

## QUALITY HEALTH FOUNDATION PROVIDES \$30,000 GRANT TO LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES

The Quality Health Foundation (QHF) awarded a grant in the amount of \$30,000 to Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area as part of this year's grant cycle. The funds support the Youth Haven Project, which provides age-appropriate health and wellness services to 90 children, teens, and adults living with or



affected by HIV/AIDS related stigma—the prejudice and negative attitudes directed at people living with HIV/AIDS. With Youth Haven, clients and their family members have a safe, supportive environment to find comfort, hope, and grow past HIV/AIDS stigma and work on wellness. Through educational workshops, retreats, peer support, and mentorship, participants increase their emotional wellness and their healthy eating and nutritional habits.

Youth Haven's goals are to improve health management and life-skill habits, build connections for trusting relationships, and increase opportunities to support personal success. To accomplish these goals, the organization:

- Facilitates monthly intergenerational learning experiences that focus on emotional wellness and physical health.
- Coordinates peer group fitness clubs.

- Offers intensive overnight retreat/camp experiences in a safe and confidential environment.

Participants in the Youth Haven Project face multiple challenges, which include fragile family relationships, trauma, low income, unstable housing, substance abuse, illiteracy, food insecurity, and one or more adults in the household who are HIV positive or living with cancer, diabetes, obesity, or another chronic and debilitating illness. They want and need more health education and links to community resources.

“Although the diagnoses of HIV/AIDS has been decreasing in the United States since 2005, this remains one of the most devastating diseases of all time,” said Dr. Molly Burgoyne, QHF Chair. “QHF is pleased to support Lutheran Social Services’ efforts to make a difference in the lives of youth impacted by HIV/AIDS.”

### Original Florida DD Team Member, Avril Wilson Retires

By Charmaine Pillay

On December 9, 2016, the South Florida Team gathered at Casablanca Restaurant in Fort Lauderdale for a bittersweet celebration: to say goodbye to one of their own. Avril Wilson, an esteemed member of the Florida DD team is retiring at the end of the year after an amazing and fruitful run with the Florida Statewide Quality Assurance Program.

Avril is one of the original members of the Florida Developmental Disabilities project, which began in 2001, which blossomed and is still going strong after 15 years. The contract's mission is to work with the Agency for Health Care Administration and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in the State of Florida. In the truest sense, Avril is one of the pioneers of the program in Florida and was among the first members of the statewide team. But beyond her professional accomplishments, she is a beloved member of the team for a number of reasons. Among them—her work ethic; calm wisdom and style; sense of humor; witty and timely observations during conferences and meetings; and her grace in all situations.

She will be truly missed, but her contributions will not be forgotten, and the team recognizes that its loss is her family's gain. It is said that as we journey through our lives when time is well spent it becomes frozen in time, a cherished memory. In her time with Delmarva Foundation, Avril has touched the lives of countless individuals, providers, and coworkers, and for this we can all be grateful. So we do not say goodbye so much as “well done Avril, until we meet again, thank you for everything.”