

Academy Programs

Annual Report

2023



Youth Academy

Yore Academy

YALE Academy

Since 2002, Academy Programs has been dedicated to serving at-risk youth and families in West Virginia. Through growth and expansion, amid various challenges and changes, we have stayed true to our values and goals, honoring our commitment to changing lives through innovative strategies.

Values

- Commitment to Service...by acknowledging that the easy way is not always the best way and challenging oneself to find positive solutions.
- Education...as the cornerstone to constructive change.
- Outcomes... that are evidenced-based.
- The Individual... Every child matters.
- Community...by developing a sense of belonging accomplished by valuing each community member as an investor in the mission of the Youth Academy and the client as a member of the community.
- Respect... that is earned by staff and client.
- Communication...as essential in delivering efficient and effective services.
- Re-Education... as the foundation on which programming is delivered.
- Family...as being a vital and inherent component of a child's success.
- Safety and Well-Being...as the first component to treatment.
- Trust... as sacred and essential.
- Innovation...in programming to create a challenging environment that guides a child and family to reach their potential.

Goals

- To develop, maintain and nurture programming reflective of evolving client, family, and community needs.
- To seize and exploit every opportunity as a learning moment.
- To provide evidenced-based practices that are rooted in the achievement of expected outcomes.
- Ensure that all programming is individualized and addresses each child's needs.
- To engage stakeholders through acts of altruism and partnership so as to contribute socially and economically to the betterment of our community.
- To provide an environment where client and staff opinions and feelings are respected.
- To communicate with stakeholders on a free, open, and continual basis.
- To maintain a solid focus that the principles of Re-Education are the driving force of the Youth Academy.
- To engage each client's family as a valuable and critical component of the treatment process.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where clients and staff thrive.
- To manifest an environment to actualize the essence of trust in the relationship building process.
- To commit to the constant pursuit of innovative, efficient, and state-of-the-art approaches that promulgate success.

Throughout 2023, the more things changed, the more they stayed the same. Focus and dedication to providing the best programming possible while maintaining program fidelity was our priority.

"In RE-Ed, no one waits for a special therapeutic hour. We try, as best we can, to make all hours special. We strive for immediate and sustained involvement in purposive and consequential living." — Dr. Nicholas Hobbs

The 2023 Academy Programs Annual Report:

- Academics
- Average Daily Census and Occupancy Rate
- Average Length of Stay
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- Smart Recovery
- Incidents
- Safety Committee Report
- General Staffing Patterns
- Staff Retention and Turnover
- Satisfaction Surveys
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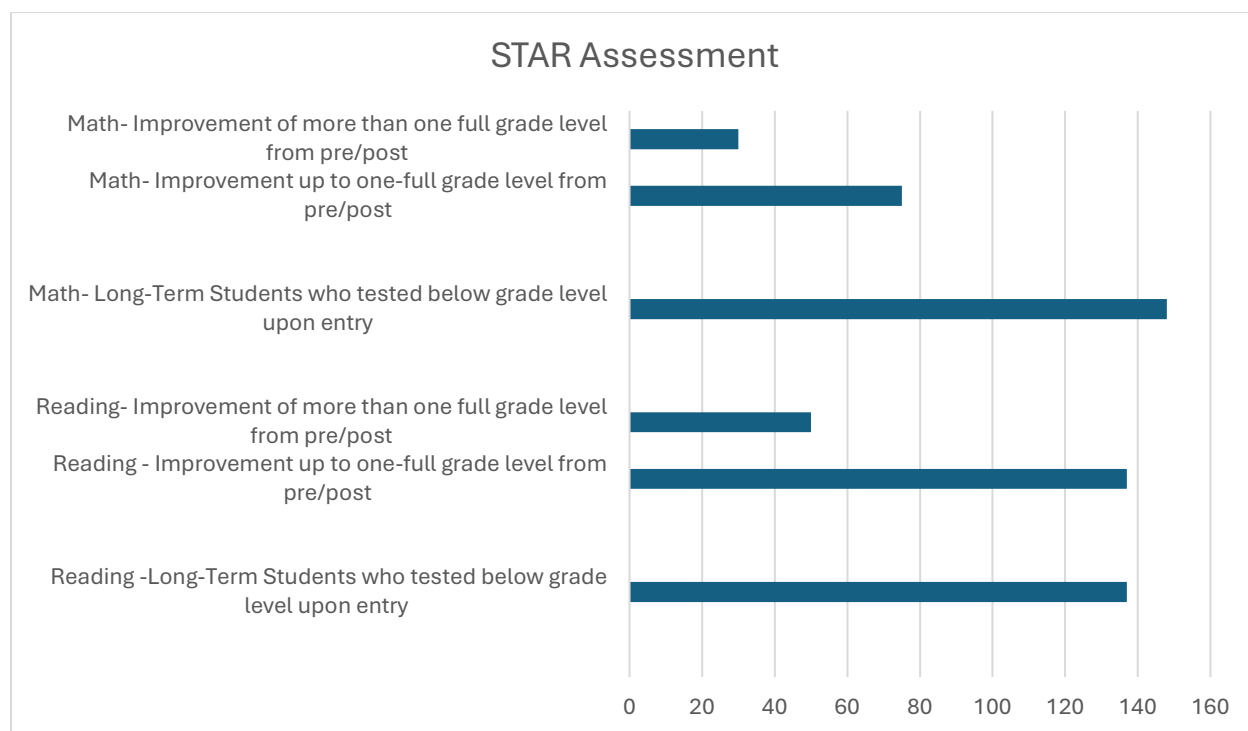
Academics

The 2022-2023 school years at Academy were back to normal routines after the COVID-19 pandemic. The students were rotating between teachers the entire school year, and teachers remained vigilant in sanitizing classrooms and general work areas in the classrooms.

