

## JDCAP-2019 Staff Person of the Year Nomination

Nominee: Missy Kennedy

JDCAP Member Organization: Abraxas Youth Center

Number of Years Employed: 22

Current Position: Education Director

Missy Kennedy has been employed with Abraxas since 1997. During those 22 years, she has made countless contributions and relationships within the field of juvenile justice, while continuously motivating those around her to provide better opportunities for the youth we serve. In her role of Education Director for both the Abraxas Youth Center and Leadership Development Program, Missy is a constant challenger to the status quo and insists our residents be offered new opportunities in both the educational and treatment settings.

In her own department, Missy has strived to add services and accreditations outside of the typical requirements for private school certified programs. She organized, achieved and has maintained Middle States Accreditation (MSA) for the Abraxas Youth Center and has the Leadership Development Program preparing for the same. During her time as the Education Director, Missy has achieved on-site testing for GED and SAT prep at both programs. She has supported both programs in establishing a 'Computer Club,' and made it possible for a few clients to recently compete nationally at the annual Certiport conference. She is a primary figure in extending our client's career learning opportunities through connections she has established with state initiatives such as Pennsylvania Academic & Career /Technical Training (PACTT) and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). Each of which has expanded the program's connections to several external partners; with only additional growth and opportunities to come.

Those who know Missy best know it would be a mistake to mention her accomplishments without recognizing her social consciousness. She repeatedly drives initiatives for our residents to be aware of and included in community events directed at raising awareness. The annual 'Walk-a-Mile in Her Shoes' event to bring awareness and support to the issue of domestic violence in the local community is just one example of Missy's emphasis on the social education of our residents and their betterment by understanding the importance of community.

Finally, it's the people who work around Missy each day that most often recognize her value to Abraxas as an organization and to juvenile justice. Her experience is often on display in so many of her leadership decisions, but most obvious in how she treats and lifts up others in her work environment. Missy is involved in each program's 'Work Climate' committees, which plan and execute everything from staff recognition events, to holiday celebrations and resident extracurricular activities. She also continues to also be a member of our 'Core Team' focusing on things related to the Sanctuary Model. Her care for people and investment in our mission is undeniable and the reason she is my nominee for JDCAP's 2019 Staff Person of the Year.

Submitted by: Brian Dean

Position: Program Manager

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