

Academy Programs

Annual Report

2024



Youth Academy

Yore Academy

YALE Academy

At the heart of our programming lies the enduring philosophy of Re-Education, developed by psychologist Nicholas Hobbs, which emphasizes strength, resilience, and the healing power of relationships. Grounded in the belief that every child and family possess innate potential for growth, our programs create positive, structured environments where emotional wellness can flourish. As

Hobbs so clearly stated, “The right way to work with children is to live with them. Not talk at them but to talk with them.” By integrating these values into all aspects of care, we nurture not only recovery, but lasting transformation and a deepened sense of connection and competence.

Mission

Academy Programs provide accountable, effective, family-centered, community-based treatment services which are delivered in the least restrictive and most efficient manner.

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 evidence-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.

As we reflect the evolution of our programs in 2024, we are reminded of Nicholas Hobbs' insight: "Competence makes a difference. The experience of success is essential." This belief continues to shape our approach, guiding efforts to ensure each child experiences measurable growth and personal achievement. The following section highlights key milestones, outcomes and initiatives that brought this vision to life over the past year.

The 2024 Academy Programs Annual Report:

- Academics
- Average Daily Census and Occupancy Rate
- Average Length of Stay
- Referrals
- Permanency of Life Situation
- Presenting Diagnosis (Substance Use)
- Presenting Diagnosis (Behavioral Health)
- Success Rate
- Graduating Academy Programs
- Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale
- Smart Recovery
- Incidents
- Safety Committee Report
- General Staffing Patterns
- Staff Retention and Turnover
- Satisfaction Surveys
- Expenditures & Revenue

Academics

As we evaluate our academic and school-based initiatives in 2024, we are grounded in Nicholas Hobbs' belief that "school is a good place to be, a good place to learn things that are important, and a good place to learn how to live with others." Our work this year focused on strengthening classroom partnerships, supporting students with individualized care, and ensuring that learning environments were safe, nurturing, and inclusive for every child that we served.

Our principal, Michael Ferguson, is now in his third 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, it is the largest residential on-grounds school under the West Virginia Schools of Diversion and Transition. During the 2023-2024 school year, there were 158 students enrolled.

The school continues to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as a proactive framework for fostering a safe, supportive, and effective atmosphere. Rooted in the belief that positive behavior can be taught and reinforced, PBIS helps create consistency in school. By clearly defining expectations, modeling respectful behavior, and recognizing progress, we empower students to build self-regulation skills and reduce disruptive behaviors. In 2024, PBIS was utilized across all classrooms, ensuring staff were equipped to support emotional growth and reinforce strengths in every interaction.

Since the COVID pandemic, we have seen even more students enter our school who are behind academically, socially, and emotionally. The pandemic saw students miss almost two years of in-person instruction. Consequently, we have seen a huge increase in students with learning and/or behavioral disabilities. We continue to implement a multi-tiered system of support for all students through the utilization of Reading and Math Title I interventionists and a full continuum of special education services.

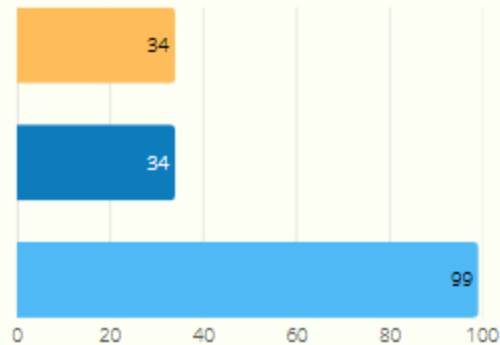
As students entered Academy Programs, they completed STAR diagnostic assessments to assess their individual Reading and Math baselines. We have seen a huge drop in proficiency in both of those areas with students being at several grade levels below where they should be. At the end of Term 1 and Term 2, the STAR benchmarks were also administered to track the growth of students in Reading and Math skills. Using this data, students in need of a specialized program of intervention delivered by Title I teachers are identified. One of the programs available to students struggling exceptionally with reading skills is Reading Horizons. Incorporating this program into our literacy initiative has enhanced our ability to provide targeted, evidence-based instruction, supporting students in developing the foundational skills necessary for reading proficiency.

STAR Assessment: MATH

Math: Improvement of
MORE than one full grade
level from pre/post

Math: Improvement of
UP TO one full grade
level from pre/post

Math: Long-Term
students who tested
below grade level upon
entry



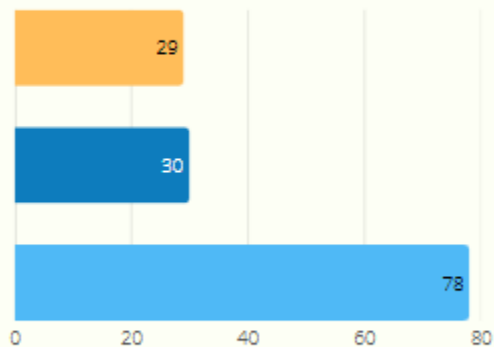
School Year 2023-2024

STAR Assessment: Reading

Reading: Improvement of
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level from pre/post

Reading: Improvement
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Reading: Long-Term
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School Year 2023-2024

This year, students enrolled at Academy Programs earned over 500 credits towards high school graduation. The High School Equivalency testing platform (HiSET) had a full year of students testing at Academy Programs, and we had 6 high school graduates via Option Pathway. In addition, we had 3 students who graduated traditionally, with a total of 9 graduates in 2024.