Our principal, Michael Ferguson, is now in his second year at Academy Programs, and the school continues to be one of the highest-performing schools among all WVDE residential on-grounds schools. In addition, we are the largest residential on-grounds school under the West Virginia Schools of Diversion and Transition.

The school has begun implementing (PBIS) Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Briefly, it is an approach schools use to promote safety and good behavior. It teaches students about behavior expectations and strategies with a focus on prevention not punishment.

After the COVID pandemic, we see more students enter our school who are behind academically, socially, and emotionally. The pandemic saw students miss almost two years of in-person instruction. As students enter Academy Programs, we do STAR assessments benchmarks to assess Reading and Math baselines. We have seen a huge drop in proficiency in both of those areas and students being several grade levels below where they should be. We do STAR assessments again at the end of Term 1 and Term 2 to track the growth of students in Reading and Math.



This year, students enrolled at Academy Programs earned over 550 credits towards high school graduation. The High School Equivalency testing platform (HSE) had a full year of students testing at Academy Programs, and we had 9 high school graduates via Option Pathway. In addition, we had 2 students who graduated traditionally, with a total of 11 graduates in 2023.

Eight credits are available to be earned during the traditional school year.

- Five core subjects of PE, Math, English, Science, and Social Studies
- Special Education and Option Pathway
- Electives include but are not limited to the following: Automotive Technology (Students are able to earn a National certification as a student ASE Certified Mechanics), Facilities Maintenance, Career Integrated Experiential Learning, Communications, Geography, Piano, Art, Music Appreciation, Health, Fitness, Computer Applications, Psychology, Sociology, Medical Terminology, Parenting, Child Development, Criminal Justice, Test Strategies, Journalism, and Virtual School programming.

A full college- and career-based summer school is offered in which students can earn up to two credits towards high school graduation (the majority of public-school systems do not offer summer school). Our summer curriculum is designed to be “hands on learning,” and our teachers cover all 16 career clusters as outlined by CFWV. This was the second year of the Career Fair at the school, and we had 4 out of the 5 branches of the military and 8 other presenters for students to meet and gain valuable information at the end of summer school.

We are a Federal Title I school, which enables us to receive federal funding to run academic programs for at-risk children. This includes the following: two tutors, a full-time Reading Intervention Specialist, a full-time Math Intervention Specialist, and a full-time Transition Specialist who provides discharge transition services for up to 12 months. In addition, this year we began a new reading initiative. The Title I teacher identifies students who would benefit from an online platform called Reading Horizons to provide tier 3 interventions. The program has seen great successes with students who were non-readers, and those students are now reading independently.

Our Automotive Technology CTE program and our Facilities Maintenance CTE program enable our school to participate in the Option Pathway program which increases opportunities to earn a high school diploma through alternative methods.

Auto Tech students earn national ASE Student Certification in multiple areas of auto technology. This year we had one student earn ASE certifications. This certification is recognized as the industry standard for mechanic competency in the automotive repair industry.

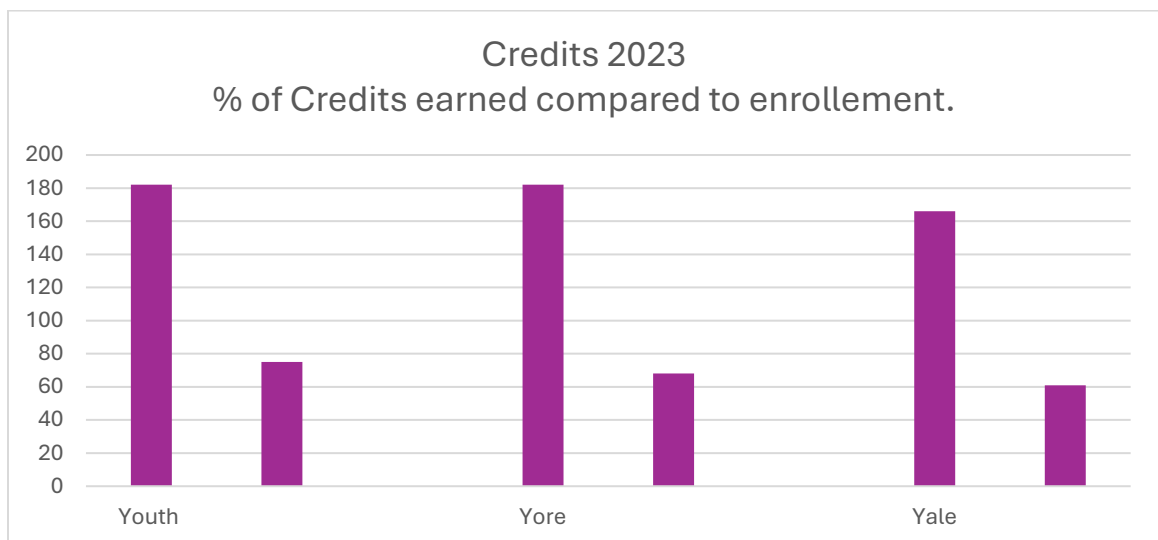
Additional certifications achieved include:

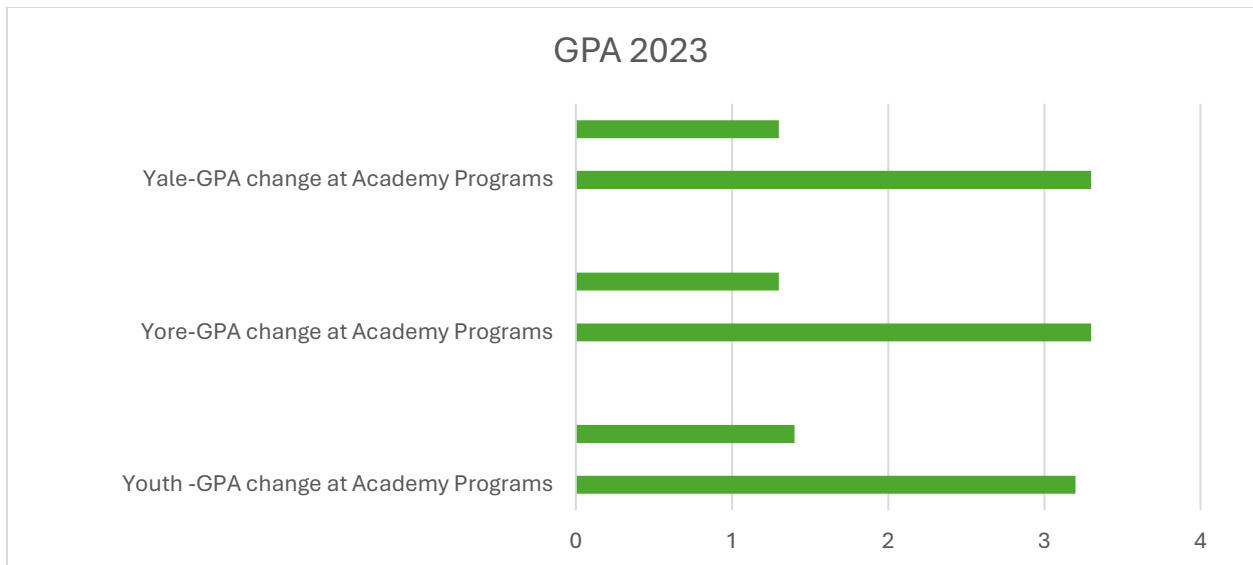
- 23 ServSafe Food Handlers cards
- 22 ProTrainings CPR Certifications
- 15 OSHA 10-hr Cards
- 78 Everfi Personal Finance Certifications
- 583 Tooling U Certifications

Students may be enrolled in distance learning classes to supplement our direct delivery:

- “Credit Recovery” classes for students that have previously failed a class and need to retake that class for a credit
- “Virtual School” for students who need a particular class our school either can’t offer or can’t fit into our course offering schedule
- College classes
- Career Technical Education coursework

Two measures of academic success, credits earned and GPA, are illustrated below:





Length of Stay

Research has indicated that the length of stay in a treatment program can have a profound impact on the outcomes for individuals with co-occurring disorders (mental/behavioral health and substance use disorders). It has shown that longer residential stays are more effective than short term. This extended duration allows individuals to engage in intensive therapy, develop coping mechanisms, and make sustainable behavioral changes.

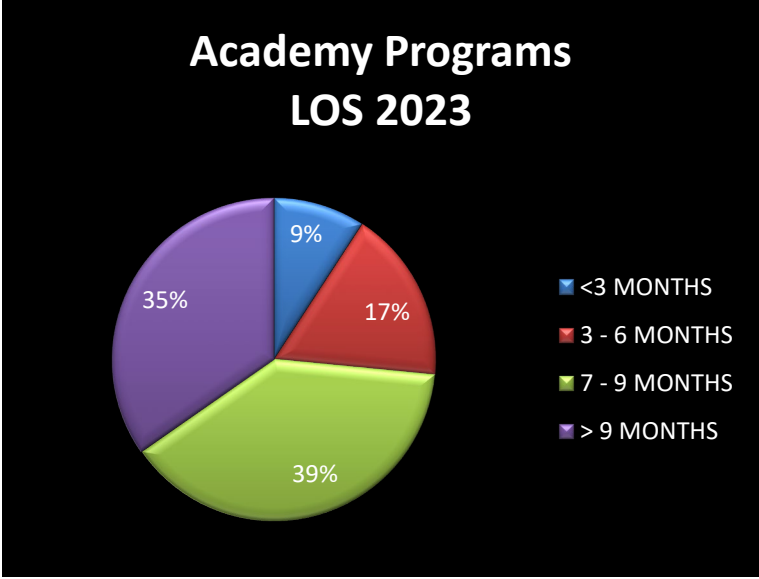
Academy Programs provide accountable and effective treatment services which are delivered in the least restrictive and most efficient manner. Our goal is to make each student’s stay in congregate care as meaningful as possible, while ensuring they do not leave without the necessary skills to be successful. The intended length of stay, modeled on the stages of change, is approximately six months. During that time, each student has the ability to influence their own destiny based on their involvement in the treatment process. They have independent control over the amount of effort they choose to apply to modifying/changing their behavior.

Quantifying the amount of time needed to change is unique to each person. Traversing the stages of change is not always linear. Instead, stages may be revisited as relapses occur during treatment. Adolescents sometimes spend more time in the precontemplation (failing to recognize a need for change) and contemplation (considering a need for change) stages at the beginning, adding a bit more time to their stay.

“Students who are able to overcome the challenges to reach each of these milestones will be able to return home and live in a manner more satisfying to themselves and more satisfying to those around them.” *Nicholas Hobbs*

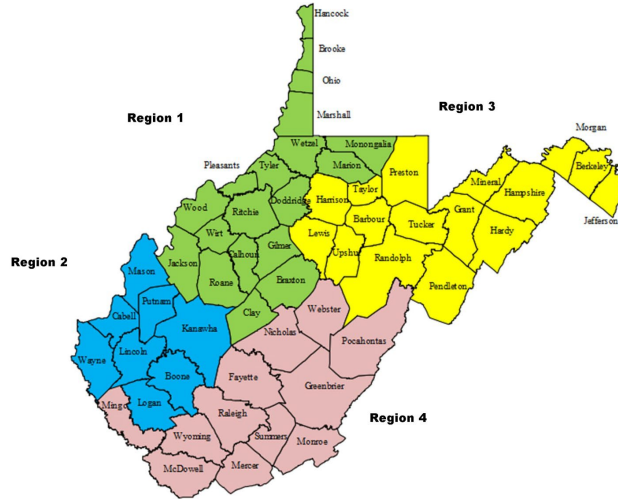
In 2023, the average duration of stay remained the same as the year before. As illustrated in the chart below, a slight majority of the students completed the program in 7 – 9 months. By program, the average lengths of stay were:

Youth Academy	7.9 months
Yore Academy	8 months
YALE Academy	8.8 months

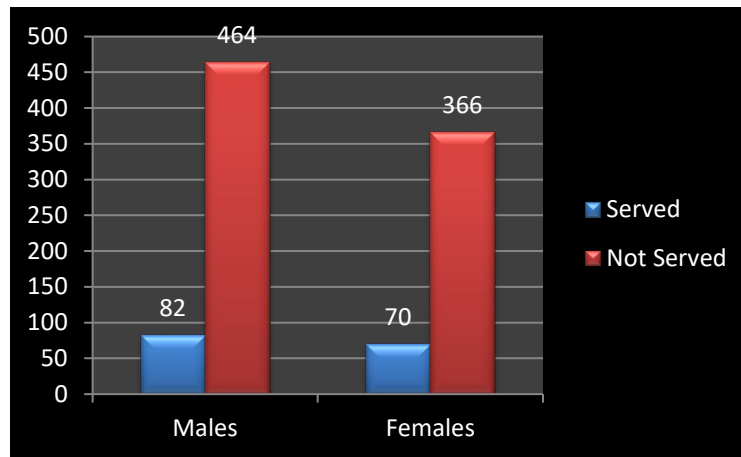


Referrals

All referrals for youth in need of services come from WV DHHR. Academy Programs serve adolescents from all regions in West Virginia. In 2023, a total of 152 students from 32 counties in WV received services.



More referrals were received in 2023 than could be served. A total of 982 students were referred for treatment in 2023 and Academy Programs was only able to serve 15%.

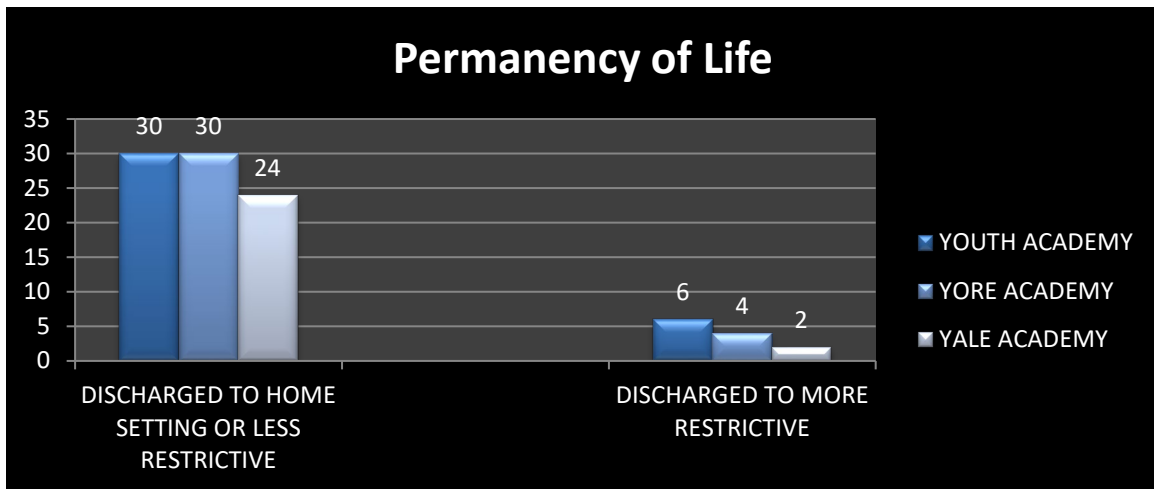


Permanency of Life

In child welfare, permanency is a stable living situation for a child that ideally preserves family connections. This can be achieved through reunification with the child's family, adoption, or guardianship. Permanency can also refer to safe and nurturing relationships with adults who provide emotional, financial, moral, educational, and other kinds of support as youth mature into adults.

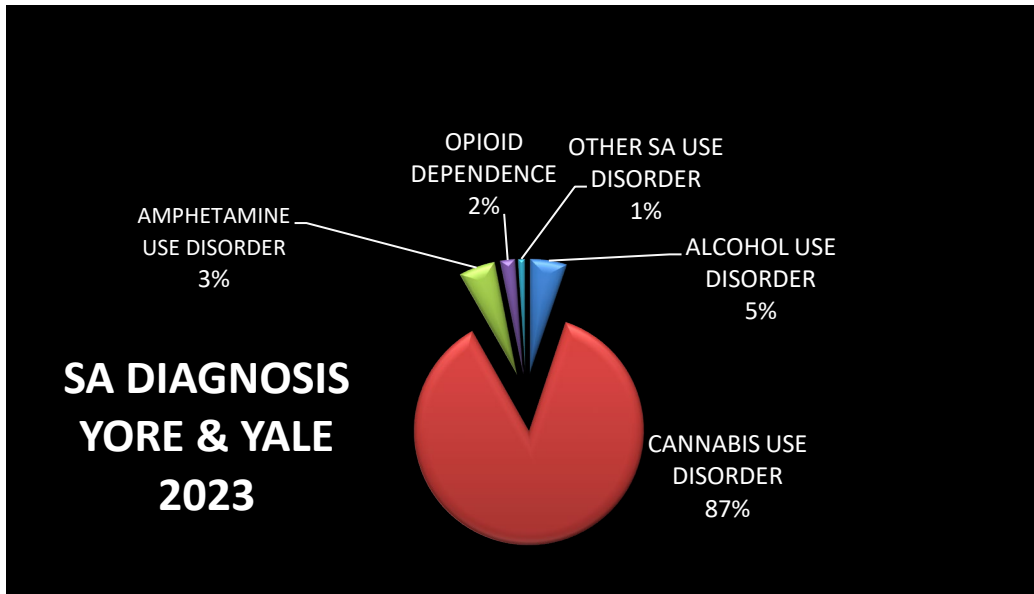
Positive outcome measures stipulate that 70% of all kids receiving services for 90 days or longer will be discharged to a home setting (foster home, birth family, adoptive, kinship care, lesser restrictive, or independence). Less restrictive care is often used as a step-down on the way to a permanent home. Infrequently, the youth in our care have issues that require more intensive treatment and are referred to more restrictive placement.

