## EPIPHANY TIDINGS <br> Volume MMXXI, Issue III <br> November 2021 <br> Epiphany Ministries of Texas, Inc. www.texasepiphany.com

## Roy's Ramblings...

He has said to me,
"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest on me.
2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

This verse resonates with me as we are all feeling rather helpless where our Stars are concerned. However, our prayers and letters we know are having a positive effect on the Stars. I have word today that they are beginning to let volunteers back on campus. It also appears that they may be allowing Epiphany to start again in 2022. Scheduling will depend on each unit individually. It is also possible that we may get approvals to start later in the year skipping the usual Jan to April dates. That is generic information check with your unit.

Grace and Peace,
Roy


## McLennan County Hosts First "Trauma-Informed Camp"

Staff came together recently at the McLennan County campus to pilot a new "Trauma-Informed Camp" for youth.

This first camp focused on nine youth from a single dorm, who engaged in games and activities for three days with specially assigned staff "buddies" and others. The goal: To break down barriers and build healthy connections between staff and the young men.

The non-stop event, filled with fun activities, "immersed these kids in an environment where they could be supported by staff and express how they felt within groups," said Associate Director of the Texas Model Troy McPeak.

As the boys worked and played side-byside with their assigned adult "buddies" they were learning how to discern and share their feelings in a safe space, McPeak said.

Activities ranged from obstacle courses and trust-building exercises to nurture groups and art making sessions. Camp opened each day with individual buddy meetings, followed by physical activities,
snack breaks, nurture group and life skills group. Afternoons brought art activities and more games, followed by a wind-down period and buddy meeting.

Supervising staff included Texas Model Activities Leader lan Bracken, who ran several active "Crash and Bump" activities; Youth Experience Leader Elaine Windberg, who oversaw art activities; Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex Supt. Lisa Broussard, who led Nurture Groups; Director of Treatment Programs Dr. Evan Norton and Director of Secure Facilities Alan Michel, who oversaw the themes of the day and buddy groups; and Treatment Services Health Specialist Katie Stokes, who ran Dialectical Behavioral Therapy groups. Dr. Evan and Manager of Integrated Treatment Lacey Evans did "check-ins" with the youth.

Many others, including McLennan campus Supt. Michelle Havranek, Assistant Principal Joy Rogerson and Assistant Superintendent Antonio Houston, and other staff pitched in to make this pilot program a success.
Texas Model Mentors Monique Mosley
(Ron Jackson campus), Rebecca Williams (Gainesville) and Tatrina Bailey (Giddings) came to provide assistance and also to observe this pilot camp so they can run Trauma-Informed Camps at their campuses. Alan Michel says this is the first of many more Trauma-Informed Camps to come.

And if the response at the McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility campus is any gauge, the youth cannot wait.

The camp built/strengthened connections with healthy boundaries, McPeak said, "and at the heart of it all I saw nine kids have a really great time over the three days."
"Later the whole campus was clamoring to get to be part of the camp. The kids just heard the buzz and wanted to be a part of it all."

Special thanks to Troy McPeak and Tanya Rosas, Community Relations Coordinator, for taking photos at this event.


# All the Stage is a World of Opportunity at TJJD's Ron Jackson Campus 

## By Barbara Kessler, TJJD Communications



Like every other veteran employee at the Ron Jackson State Correctional Complex, in Brownwood, Daniel Nix must have walked past the stage in the campus gym a thousand times.

The brick-bordered proscenium facing the basketball courts sported not one detail that left an impression. The nook was used sometimes to serve snacks after sports events, but it was usually dark and deserted, the place no one notices anymore.

Then one day, Nix stopped -- and took note. He envisioned the stage festooned with curtains; a marquee declaring it to be a special place, say the "Rising Stars Theater." He heard the beats of band ensembles and graduation speeches booming off the gymnasium walls.

In his mind, the stage would host rousing performances and nestle precious high school memories.

Nix, the assistant superintendent of RJSCC, vowed to breathe life into this forgotten corner of campus, and this fall, that's happening.

