

# STOP THE PROPOSED CLOSURES AND DOWNSIZING OF OCFS YOUTH FACILITIES

**The Governor has proposed to close AUBURN, BRACE and GREAT VALLEY RESIDENTIAL CENTERS, and the PYRAMID RECEPTION CENTER. He has also proposed to consolidate the ADIRONDACK RESIDENTIAL CENTER AND ADIRONDACK WILDERNESS PROGRAM and to downsize the LANSING RESIDENTIAL CENTER.**

## FACT

The administration has made the economic revitalization of upstate New York a major priority. The plan to close Auburn, Brace, and Great Valley Residential Centers and downsize the Adirondack programs is contrary to this objective, as it will have far reaching economic impact well beyond the affected employees. The facilities' closures will have an adverse impact on numerous local businesses that rely on employment and contracted services with these programs.

## FACT

Numerous research studies have documented that small scale environments enable improved treatments for youth. OCFS' current bed plan, which includes eliminating several small scale facility treatment programs, contradicts this treatment philosophy. OCFS should repatriate children receiving services in privately run facilities and treat them at underutilized facilities.

## FACT

OCFS is being short sighted in its rush to close facilities for the treatment of youth. The need for residential facilities for juvenile offenders is cyclical; recent evidence points to an increase in juvenile crime. The New York City Police reported that juvenile arrests of youth under 15 increased 8% over last year and that there has been a 31% increase in the number of youth admitted to juvenile detention centers by police in New York City over the last three years.

## FACT

The State should not close any OCFS facility when so many youth have severe mental, educational, addiction, and other social problems that cannot be safely and successfully treated in private programs. Approximately one thousand OCFS-placed youth receive residential services in private facilities. One-third of youth placed by OCFS in private facilities fail in these placements and are transferred to OCFS facilities for more appropriate treatment. In the last month alone 19 children were returned to Pyramid from private facilities.

## FACT

Each targeted facility has unique programs and services that should be maintained:

- **Pyramid Reception Center** currently offers reception, transportation, and intake services as well as providing 8 temporary emergency beds in one central, easily accessed location. No other existing facility offers the space or convenience of Pyramid, and OCFS has not offered a plan for how these services will be provided.

- **Brace Residential Center** • is a transitional program that prepares residents for their successful reintegration into their communities. The residents are provided educational experiences in areas such as culinary arts, horticulture, computer technology, woodworking, landscaping, welding, and maintenance and grounds.
- **Great Valley** is one of only 2 OCFS treatment facilities in the western NY region. OCFS recently invested millions of dollars in upgrades to the Great Valley facility. This includes state of the art surveillance cameras, key security systems, sewer-treatment plant and numerous facility improvement projects
- **Auburn's** exceptional treatment environment closely resembles the nonviolent, trauma-based Sanctuary Model of therapeutic care that OCFS is promoting throughout its residential system. The residents of Auburn have been very active in the community, participating in activities of the Red Cross, Literacy Volunteers and Cornell Cooperative extension. Auburn boasts the newest school building in all of the OCFS system.
- **Adirondack Wilderness Program** is a four-month residential and outdoor experiential education program for boys 13 to 17 years old, which provides male teens with counseling, vocational guidance and experiential education. This facility has shorter residential stays, which makes this program's residential cost lower than those of the standard OCFS detention facilities. The residents at the AWP have participated in a number of community services including major trail reconstruction, cleaning up camp grounds, bird banding, invasive species eradication, and working with food kitchens at local churches.
- The need for enhanced staffing at **Lansing** exists in spite of recent changes to the facility's operations. Although reclassified from a Limited Secure to a Non-Secure facility, the youth remaining in Lansing are in fact the very same youth with the same significant behavioral, educational, addiction and other social problems as when it was designated a more secure facility. Lansing also recently began conversion to a Sanctuary Model approach to treatment. In order for this trauma-informed approach to be successful, staffing must be enhanced, not diminished.

**FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN AND OUR COMMUNITIES  
RESTORE \$2.5 - \$3.4 MILLION TO THE OCFS BUDGET**

**Keep Auburn, Brace and Great Valley Residential  
Centers, and Pyramid Reception Center Open!**

**Stop the Consolidation of Adirondack Residential Center and  
Adirondack Wilderness Program!**

**Prevent Staff Reductions at Lansing Residential Center!**



**New York State  
Public Employees Federation, AFL-CIO  
Kenneth Brynien  
President**

**Arlea Igoe  
Secretary-Treasurer**