In 2023, Academy Programs achieved 86% success rate in achieving a positive permanency of life for the children discharging from care. 84 of the 98 children discharged went to a home setting.

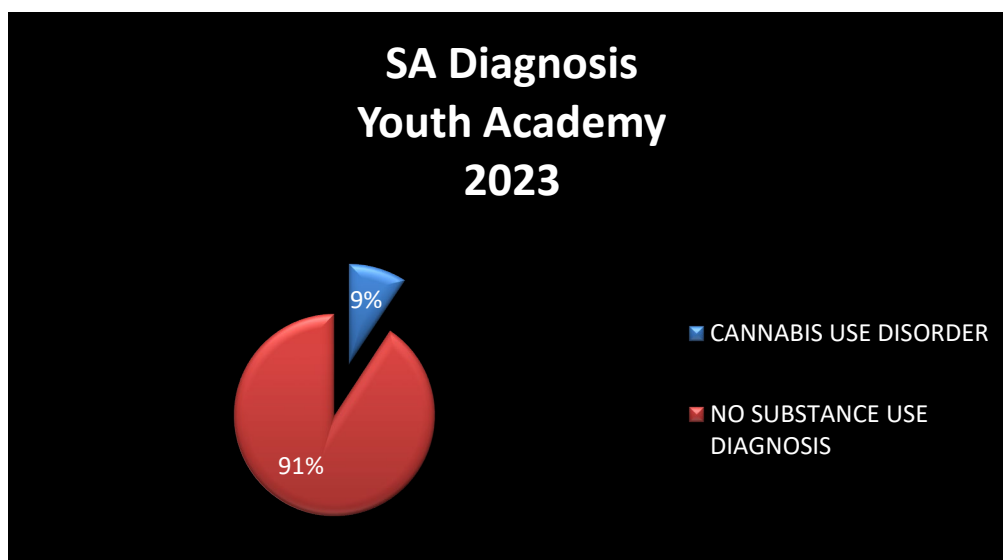


Presenting Diagnosis (Substance Abuse)

All of the students in Yore Academy and YALE Academy have co-occurring diagnoses, behavioral and substance abuse, which are treated through cognitive-behavioral methods of behavioral change. This approach is designed to teach them coping skills which will help them remain substance free after discharge from the program. The diagnoses below were primary at intake.

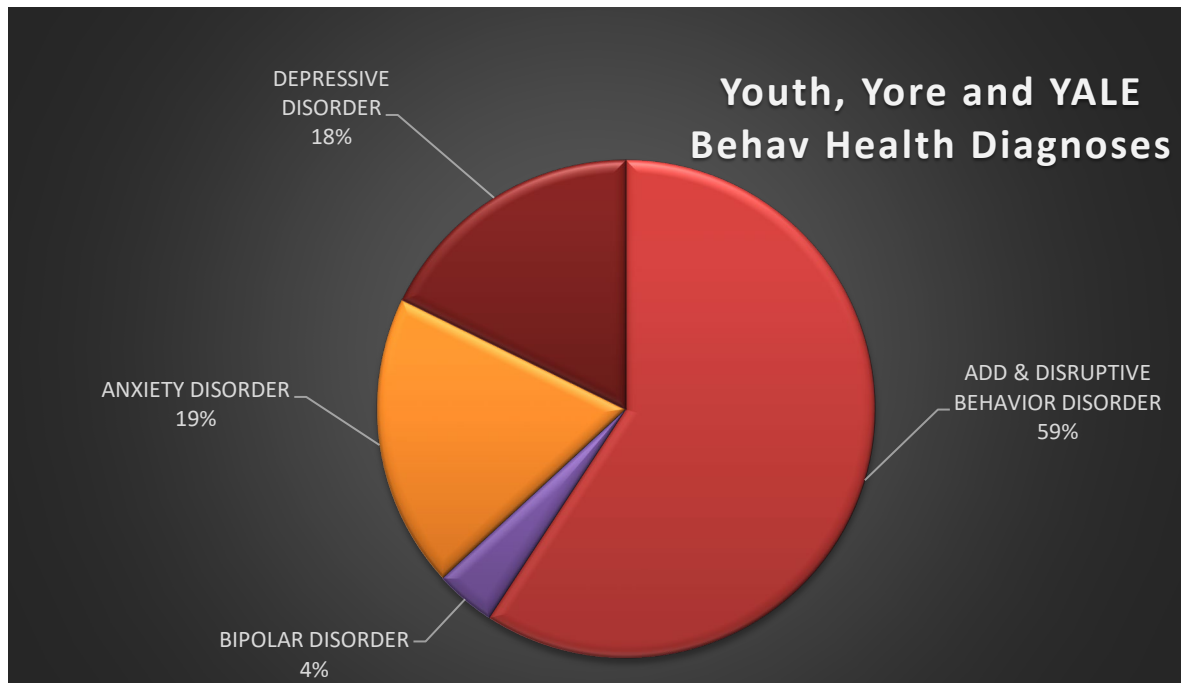


Some Youth Academy students have substance abuse diagnoses upon admission although it is not the norm. Only 9% of students had a substance abuse diagnosis at entry. However, through the course of treatment, substance abuse issues may be uncovered and treated.