New black curtains have been hung and a troupe of lively young women, the pioneering members of Ron Jackson's inaugural improv club, burst onto the stage every Tuesday night.
The five teens practice the art of improv under a program developed by Mary DiMichele, a nationally known improv educator who helps organizations oper-
ate at the intersection of improv and trauma-informed care. Deputy Executive Director for State Services Shandra Carter had suggested that Nix engage DiMichele to introduce improv to Ron Jackson.

DiMichele kicked off the program with a day-long workshop on Sept. 17 teaching a style of improvisation she calls "Yes, and" because responses require that locution. A person says something, and another person adds to it, replying with "Yes, and." After the in-person workshop, DiMichele gave the Ron Jackson group access to a packet of improv games to carry them forward through a dozen more gatherings on their own.

The girls, excited but nervous at first, had a blast.
"I had quite a bit of fun with Ms.
DiMichele," mused S.L., an 18-year-old who lives in the Success dorm. "She was very open and she wasn't judgmental all.


We all got together and had a good laugh."

Other girls participating echoed her assessment, remarking that they never tired of the exercises during the full day workshop and never felt "judged" because their responses and improv efforts were all considered valid and worthy.
"I learned that I can do anything that feels right to me and that nobody is
judging me for who I am. Nobody is saying, 'That was horrible,' or that they don't like how l'm doing it," said Z. J. of Pride dorm. "I felt uplifted."

Affirmation is the heart of DiMichele's improv approach and the girls definitely felt the acceptance.
"You can take it in different directions...and sit or be active," said C.E., a Courage dorm resident and selfdescribed introvert who typically prefers pets to people. Surprisingly, she said, she felt thoroughly engaged by the improvisations and didn't weary of the social aspect but had "fun throughout the whole thing."

Yes, and . . . it fits like a glove with the Texas Model

By their very nature, the improv games seem ready made to fit with TJJD's Texas Model approach to activities. Both emphasize building connections, teamwork and empowering the youth.
"Improv teaches them how to change, how to trust and how to deal with others coming into a scene and introducing something they may not agree with," Nix said.

Watching the workshop was "mind blowing," he said, because the girls stayed so fully engaged throughout, which is not a given among youth who've been through so much trauma in life.

The girls had to sustain a lot of eye contact and pay close attention to others, which can be difficult for kids from hard backgrounds. But the improv framework seemed to dislodge defenses and enable extended interactions, he said.

A couple caveats: Improv may not be what you think, and this was something DiMichele explained in the workshop. It's not a standup comedy routine, though it shares aspects with that type of agile performance.

Improvisation is an unscripted back-andforth dialogue, but it's not unstructured. People tee off of a topic or scenario and bounce that around with team members following certain guidelines. One exercise might require that responses rhyme, for example. Always, participants must be quick to pivot as the narrative zigzags, creating a somber, silly and sometimes deeply introspective story or vignette.

DiMichele, the founder of One Rule Improv, explains it this way in her blog:
"This frame of "Yes, and..." may seem simple, and it is, but look what is being practiced. In order to "Yes, and," a person must be present, mindful, aware. She must be self-regulated enough to listen and to be attuned to the other player(s) so she may fully understand their offer. She cannot pre-plan what she is going to say. She cannot be oppositional. She must, in that moment, accept whatever offer is given without judgement, comment or question. She then adds her own offer, building off the preceding one..."

And this is how S.L. experienced it: "I felt as though it was more personal. The drama is coming from you, you're speaking. I never would have thought that improv had so much to it. You see improv in movies and you think it's like a standup show, and there're no rules to it, but there's actually a lot of structure to it."

Improv, in other words, is not quite like its breezy reputation. It requires discipline and deep thinking. It's part acting exercise - think "Barry" -- and part prob-
lem-solving, like Dungeons and Dragons, but without the dungeons or dragons.

Importantly, DiMichele’s "Yes, and" brand of improv is firmly affirmative.