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

- Five core subjects of PE, Math, English, Science, and Social Studies
- Credit Recovery 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.

In addition to the regular school year, 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.

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. The reading initiative continued with the Title I teacher identifying students who would benefit from an online platform called Reading Horizons which provides tier 3 interventions. This program has successfully transformed non-readers into independent readers who enjoy reading for pleasure.

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. In particular, 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:

- 17 ServSafe Food Handlers cards
- 27 ProTrainings CPR Certifications
- 17 OSHA 10-hr Cards
- 100 Everfi Personal Finance Certifications
- 503 Tooling U Certifications

Since the majority of students enrolled in Academy Programs are behind in earning credits necessary for graduation, they may be enrolled in credit recovery classes or distance learning classes to supplement direct delivery classes. Students who are on track to graduate may enroll in college classes or CTE courses.

- “Credit Recovery” classes are for students who have previously failed a class and need to retake that class, or a portion of it, for a credit towards graduation. This practice has proven beneficial over the past year with 37 students earning 102 half credits.
- “Virtual School” is for students who need a particular class our school either can’t offer or can’t fit into our course offering schedule
- College classes are available for eligible students.
- Career Technical Education coursework provides a simulated work environment for students.

Below, two measures of academic success, credits earned and GPA, are illustrated:



Length of Stay

Research consistently demonstrates that the length of stay in behavioral health treatment programs significantly influences recovery outcomes. For substance use disorders, longer treatment durations are linked to improved outcomes. Continuing care models recommend treatment durations extending from 3 months to 6 months, with some advocating for up to 12 months to ensure sustained recovery and relapse preventions. These findings underscore the importance of tailoring treatment to individual needs, ensuring that programs provide sufficient time for children to achieve stability and develop coping strategies.

Nicholas Hobbs, the architect of the Re-Education (Re-ED) philosophy, emphasized the significance of time in the developmental process of children and adolescents. One of the core principles of Re-ED states:

“Time is an ally, working on the side of growth in a period of development when life has a tremendous forward thrust.” *Nicholas Hobbs*

This principle underscores the idea that allowing adequate time in treatment programs facilitates natural growth and healing. Rather than rushing the therapeutic process, Hobbs advocated for a patient approach that respects the individual’s developmental pace. In practice, this philosophy was reflected in Project Re-ED, where the average length of stay was approximately seven months. Studies indicated that longer stays were associated with more substantial reductions in problem behaviors, particularly among younger children. This evidence supports the notion that time, when used constructively within a supportive environment, is a critical component of effective treatment.

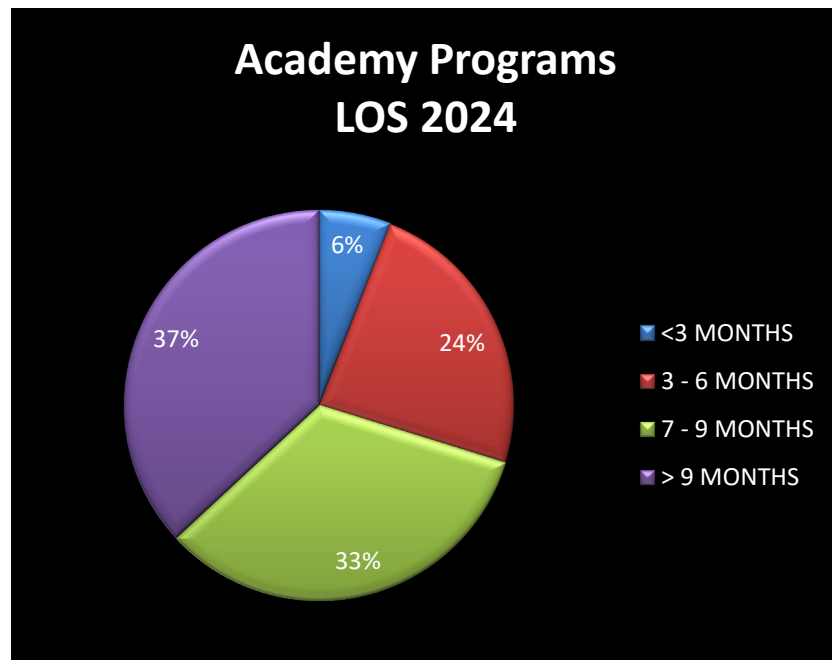
Integrating Hobbs’ perspective into our programs means recognizing that meaningful change often requires sustained engagement. By aligning treatment durations with the individual’s readiness and developmental needs, we honor the principle that time, indeed, is an ally in the journey toward growth and well-being.

