 30 juveniles to talk about the types of jobs available, including at Boeing's North Charleston facility. The presentation taught DJJ youth to "dream big" and develop good work habits to help them in future careers.

The guest presentation was part of DJJ's Job Readiness Training,

"Our juveniles are smart and able to make some incredible employees for any company in South Carolina. It is an honor to have such a company as Boeing come here, spend time with our juveniles and maybe even inspire them," says Robert Snipes of DJJ Job Readiness.

Boeing has made several visits to DJJ over the last year in an effort to help DJJ's youth. Last Summer, they toured the Broad River Road Complex to see how DJJ is empowering youth for the future.

Boeing South Carolina - like DJJ - understands our youth are the future. They are the key to new innovation and turning dreams into reality. Boeing's DreamLearners educational program is designed to engage the younger generation and teach kids about careers in aerospace.

"At Boeing, we understand the importance of investing time and resources with young people across all backgrounds," says Frank Hatten, Boeing South Carolina Education Relations Specialist. "We're committed to inspiring future generations to explore the possibilities of careers in STEM-related fields."

Hopefully, juveniles will allow themselves to dream again and maybe some of their model airplanes will be dusted off soon.

Click here to learn more about DJJ's Job Readiness Training Center.

Click here to learn more about DJJ's Job Training programs in the community.
U.S. Air Force veteran Sgt. Gregory Politte was laid to rest in November at Fort Jackson National Cemetery, receiving full military honors.

Under perfect blue skies, Chapin's American Legion Post 193 and riders from several veteran groups escorted Sgt. Politte's remains to the cemetery. Juveniles at the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice crafted Sgt. Politte's wooden urn used in the interment.

To date, DJJ juveniles have built more than 75 urns for unclaimed veteran remains.

After the ceremony, members of American Legion Post 198 and other military veterans visited with juveniles at DJJ's Broad River Road Complex. They spoke with juveniles about their time serving, how important it is to honor fallen veterans, and offered motivation going forward.
Eleven juveniles found themselves in the spotlight for all the right reasons last October. Three females and eight males at DJJ's Broad River Road Complex competed in the 8th annual Mr./Ms. Birchwood "Bulldog" Competition.

The pageant-style event featured formal wear, casual wear and talent categories. Talents included original poems, dances and a drum performance. The competition is an opportunity for youth to learn a variety of life lessons, from how to tie a bow tie to public speaking. One juvenile said the competition helped him overcome his stage fright.

Another competitor said she stepped outside her comfort zone to make her grandparents proud.

Each contestant earned his or her way onto the stage, meeting several criteria before being allowed to participate. Criteria included writing an essay and exhibiting outstanding behavior leading up to the pageant.
DJJ welcomes new Wellness Coordinator Eugenia Padgett. Eugenia is a graduate of the University of South Carolina, where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Exercise Science. She most recently worked with the USC football team in the nutrition area.

Evidence shows weight-related health issues can affect an employee's productivity and contribute to absenteeism. When our employees are healthier, the Agency is healthier and everyone benefits.

Twenty people signed up for the most recent Biggest Loser Challenge, and during those twelve weeks lost over 100 pounds and 200 centimeters!

After the final tally - Mattie Watkins, BRRC, won First Place, losing 22 pounds and 38 centimeters. Sharon Richbow, Sumter County, earned Second Place. Crystal Robinson, Sumter County, won Third Place. These three ladies also split the cash prize.
The Wellness Team is working hard to help you live a healthy, happy life. Feel free to contact them at WellnessCenter@scdjj.net or (803) 896-9245.

A group of students from Rutgers University spent their Winter break volunteering here at SCDJJ! These community-conscious students spent time with staff and juveniles while gaining a better understanding of the juvenile justice system. They tutored at Birchwood School, supported Activity Therapists during Rec time, cheered on the Birchwood Bulldogs basketball team, and enjoyed a Super Service Saturday with the young men of Myrtle Dorm.
DJJ’s Teen After-School Centers work strategically with community partners around the state to prevent kids from getting into trouble. One TASC partner - City Year - volunteered to paint a mural at the Detention Center as an MLK Day service project. Twenty-eight City Year staff members participated in the project. The mural includes powerful words of encouragement to kids at the facility.
Adam, 17, is from Greenville County. He became involved with DJJ in 2015. He has since overcome his mistakes, earned his GED this year and graduated from the SC Youth Challenge Academy. With the help of our Job Readiness Training Center, he took the ASVAB - an aptitude test for people interested in joining the military. Adam scored very highly and officially joined the United States Navy. He will ship to a Naval Training Center in May to begin his service to our country.

The Lexington DJJ office honored veterans in their local community for Veterans Day. Staff and kids on probation wrote over 150 thank-you cards to veterans.

The Lexington office also delivered doughnuts to a group of veterans to show appreciation for their sacrifice and commitment to our country. The group of veterans meet every week to support and fellowship with one another.
Juveniles at DJJ's Broad River Road Complex took the baton in November to lead South Carolina's premier orchestra. The South Carolina Philharmonic visited DJJ as part of their "Conduct the Phil" program. Orchestra members travel across the Midlands performing free of charge. People in attendance are given the chance to conduct the musicians as they perform well-known classic compositions. In our case, juveniles and staff handled the conducting duties.