Anyone can play and it offers multiple benefits.
"Please note that the point of 'Yes, and...' is not to teach one to say yes to everything," she writes. "It is, instead, an exercise that teaches one to take a moment and seek to understand, to explore. This practice of 'Yes, and...' can be transformative."

The positivity of this type of improv program has a lot to offer the girls at Ron Jackson, says Nix. After observing it in action, he believes the format and small group setting provides the social safety the girls need to show vulnerability and at the same time, feel and extend empathy to others.

For justice-involved girls that can be empowering. It enriches their life experience and teaches how to see from another perspective.
"Our youth know they made some bad choices in the past and that they need to understand what got them into our program," Nix said. "This will help them think about being more empathetic going
forward."

It also builds self-esteem, and that's critical for the girls at Ron Jackson, many of whom were abused mentally or physically or sexually as a precursor to their involvement in the justice system, said Monique Mosley, the Texas Model Mentor at the campus.
"If you've been abused or sexually abused, it tears your self esteem down," she said.

None of this is lost on the girls participating. They see the benefit of attuning themselves to others and report that these exercises are helping them feel more assured in how they communicate.

Improv "helps me become more social and know how to process my words," said S.L. "'m a person who's not naturally social. I don't go up to people and start talking, so being in drama club and improv, it gets your mind rolling and helps out with the social skills."

The improv team plans to demonstrate all that they've learned at a yet-undated performance for staff and youth on campus. That will be a public debut for the pioneering members of the improv club, and for the one neglected stage.

Yes, and . . . Nix says, maybe later, a drama club or music group will perform there.

Yes, and . . . dancing donkeys also will grace the stage.

Yes, and . . . the dancing donkeys will put on aprons and bake cakes for the audience. Hee-haw!

Curtains up!

## TJJD Fecllitle celebrate Fallow

## TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES

## Evins - Edinburg

Fall Fest at Evins enjoyed sunny skies and gorgeous fall weather.


Youth got to play every ball game that could be convened - football, basketball, soccer and a new one, ground-level billiards.


There were sack races, a ping pong ball throwing competition and an obstacle course.


The fun kicked off on, Oct. 23 with the youth making tie-dye of t-shirts that they could wear for this event.


Evins staff pitched in from all corners, coaches, team leaders, recreation and education staff, cafe personnel, caseworkers and administrators.

Cafe workers served hot dogs, nachos, tacos, sports drinks and Cheetos. All
youth also got a Halloween goody bag. Special thanks to the community volun-

teer support council, which contributed \$350 to help provide the goodies, and also to Community Resource Coordinator Fidel Garcia for these wonderful photos.


## Mexico's Independence Day \& Tamales

Youth at the Redirect Dorm at Evins Regional Juvenile Center celebrated with tamales on Sept. 16, as they learned about Mexico's Independence Day.


On that day in 1810, Catholic priest Miguel Hidalgo called for Mexico to free itself from 300 years of colonial rule by Spain. Hidalgo's rousing speech in Dolores kicked off Mexico's years-long war for independence.


But, of course, any day is a good day for tamales.


## Ron Jackson - Brownwood

Getting ready for Halloween is no minor affair at TJJD's Ron Jackson campus in Brownwood. Every year the youth decorate their dorms in ghoulish style and decorate pumpkins in a contest that rises nearly to the level of a juried art show.


To help get in the spirit of the holiday, here are some pictures from Courage B, Integrity, Pride and Phoenix dorms. You'll see some inventive artwork and there are a couple laughs buried in there too, no pun intended.

Winners of the pumpkin painting contest:


## Hocus Pocus Talent Show

Girls at the Ron Jackson campus took to the stage to showcase their dancing, singing, rapping and original poetry at a talent show that staff hope will become an annual event.

The extravaganza, themed "It's Just a Bunch of Hocus Pocus," featured 20 young people from Courage, Challenge, Pride and Success dorms who performed for staff, dorm mates and special guests. Youth from Integrity dorm helped with sets, makeup, making popcorn and handing out treats.