Presenting Diagnosis (Behavioral Health)

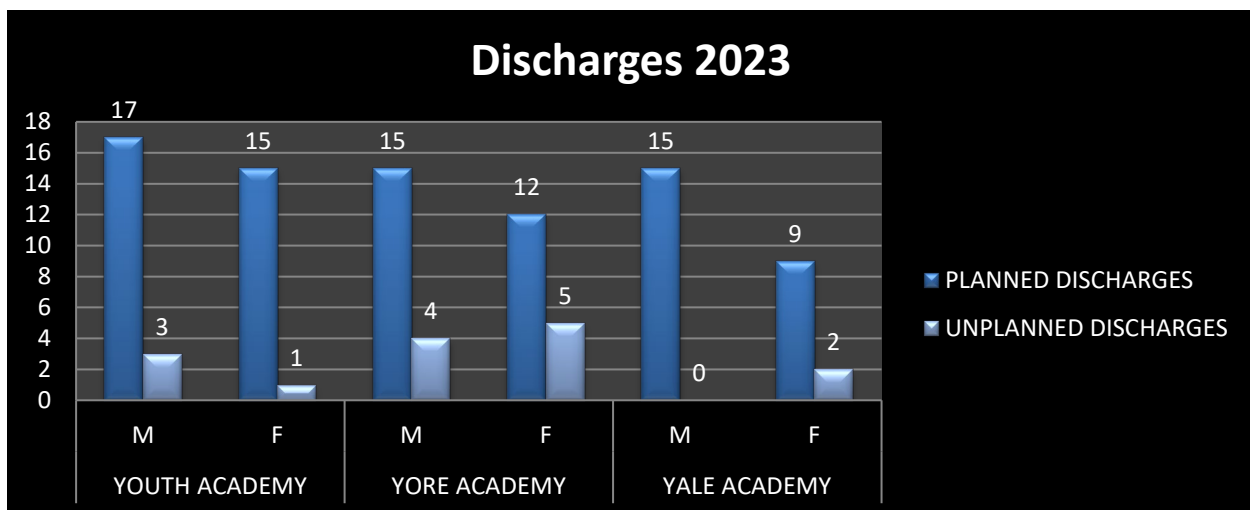
Attention Deficit Disorders and disruptive behavior problems are the most commonly diagnosed mental disorders in children and adolescents across all three programs. As shown in the charts below, they represent more than half of the residents, while depression and anxiety are second and third.



Success Rate

Discharge planning begins at the onset of treatment with the student's entire treatment team and available family. The goal is to facilitate the transition from residential treatment back into the community as seamlessly as possible. Sometimes a discharge is planned and implemented prior to program completion due to clinically significant issues that are best addressed in a more intensive setting. Academy Programs will then assist in the transition to a different setting through discharge planning, whether it be to another placement or the student's home.

Academy Programs completed 85% planned discharges in 2023. Unplanned discharges were due to elopement, referral to a higher level of care to better manage emergent issues or when a student was abruptly remanded to detention.



Graduating Academy Programs

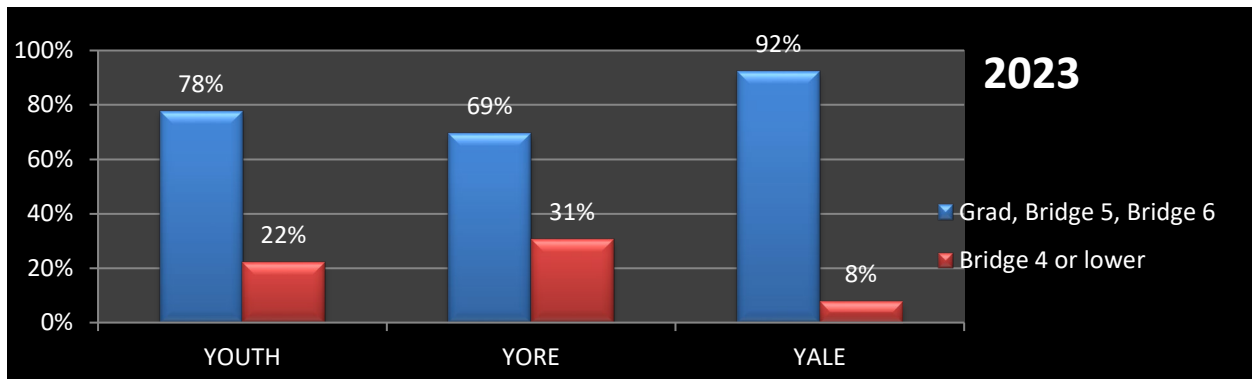
There are many standard assessments that, in one way or another, claim to track and monitor a child's progress through a treatment program. However, they are generally defined by data, charts, and numbers as opposed to a real time, tangible tool for making the child aware of how they have progressed and/or be able to identify what steps they need to take to become completely successful. Assessments are designed to measure ecology, behavior, functioning, and academic performance, but few are available to actually demonstrate success in completing a particular treatment program. For this reason, Academy Programs has developed and employs a six-phase program known as Graduating Academy Programs, or GAP, delineating the steps a child must take in order to fully and successfully complete the program and utilize the strategies of this program as an integral part of the treatment planning process.

This program was developed by combining the stages of development that a child goes through in an out-of-home placement with the Stages of Change model in the therapeutic process to identify and target a list of treatment milestones a student must master in order to maximize their opportunities for successful living post completion of our program. The theory in effect here is that a student who is

successfully able to overcome challenges to reach each milestone possesses the skills needed to return home and live in a manner more satisfying to themselves, and more satisfying to those around them.

