

# THE WELL

THE RESOURCE FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS  
APRIL/MAY 2025

Of PBC



## Ten Years Strong:

Get Your Green On Marks a  
Mental Health Milestone

## Building Bridges:

Youth Services and Justice  
Department Unite for Mental  
Health Awareness Month

## Bringing the Desi Community Together:

The Power of Puja, Functions,  
and Cultural Events

Plus: Multicultural Youth Arts Festival • Senior Year Is No Joke •  
To Support and Serve • From Being an Inmate to Living  
My Best Life • Empower Healthcare: Breaking Barriers  
to Build a Healthier Future • **And Much More!**

**PALM BEACH COUNTY**



**ON MAY 15TH**

**WEAR GREEN**

**FOR MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS &  
TRAUMA INFORMED CARE**

**TAKE PICTURES AND TAG  
#GETYOURGREENON #GYGO2025  
[www.GetYourGreenOn.org](http://www.GetYourGreenOn.org)**



# CONTENTS



**8 FEATURE STORY**  
**Ten Years Strong:**  
Get Your Green On Marks a  
Mental Health Milestone

**12 THE DRAW**  
Multicultural Youth Arts Festival

**14 THE SOURCE**

**16 THE FOUNTAIN**  
Senior Year Is No Joke

**19 THE REAL**  
Palm Beach County is proud to  
celebrate ten years of Get Your Green On!

**20 BEWELLPBC NEWS**

**22 THE WORD**  
**Empower Healthcare:**  
Breaking Barriers to Build a Healthier  
Future

**24 THE RESERVOIR**  
To Support and Serve

**26 THE DEPTH**  
Bringing the Desi Community  
Together: The Power of Puja,  
Functions, and Cultural Events

**28 CORNER TALK**

**30 THE PROVIDERS**  
5 Things to Look for In a  
Behavioral Health Provider

**32 BEYOND THE COUCH**  
**Building Bridges:** Youth Services and  
Justice Department Unite for Mental  
Health Awareness Month

**34 The Birth to 22:**  
United for Brighter Futures Alliance  
Celebrates 10th Get Your Green On  
Campaign

**36 SPOTLIGHT**  
From Being an Inmate to Living My Best Life

**37 ACORNS**

From Top Left to Bottom Right: Page 8 - **Feature Story**;  
Page 12 - **The Draw**; Page 16 - **The Fountain**; Page 22 -  
**The Word**; Page 26 - **The Word**; Page 36- **Spotlight**

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With a readership of thousands that covers Belle Glade to Lake Worth Beach to Jupiter to Boca Raton, *The Well of PBC* is a comprehensive, community-directed resource, dedicated to elevating the voices and concerns of all who call Palm Beach County home. Please join us as we advocate for mental health and work together to transform the behavioral health landscape. Your commitment helps us do exactly that.

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**JULIE KHANNA**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

*"What makes this campaign so special is how it shows up for each and every person. Everybody may define why this campaign is important to them in different ways, but it can be very personal and it can also be very much about how to support those around you. It can be very community-based. It can be big. It can be small. But it's really meant to touch the entire community. And hopefully everybody can see themselves in it." -Lauren Zuchman*



**This year, we celebrate a decade of *Get Your Green On*.**

It started, as many great things do, from humble beginnings. A collaboration between the students at Healthier Delray Beach and Atlantic Community High School to show support for mental health.

Ten years later, it has bloomed into a county-wide movement, engaging hundreds and defining Palm Beach County's commitment to creating visible support and fostering safe spaces to talk openly about mental health and trauma and the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners issuing a proclamation declaring May as Mental Health Awareness and Trauma Informed Care Month in Palm Beach County.

This is how movements begin—the tiniest mustard seeds, carefully cultivated, until they grow into something beautiful and nourishing.

Mental health and wellness are integral to a strong community and thanks to campaigns like *Get Your Green On*, we are talking more openly about it and ensuring that people in our community have access to the services they need to thrive.

As the editor-in-chief for The Well of PBC, I have a unique opportunity to not only serve as a community advocate for behavioral health and also to use my position to elevate the voices of those working in the community and make sure that their tireless efforts are celebrated.