Organizers Katherine Brown, who supervises case managers, and Texas Model Mentor Monique Mosley worked for several weeks with the young performers, helping them prepare songs and dances
for the Oct. 29 event. Supt. Lisa Broussard and Asst. Supt. Daniel Nix handled planning and logistics, including reclaiming the gymnasium stage, so the youth could perform under stage lights with a full audio system.
"It was the first organized event since we opened the stage back up," Brown said. "The youth loved it. They're asking when we can have the next one."

The Hocus Pocus talent show performers were judged by a panel that included Nix, Bailey and Sherri Coutee.

Congratulations to the winners:
BEST SOLO SONG: T. K. -- "Take me to the King"

BEST SOLO DANCE: Z. J. - "23 Island"
BEST SOLO RAP: P. C. - Freestyle rap "Heart of Gold"

BEST GROUP SONG: Pawsitive - K.J., K.L., B.M., L.K., A.S. - "Do Better"

BEST RAP GROUP: Moore Awesome -J.M. and B.M. - "Leader" + breakout dance "The Mop"

BEST DANCE GROUP: Dancing Dolls 4 Life -- Z.J., J.W., C.S. - "Getcha Sum"

BEST POEM: C.E. - "Pain"
About a dozen other girls received honorable mentions.

## Giddings State School

Halloween Carnival


The Recreation Department at Giddings State School hosted a Halloween carnival that featured an array of games set up in the gymnasium.
Photos: Janet Sheelar, Volunteer Services Coordinator


## Fall Festival

Giddings State School also hosted a Fall Festival with flag football games, jumbo Jenga, soccer and more.


Grillmaster Robin Motley prepared the hot dogs and the youth got their choice of snow cones or cotton candy for a special treat.


The "Three Amigos" - Supt. Bill Parks, Assistant Superintendent Demeen Tilley and Operations Manager Motley packed jetted water toys and kept everyone on alert for ambush water attacks.


Thanks to Volunteer Coordinator Janet Sheelar, Family Reentry Special Hayley Gabriel-O'Bryan and the entire recreation staff for organizing this fun event last week.

## Gainesville State School



The "Great Pumpkin" certainly made a generous visit to Gainesville State School, Friday, Oct 29th, 2021. Over 130 pumpkins were distributed across campus as youth prepared to observe the fall season and Halloween. Coaches challenged youth to pick up the paintbrush and try their hand at creating the best painted, most festive and most seasonally decorated pumpkin.


Even staff jumped in and took up the brush. In addition, dorms were challenged to a campus wide dorm decorating contest. Each dorm has its own theme and certainly demonstrated the fall spirit and the "Boo" in Halloween. Our thanks to dorm staff for facilitating this fun weekend for youth as well as the Student Services Council of Gainesville State School, which provides funds for

these projects.
The winning pumpkins are pictured here. Their creators got a ribbon and a certificate.
-- Stephen Claybrook, Community Resource and Volunteer Services Coordinator


State School youth and dorm staff relished a "Banana Split Party" in their dorms this week.

Leadership arranged for the treats as a way to say thank you for the youths' good attitudes and hard work through the hot summer months.

The assembled food was impressive: 40 gallons of ice cream, 80 pounds of bananas, chocolate, strawberry and caramel toppings and dozens of dollops of whipped cream. Community Resource Manager Stephen Claybrook, said "The cool deliciousness made everyone's taste buds dance."

Claybrook and Family Reentry Specialist Trey Spellman diligently rounded all the dorms, packing freezers full of the fixings.


Props to the local Walmart, which threw in a few extra gallons of ice cream to extend the treats to the administrative staff. Rumor has it that "Everyone had sweet day!"


Photos courtesy of Dorm Supervisor Michelle Watkins.

## MARET UAG Gomilinues to Millisher io TJJD Youth



## SaAn Rruler Stoying connectod

Lisa Ortiz, UAC Representative from S.A. Krier shares some of the ways they are working to keep their UAC connected and involved...

I thought I would share some of the things Epiphany-Krier team is doing--for the newsletter:
1--Thanksgiving Newsletter distributed to all residents (see attachment). The residents were provided with a cookie decorated with a colorful turkey frosting. The staff was also treated with a variety of cookies.