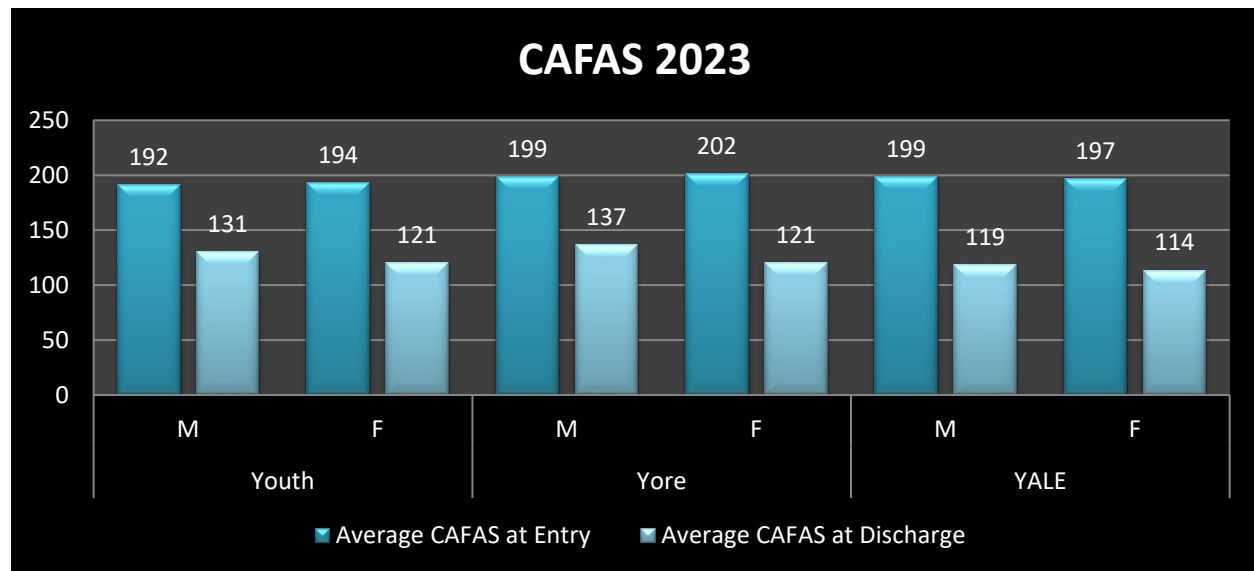
The GAP program creates several other improvements in the ability of Academy Programs to enhance the quality of treatment offered to its student body. First, emotionally disturbed and troubled children require two foundations in order to effectively change their behavior; an understanding that their behavior is a problem that has prevented them from living successfully, and a vested interest in changing that behavior. The GAP program helps to generate investment in the treatment process by allowing the student to identify exactly what is required in order to successfully complete the program. This gives the student an ability to control their destiny and accurately determine how much time they will require to effectively address problems. It is commonplace for a new student to ask, “What do I need to do to get out of here?” This question is easily answered during intake, where the Director of Admissions and/or Program Director is able to provide the student with application packets and discuss the graduation criteria at length if needed. Time is our ally in allowing students to increase awareness that their behavior is problematic. Acknowledgement and acceptance of responsibility is addressed early on in this program and in a sequence that allows the student the time to generate effective change.

Once a student has completed all six bridges of the GAP program, they are ready for graduation. Students who have graduated or have completed bridge 5 or above are considered an optimal discharge.



Child and Adolescent Functioning Scale (CAFAS)

The CAFAS is the gold standard for assessing a youth's day-to-day functioning across critical life subscales AND for determining whether a youth's functioning improves over time. The Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS: Hodges, 2000a; 2000b), assesses the degree of impairment in youth with emotional, behavioral, psychiatric, or substance use problems. The CAFAS, intended for use with youth aged 5 to 19 years, is a clinician-rated measure that assesses the degree of impairment in youth with emotional, behavioral, or substance use symptoms and/or disorders. The CAFAS is an essential tool that mental health professionals can use to guide treatment planning, implement evidence-based treatment, and provide a direct path for evidence-informed practices that will improve the well-being of youth being served. The reduction in CAFAS scores at discharge shows that the residents have achieved a measurable improvement in functioning.



Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART)

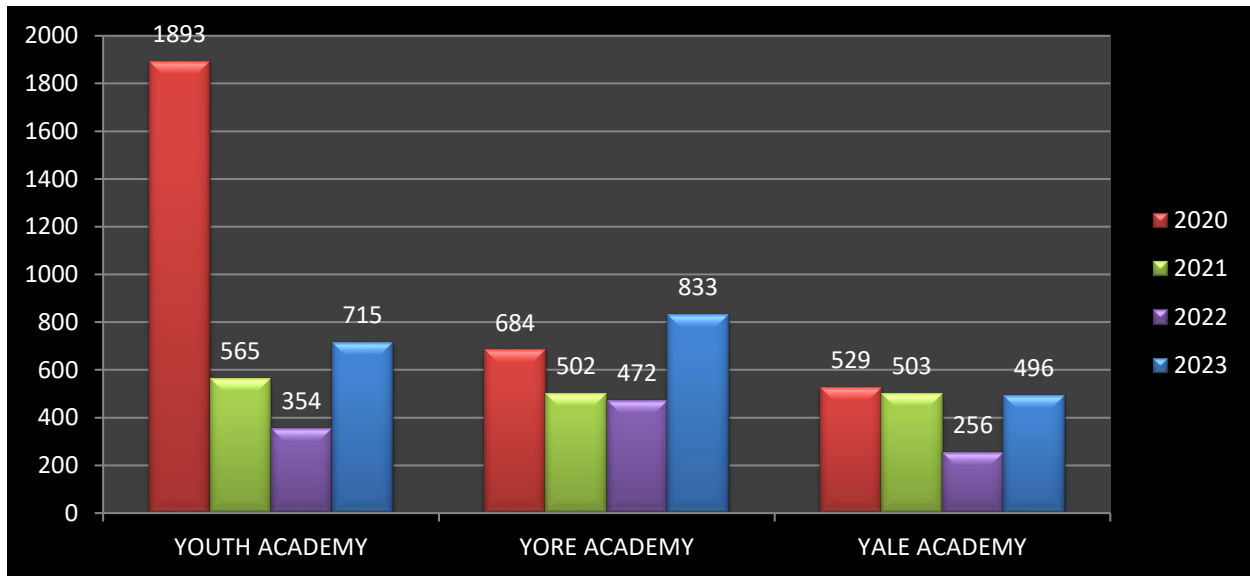
SMART Recovery is the leading, evidence-informed approach to overcoming addictive behaviors and leading a balanced life. SMART is stigma-free and emphasizes self-empowerment.