In 2024, the average duration of stay increased slightly from the year before. By program, the average lengths of stay were:

Youth Academy	8.8 months
Yore Academy	8.4 months
YALE Academy	8.5 months

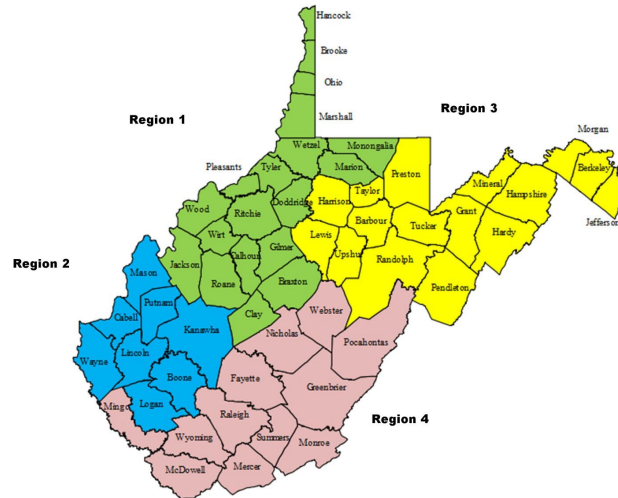
When averaging all three programs together, the males had a slightly longer length of stay than the females. Males averaged 8.9 months while females averaged 8.2 months

When viewing the chart below, it's important to note that not all children successfully complete the programs. Some have more difficult behavioral issues that cannot be addressed in our programs, some have legal issues that warrant change to a different setting and others have completed an improvement period that included time outside our programs. Those children may leave our care before fully completing the program. While we have modeled our program along the stages of change timeline and feel that program completion can occur within 6 months, the duration of stay for each child is individual and is influenced at the rate in which they learn and apply the changes necessary for success.

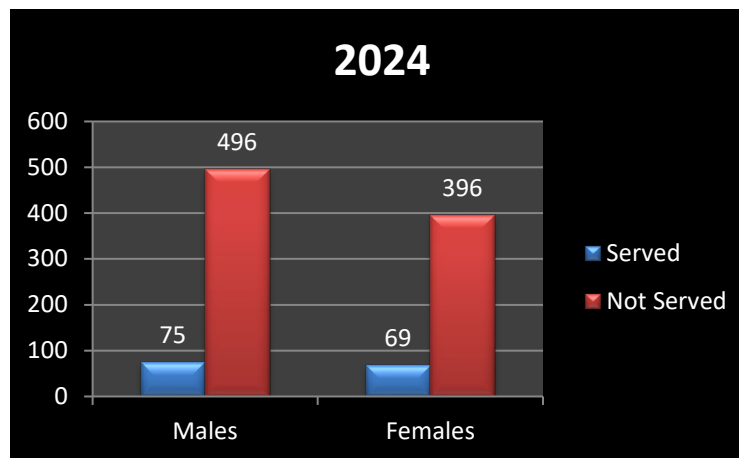


Referrals

All referrals for youth in need of services come from WV DoHS. Academy Programs serve adolescents from all regions in West Virginia. In 2024, a total of 144 students from 26 counties in WV received services.



More referrals were received in 2024 than could be served. A total of 1036 students were referred for treatment in 2024 and Academy Programs were only able to serve 14%.