2--We are meeting month--as a team--via Zoom on the day we usually have our Reunions. we are trying to keep connected to one another and maintain that team chemistry. There is time for prayer, updates and discussions about our newsletter ideas, etc.

3--White Elephant gift exchange party--for the team--is scheduled for Dec. 11th. This will be face-to-face....but hope to have Zoom option for those who can't attend. Last year we were able to do it all virtually \& gifts were mailed or hand delivered to gift recipients. Lots of fun!

4--Book Club, via Zoom! The team has been invited to read, Tattoos On The Heart by Rev. Greg Boyle. We just met this past week and have another meeting on 18th. We will read another one of his books and do an Zoom Book Club at the beginning of the year.

Due to Covid restrictions, we are trying various things to keep the fire burning in the hearts of our team members, residents/ staff at facility, etc. Hopefully others will see God is still working through this ministry and we can use this to build more relationships and recruit new members when Covid issues die down.
Thanks for sharing, Lisa!
What are some of the ways your UAC is keeping up with each other and the facilities where you minister? We would love to hear from you. Your input might encourage other UAC's to follow your lead.

## S.A. Krier's Epiphany Express, Newsletter for the Youth, Thanksgiving Edition



Jesus heals 10 Lepers but only one gives thanks


[^0]What types of things can you do to help you remember to always thank Jesus?
Father, I pray that I would be like the one grateful leper, remembering to praise and thank YOU for all of your blessings!

## + ++Epiphany Express <br> $\begin{array}{ll}\text { Epiphany Ministries of Texas at } & \text { Thanksgiving } \\ \text { Cyndi Taylor Krier Juvenile Correctional Treatment Center } & \text { Edition } 2021\end{array}$

 * HAPPY THanKSGIVI/MG \% the fourth Thursday in November. * Hor $1 \mathrm{H}_{6}$ 粦 It is a day people give thanks for what半 hey have.
Families and friends usually gather together for a meal, which includes turkey, stuffing, potatoes, vegetables, cranberry sauce, gravy and pumpkin

## Thanksgiving and the Bible

Thanks is defined at "an expression of gratitude or appreciation" According to Biblegateway.com, there are 30 verses in the Bible about thanksgiving. In Psalm 100:3-5 you will find these words:
"Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations".

We hope you will take time to read the other verses in the Bible about


> "Goodbyes are not forever, are not the end; it simply means we'll miss you until we meet agaín.

## Harry Harrington

Dec. 16, 1950-Oct. 2, 2021

Harry R. Harrington, age 70, of West, passed away Saturday evening, October 2, 2021 in Waco. Funeral Service will be held 10 a.m., Friday, October 8, 2021, at the First Baptist Church in West, with Rev. Wayne Williams officiating. Burial will follow at Bold Springs Cemetery. The family will receive visitors from 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday at Aderhold Funeral Home Chapel. Limited capacity, facial masks, and social distancing are encouraged at all services.

Harry was born December 16, 1950 in Orange, TX, the son of Jes and Margie (Samuel) Harrington. He was a 1969 graduate of Waco High School and attended college at the University of North Texas. On October 18, 1975 he was united in marriage to Sherry Harrison in Ft. Worth. He worked as a construction project manager for Greenway, KBR, and Waco I.S.D. Harry was a member of First Methodist Church of Waco and the Renew Church in Waco. He went on a mission trip to Peru, served with the Epiphany Youth Correctional Ministry, went on the Emmaus Walk, and was part of several Men's Bible Groups. He had a true servant's heart and was always willing to lend a hand to help others. Harry was a past President of the West Kiwanis Club and was heavily involved with the West Little League when his boys were young. He enjoyed sports, woodworking, motorcycles, attending car shows with his boys, fishing and anything related to the water. Harry was an avid Baylor sports fan. He loved spending time with his family and watching his grandkids play sports.

Harry was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Van Harrington.