SMART Recovery's approach to behavioral change is built around a 4-Point Program®: (1) Building and maintaining the motivation to change. (2) Coping with urges to use. (3) Managing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in an effective way without addictive behaviors. (4) Living a balanced, positive, and healthy life.

All of the youth on campus attend SMART Recovery groups multiple times per week.

Incidents

Academy Programs ensure that every incident is documented and tracked so that trends and patterns can be identified, and comparisons made over time. The Safety Committee reviews incidents at each meeting to determine if a particular category of incidents is elevated or if further action is necessary. Although there has been an increase in incidents this year compared to last, they are minor in nature.



Safety Committee Report 2023

Monthly Walk-Through Report:

Minor damage and general messiness were the top items reported each month.

Fire Drill Report:

Each fire drill was completed monthly and rotated through shifts as prescribed. No issues.

Pending Safety Issues:

Pending safety issues are discussed monthly and addressed accordingly. Some issues are seasonal (sun exposure, wildlife encounters, increased elopement due to warmer weather, need for more clothing due to colder temps, icy areas of campus that must be attended to, etc.), while others can be supervision and treatment related.

Incident Report:

As in previous years, multiple sports-related injuries were the top category of incidents. Students actively participate in multiple games and organized sports. No major injuries were reported. De-escalation techniques have been better utilized when addressing aggressive behaviors. A reduction in physical interventions is noted after implementation of de-escalation. Negative Social Behaviors is a remarkably diverse category, and all manner of inappropriate behaviors are being documented there.

Grievances:

A single grievance was received and addressed accordingly in 2023.

General Staff Patterns and Turnover

Our staffing challenges over the past two years have not been solely the recruiting, training and retention of quality staff who work directly with children, but the absence of an available workforce. In spite of our efforts to market open positions throughout the year, the number of resumes, applications, and interest enquiries has remained low. As a result, recruiting new employees to fill vacant positions has become a more complicated struggle than retaining experienced employees across campus.

A total of 22 full-time, direct care staff left their positions at Academy Programs throughout the course of the year. The total turnover rate for direct-care positions in 2023 was 44 percent, up slightly from 2022.

Satisfaction Surveys

Surveys were distributed to staff in 2023 to gauge their satisfaction in multiple key areas. Gap analysis shows the difference between how important attributes/services are to survey takers and how satisfied they are with those attributes/services. By comparing importance (blue) and satisfaction (red) scores in the charts below, we used gap analysis to identify priorities for improvement. Any area that has a gap of 1.0 or more is considered an opportunity for improvement.



Areas that had a gap in 2023 were:

1. Feeling well informed about the status of the company
2. Training
3. Work Schedule
4. Feeling supported by Team Leaders and Program Directors
5. Feeling supported by upper management.

Measures that have been taken to alleviate the gaps:

The management staff, TL, and PD have increased their presence within groups so that staff will feel more supported.

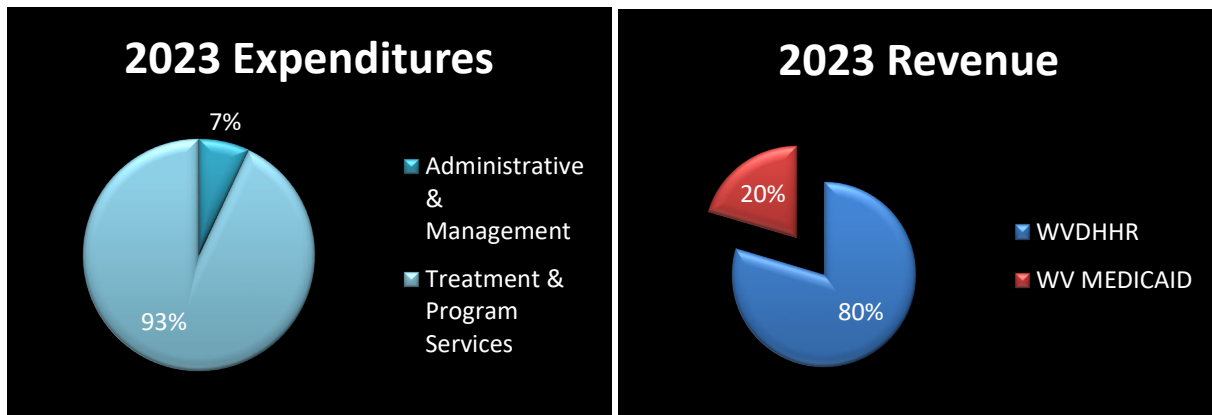
Training schedules have been altered to allow more shadowing for trainees prior to beginning work with students.

The schedule has been closely monitored and been adjusted when necessary.

Staff are encouraged to ask for any information that they are seeking concerning the status of the company.

Expenditures and Revenue

Expenditures for 2023 are divided between Administrative /Management costs and Treatment/ Program services. Revenue sources are WV DHHR and WV Medicaid.



YOUTH ACADEMY

Sources of Revenue	% of Revenue	Dollar Amount
WVDHHR	75%	\$1,925,881.93
WV Medicaid	25%	\$632,014.74
Total:		\$2,557,896.67

YORE ACADEMY

Sources of Revenue	% of Revenue	Dollar Amount
WVDHHR	82%	\$2,293,343.82
WV Medicaid	18%	\$529,750.71
Total:		\$2,813,094.53

YALE ACADEMY

Sources of Revenue	% of Revenue	Dollar Amount
WVDHHR	82%	\$2,245,355.25
WV Medicaid	18%	\$505,296.21
Total:		\$7,750,651.46