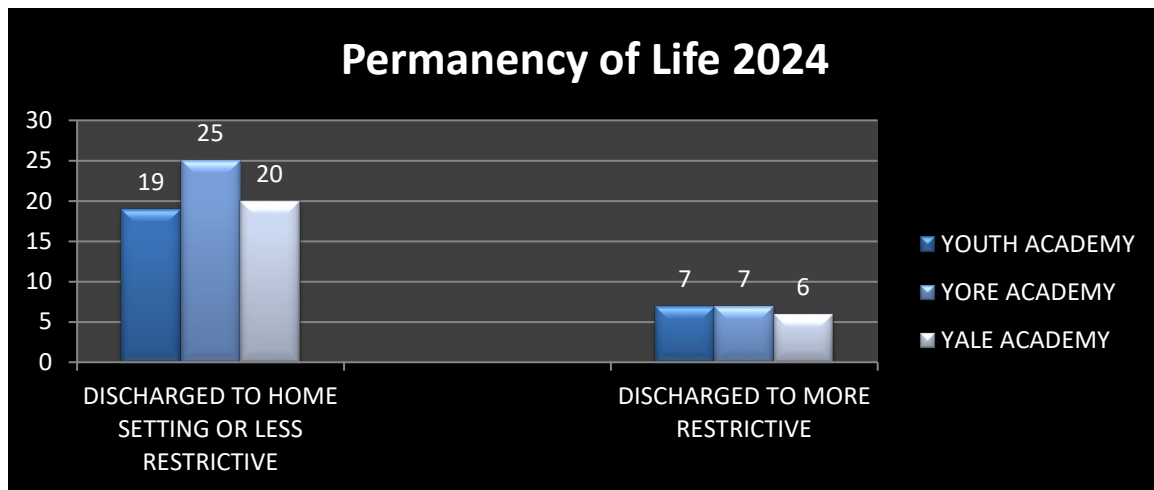


Permanency of Life

In the child welfare system, permanency refers to ensuring that every child has a stable, safe, and enduring family relationship that supports their well-being into adulthood. This encompasses both legal and relational aspects, aiming to provide children with a sense of belonging and lifelong connections. This can be achieved through reunification with the child's family, adoption, or guardianship.

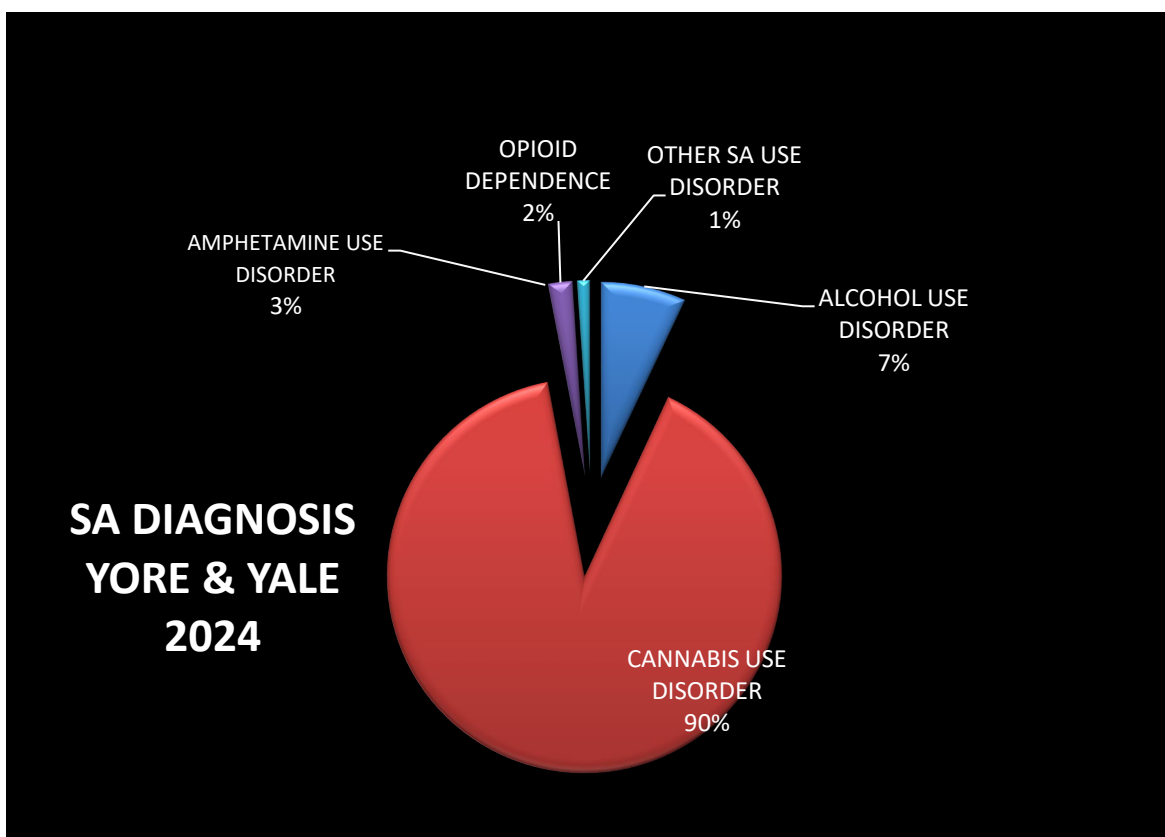
Positive outcome measures stipulate that 70% of all kids receiving services for 90 days or longer will be discharged to a home setting (foster home, birth family, adoptive, kinship care, lesser restrictive, or independence). Less restrictive care is often used as a step-down on the way to a permanent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

In 2024, Academy Programs achieved 76% success rate in achieving a positive permanency of life for the children discharging from care. 64 of the 84 children discharged went to a home setting.