Survivors include his beloved wife of 45 years, Sherry Harrington of West; two sons, Nick Harrington and wife, Rachel and Sam Harrington and wife, Christi, all of West; a brother, David Harrington and wife, Kay; a sister-in-law, Nancy Harrington; his grandchildren, Claire, Cade, Heidi, and Holly; and many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

In lieu offlowers, memorials may be made to Epiphany Youth Correctional Ministry or West Volunteer Ambulance Association. A memorial guest book can be found at www. aderholdfuneralhome.com.

## TJJD Response to COVID-19

As an agency focused on public safety, the highest priority of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department is to protect the youth in our care and our dedicated employees. TJJD remains in daily contact with the Office of the Governor, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, the Texas Department of State Health Services, and the Texas Department of Emergency Management to remain fully informed and respond to events as the situation changes. Additionally, the agency's leadership team has been meeting throughout each day to ensure services while maintaining safety. The 2,000 employees of TJJD are committed to doing their part to help Texas beat COVID-19.

## Positive Youth Cases

Total number of TJJD youth who have tested positive: $\mathbf{3 6 0}$
Number of positive youth cases at secure facilities: 333
Number of positive youth cases at halfway houses: $\mathbf{2 7}$
Number of COVID-19 tests administered to TJJD youth: 4,616

## Positive Youth Cases by Facility:

Evins Regional Juvenile Center: 45
Gainesville State School: 13
Giddings State School: 109
McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility: 120
Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex: 46
Halfway Houses: $\mathbf{2 7}$

## Positive Staff Cases

Total number of TJJD staff members who have tested positive: $\mathbf{5 9 4}$
Number of positive staff cases at secure facilities: $\mathbf{5 4 1}$
Number of positive staff cases at halfway houses: 53

## Positive Staff Cases by Facility:

Evins Regional Juvenile Center: 112
Gainesville State School: 58
Giddings State School: 109
McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility: 136
Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex: 126
Halfway Houses: 53

Totals reflect positive tests for COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.

Upcoming Epiphany Weekends

| Facility | W/E\# | Date | LD | ALD | WL | SD | B. Rep |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Brownwood | E 41 | Feb '21 | Trish Bull |  |  |  | Roy Bradshaw |
| Ellis | El | TBD | Neil Atkinson | Joe Lee | Dan Swanson | Steve Wilson | Roy Bradshaw |
| Evins | E II | TBD | Jef Eaton | Сraciano Castaneda | Raul Radriguez | Hamilton Musser |  |
| Cainesville | E 41 | TBD | Steve Tacker | Patty Jackson | Nichole Collingsworth | Steven Miller |  |
| Giddings | E 35 | TBD | Andrew Perry | Shirley Perry | Sharon Marks | Mike Jones | Neil Atkinson |
| Кгіeг | E 28 | TBD | Chrissie Smith |  | Mary Helen Silva |  |  |
| Mart | E 32 | TBD | Mike Mellina | Leeann Radell |  |  |  |
| Post | E 26 | TBD | Paula Swanson | Larae Greer | Mark Wright | E.C. Harlan |  |


[^0]:    Bible Reference: Luke 17:11-14
    "Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. He traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men met him. They had a skin disease. They were standing close by. And they called out in a loud voice, 'Jesus! Master! Have pity on us!"

    Jesus saw them and said, 'Go. Show yourselves to the priests'. While they were on the way, they were healed."
    The io men in this story have a skin disease known as leprosy. Many people did not want to be around them. Jesus is not like other people. When he saw the lepers, he had pity on them and healed them. He didn't have to heal them...but he did because he loved them. In verses Luke 17:15-16 you learn that one came back to thank Jesus:
    "When one of them saw that he was healed, he came back. He praise God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan.'
    In verses Luke 17:17-19 we read about Jesus' reaction:
    "Jesus asked, 'Weren't all ten healed? Where are the other nine? Didn't anyone else return and give praise to God except this outsider?' Then Jesus said to him, 'Get up and go. Your faith has healed you.'"

    Sounds like Jesus was disappointed that only one man gave thanks for the healing. In our lives, we should be like the one who thanked Jesus.

