

Happy 2023!

I hope you've all had a good start to the new year. Before looking ahead, I want to share some holiday cheer from 2022. Our team was honored to be able to brighten the holidays for two families who were part of the Department of Public Social Services' Adopt-A-Family program. You can see photos of our team delivering brightly wrapped toys, clothing and other surprises to the families below. We hope you all had a restful holiday season with your loved ones!

As we look ahead to all that we hope to accomplish in 2023, I want to first welcome our new director of DYD, David J. Carroll. David brings 15 years of experience working with community-based organizations focused on youth development both in Los Angeles and other communities across the country. He has most recently served as the vice president of public policy and government relations for Southern California Grantmakers. Prior to that work, he held executive roles at organizations including Brotherhood Crusade, Crystal Stairs, Inc., Unleashing Potential, North Grand Neighborhood Services and UrbanFUTURE with responsibility for programming, public policy, strategic planning, budgeting, fundraising, data collection and operations. We look forward to David's leadership and are excited for him to begin to reach out to our partners after he steps into the role in late January.

We are also very excited to announce the February launch of the Credible Messengers Program at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall and Campus Kilpatrick. Please keep reading for an update about this launch from De'Andre (Dre) Nichols, who leads this work for our team.

As always, we are so grateful for your partnership and are looking forward to many more opportunities to connect and build together in 2023!

Thanks for your support,  
Vincent Holmes, Interim Director

January 2023

## Credible Messenger Program to Launch in February

Credible Messengers – set to launch in LA County next month – is an integrated service model staffed by community-based organizations within the County’s Secure Youth Track Facilities. It works by matching youth in County halls and camps with “credible messengers” who have navigated through their own prior involvement in the justice system. They share similar life experiences with the young people whom they will be serving inside our facilities but now have a broader perspective that allows them to offer a helping hand.

The belief is that these relationships can transform thinking and increase the potential for youth to succeed in building a new life once they return to their community. The key is consistency and trust, says Credible Messenger Program Manager De’Andre (Dre) Nichols.

“Due to staffing related issues, the youth don’t have the same probation staff every day. However, the youth will have the same Credible Messengers there working with them full-time throughout the week,” Nichols says. “These Credible Messengers come from the same environment, the same communities, and tend to understand them better.”

Los Angeles County has committed to a one-year pilot of the program, which has been successful in New York as well as Washington, DC. It is planned to kick off in February at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall in Sylmar and Campus Kilpatrick in Malibu with credible messengers staffed from two organizations: the Anti-Recidivism Coalition and Healing Dialogue and Action.

Working in two 8-hour shifts, the CMs will accompany youth as they move through their day, helping them navigate barriers that can be as momentous as...(continued on next page).

...as missing the birth of their child or the death of a loved one while in a locked facility. Credible messengers will receive extensive training to help youth with crisis intervention and conflict resolution as well as with setting goals and accessing resources for a healthier, more productive life.

The program needs the support of partnering probation officers to succeed. Nichols grew up in South Los Angeles and has worked with at-risk youth in Los Angeles County for years, including as the head football coach at Manual Arts High School. But he also built a career as a probation officer and probation supervisor in Missouri, Nevada and Texas, and he is optimistic that probation staff will ultimately welcome the help.

“I wish I had a credible messenger, to be an extra eye, an extra ear, to be able to assist,” Nichols says.

The Credible Messengers will work together with probation staff to plan youth engagement and make the most of existing programs and services. They are in no way intended to take on the role of probation staff, but the hope is that they