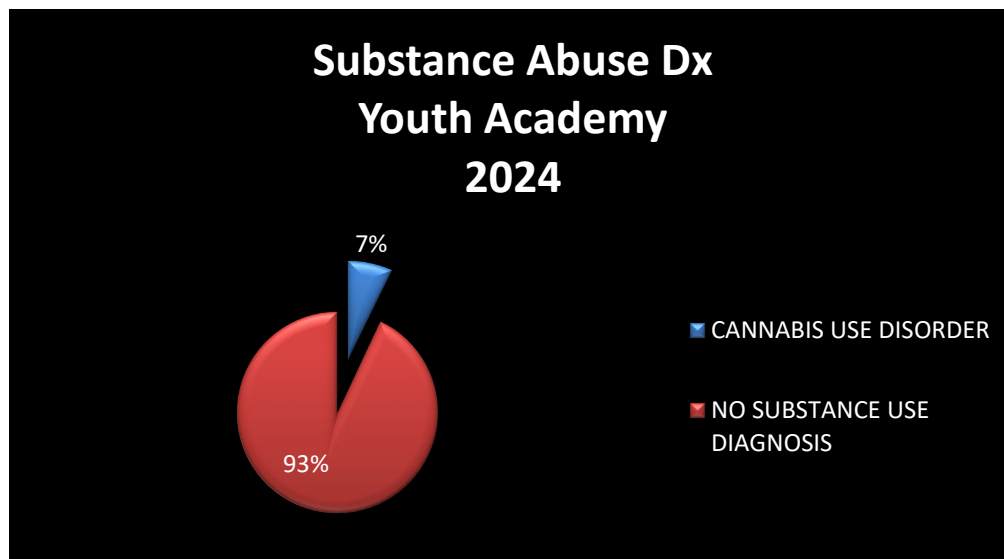


Presenting Diagnosis (Substance Abuse)

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. For many youth, cannabis is the first and most regularly used drug, so its effects are more evident and easier to diagnose. If cannabis is the substance causing the most impairment such as academic decline, social problems, motivation changes, and anxiety, it gets listed as the primary disorder, even if other substances are in the mix. Cannabis has a strong association with cognitive, motivational, and psychiatric impacts in developing brains, which often needs to be addressed first,

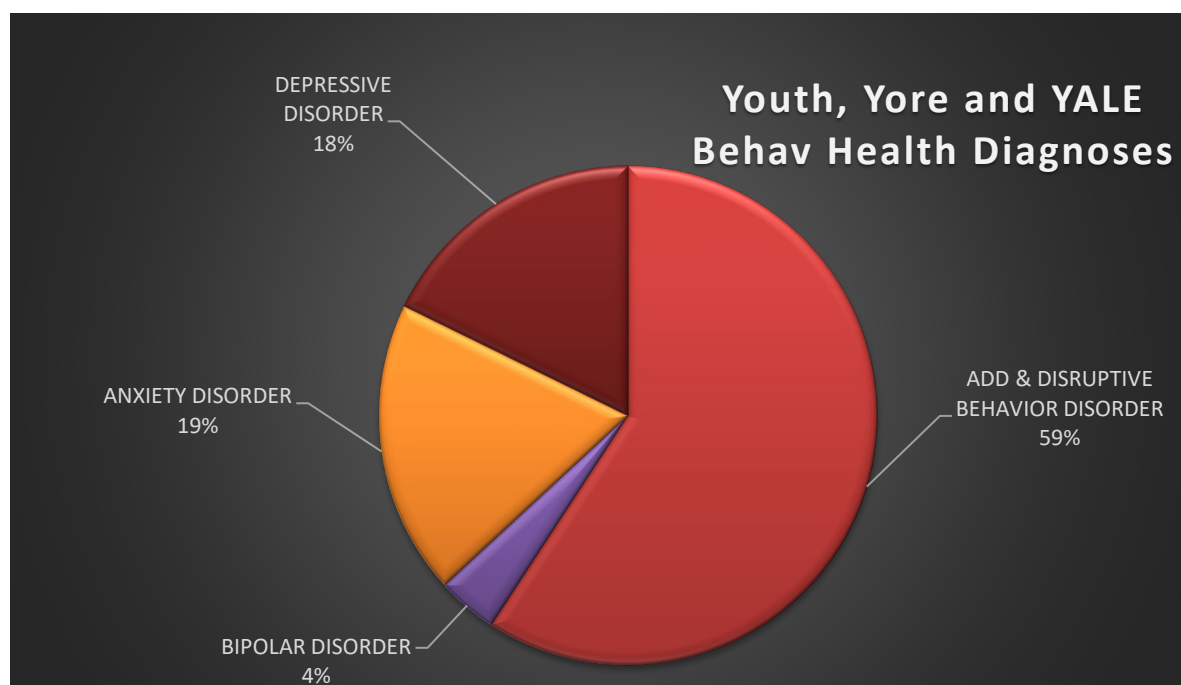


Substance use diagnoses are not required for admission to the Youth Academy. In 2024, 7% of students had a substance abuse diagnosis at entry. However, through the course of treatment, many substance abuse issues were uncovered and treated.



Presenting Diagnosis (Behavioral Health)

Attention Deficit Disorders and disruptive behavior problems tend to be among the most common adolescent mental health diagnoses for a mix of developmental, behavioral and system-related reasons; they are more visible than other conditions, school demands expose the symptoms, neurodevelopmental timing at referral, comorbidity and overlap plus referral patterns, including cultural and systemic factors. Schools are a major referral source for mental health services in youth.

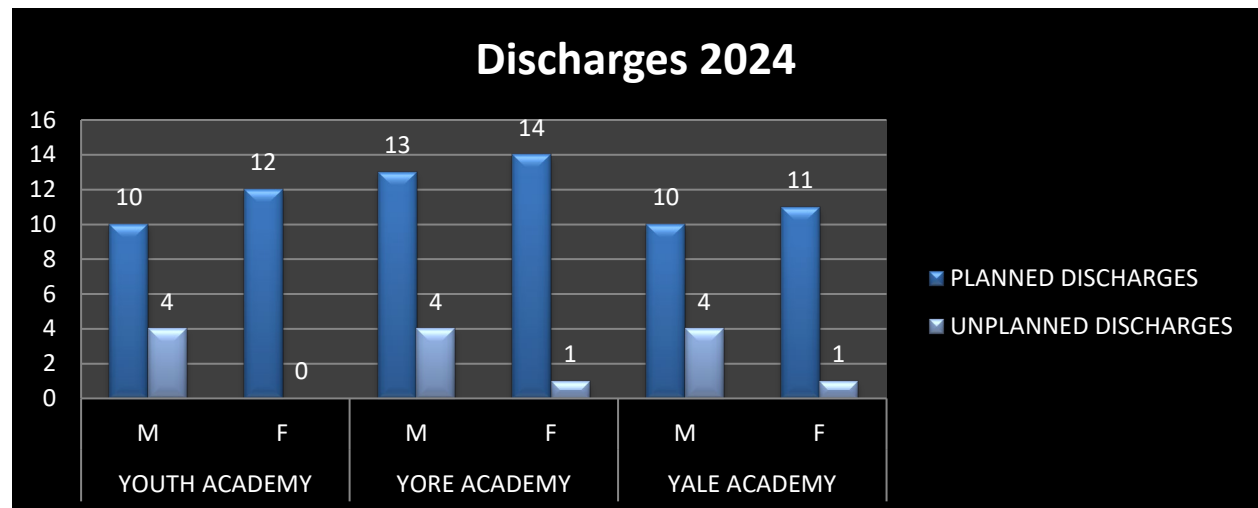


Success Rate

Discharge planning is a structured process, commencing at intake, which is designed to make sure a youth leaves the program with supports, resources, and a clear follow-up plan so they can maintain progress and avoid relapse or crisis.

Academy Programs completed 83% planned discharges in 2024. 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.

2024		TOTAL DISCHARGES	PLANNED DISCHARGES	UNPLANNED DISCHARGES	REASONS FOR UNPLANNED DISCHARGES
YOUTH ACADEMY	M	14	10	4	runaway
	F	12	12	0	n/a
YORE ACADEMY	M	17	13	4	runaway/detention
	F	15	14	1	runaway
YALE ACADEMY	M	14	10	4	detention
	F	12	11	1	runaway
		84	70	14	



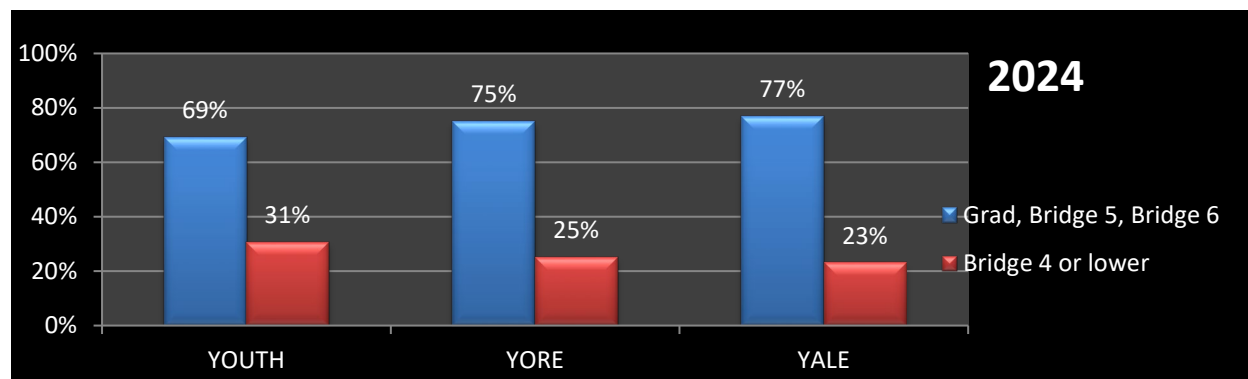
Graduating Academy Programs

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.

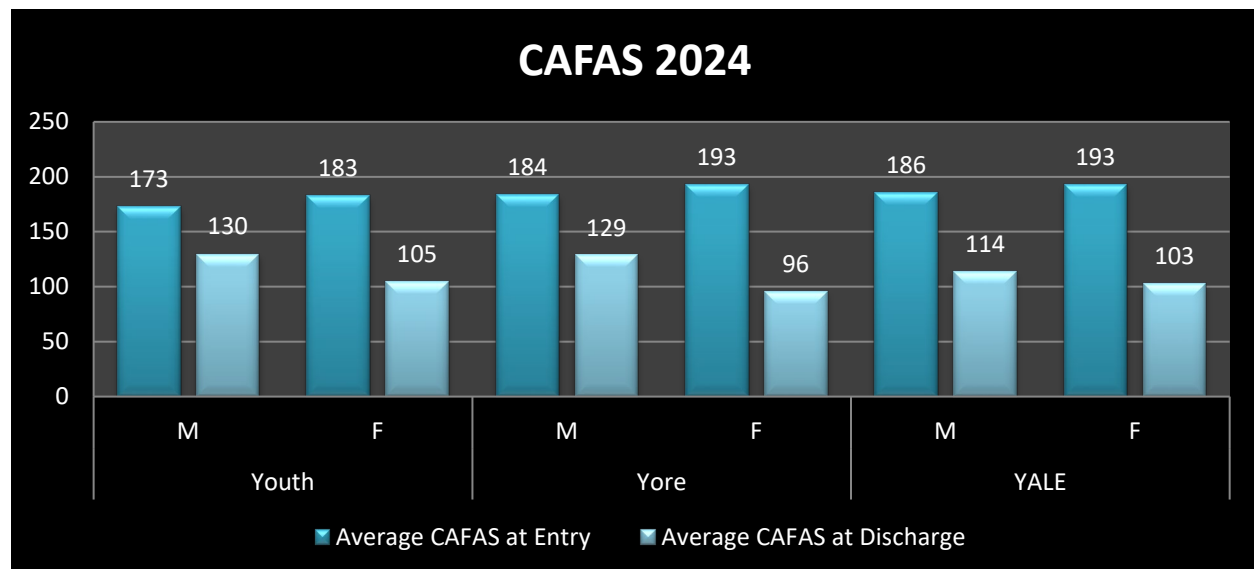
The GAP program creates several other improvements in the ability of Academy Programs to enhance the quality of treatment offered to its student body. First, emotionally disturbed and troubled children require two foundations in order to effectively change their behavior; an understanding that their 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. Higher scores indicate more severe impairment in day-to-day functioning, while lower scores show better functioning and fewer problems. Moving from a higher score range to a lower one indicates that challenges are less severe and the youth needs less intensive support. It also shows tangible progress toward greater independence and stability.



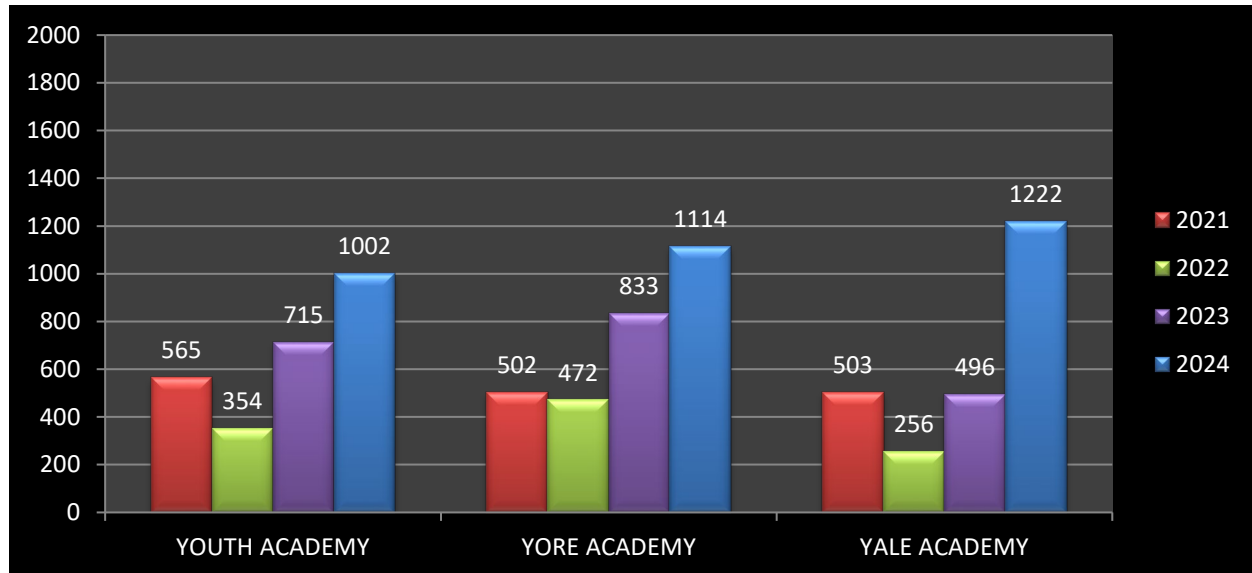
Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART)

SMART Recovery is a science-based program that helps people overcome addictive behaviors, including substance use and problem habits, by building motivation, developing coping skills and fostering balanced living. Instead of a 12-step, faith-based model, SMART uses cognitive-behavioral and motivational techniques to teach practical tools for managing thoughts, feelings, and actions. Youth learn strategies through meetings, worksheets, and peer support with the goal of empowering them to take charge of their recovery and maintain lasting change.

All of the residents in every program 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. The increase in incidents for 2024 is mainly in three categories – negative social behavior (a “catch-all” category that is designed to count interactions that are not socially appropriate, but minor in nature), minor injuries (mostly sports related) and physical aggression (due to some individual kids that were deemed to be in need of a higher level of care).



Safety Committee Report 2024

Monthly Walk-Through Report:

General repairs were needed and completed. Damage caused by residents topped the list of items needing attention on the reports.

Fire Drill Report:

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

Pending Safety Issues:

Pending safety issues are explored each month 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 dealt with, etc.), while others can be supervision and treatment related.

Incident Report:

As in previous years, multiple sports-related injuries were among 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:

No grievances received in 2024.

General Staff Patterns and Turnover

Residential children's facilities tend to face persistent staffing challenges that come from a mix of workforce shortages, emotional demands, and systemic issues. Recruitment difficulties abound such as labor deficits, competition from other employers, and negative perceptions of residential services. There is a high turnover due to burnout and compassion fatigue. Retention is sometimes difficult due to the challenging work environment.

A total of 28 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 2024 was 45 percent, up slightly from 2023.

Satisfaction Surveys

Surveys were distributed to staff in 2024 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 2024 were:

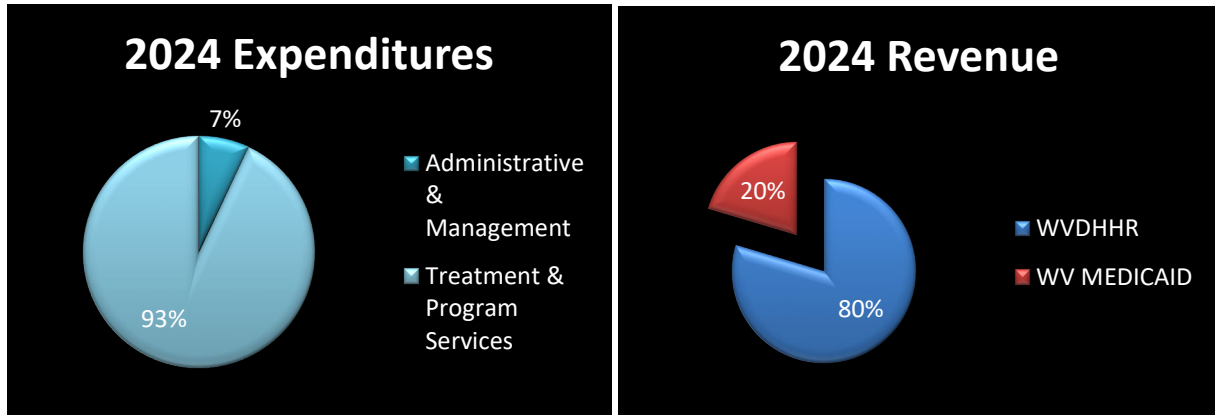
1. Feeling supported by Team Leaders and Program Directors
2. Feeling supported by upper management

Measures that have been taken to alleviate the gaps:

- A. More interaction from management, Team Leaders, and Program Directors with all staff. More follow-up with staff concerning their issues and concerns on a more frequent basis.

Expenditures and Revenue

Expenditures for 2024 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	79%	\$2,130,261.68
WV Medicaid	21%	\$576,181.74
Total:		\$2,706,443.42

YORE ACADEMY

Sources of Revenue	% of Revenue	Dollar Amount
WVDHHR	81%	\$2,600,548.66
WV Medicaid	19%	\$607,959.87
Total:		\$3,208,508.53

YALE ACADEMY

Sources of Revenue	% of Revenue	Dollar Amount
WVDHHR	81%	\$2,470,308.31
WV Medicaid	19%	\$575,409.81
Total:		\$3,045,718.12