In this issue, we are celebrating *Get Your Green On* and all those supporting mental health awareness. From Dr. Jinga Oglesby-Brihm and the PEARLS (Program to Encourage Active Rewarding Lives) program which helps seniors combat loneliness to how a diaspora community comes together to worship, break bread and connect to how non-profits are finding the support they need to continue their missions through an uncertain time.

The team at The Well of PBC would like to congratulate *Get Your Green On* for ten impactful years and we can't wait to see what the future holds. It is an honor to be on this journey and as always, thank you for being a part of the mission:

*"To be the primary resource for behavioral health and wellness for Palm Beach County; a safe exchange space for community and an outlet for our neighbors and stakeholders to transform the behavioral health landscape."*

With deep appreciation,

*Julie Khanna*

To share feedback, obtain advertising information, or contribute, please reach us at [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org).



To be the primary resource for behavioral health and wellness for Palm Beach County; a safe exchange space for community and an outlet for our neighbors and stakeholders to transform the behavioral health landscape.

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**The largest behavioral health publication in Palm Beach County, The Well of PBC is a non-profit magazine which aims to be a community-directed resource for Palm Beach County residents.**

**Advocating for mental health accessibility is central to our mission and we believe in “walking the walk” when it comes to ensuring every Palm Beach County resident has the opportunity to have their voices heard. We are proud to use our platform to highlight both national and global concerns while remaining focused on local mental health and wellness issues that matter the most to our audience.**

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# CREATIVE TEAM



**ALITA FABER**



**LAUREN ZUCHMAN**

## PUBLISHER

Lauren is the executive director for the countywide initiative, BeWellPBC, advancing behavioral health and wellness for all residents in Palm Beach County. The Well of PBC is a passion project for Lauren to increase behavioral health awareness, engage diverse perspectives across the county, and promote solutions to address our county's most complex challenges.



**JULIE KHANNA**

## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Julie, CEO of Khanna Connections, enjoys using her creativity to help health and wellness industries communicate with their audiences.



**JESSIE PRUGH**

## CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Jessie is a seasoned creative director and designer with fifteen years of experience in print publishing, education, and marketing. With a passion for innovation, she has empowered diverse clients, from arts organizations to Fortune 500 companies, with bespoke marketing solutions and creative project management.



**KATRINA BLACKMON**

## MARKETING MANAGER

Katrina, the founder, and CEO of Unity3 Palm Beach, contributed her expertise in executive advertising spanning over twenty-five years to the launch of The Well of PBC. With her background in local, regional, and national advertising media, she brings a blend of professional acumen and personal values, including her deep-rooted commitment to faith, family, and the vibrant multicultural community of Palm Beach County to The Well of PBC and BeWellPBC.



**MELANIE OTERO**

## CONTRIBUTOR

Melanie, president of Otero Communications, provides consulting services for some of Palm Beach County's leading nonprofit organizations. With a special interest in behavioral health, she has assisted with the launch of The Well of PBC and serves as a contributing writer.



**JAIME JOSHI ELDER**

## CONTRIBUTOR

Jaime, founder of Rosewood Media, is a West Palm Beach resident, creative and contributing writer to The Well of PBC. With a decade of experience in non-profit communications and a lifetime of experience as a writer, Jaime's work focuses on behavioral health, diversity, equity and inclusion, travel, music, food and parenthood through a pop culture lens.

**Call to Action:** We are looking for people to contribute to our art, ask the experts, students, self-care, cultural, spiritual, and provider columns. Email us for our contributor guidelines, editorial calendar, or if you'd like to share an event or position you're hiring for. E: [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org) | Follow along at [@thewellofpbc](https://www.instagram.com/thewellofpbc)



# Ten Years Strong:

## Get Your Green On Marks a Mental Health Milestone

By Melanie Otero



In 2016, when Lauren Zuchman, senior director of Healthier Delray Beach, met with students at Atlantic High School in Nickoletta Loulis' classroom for a Teen Life in HDB meeting, they could hardly have imagined how far their aspirations for raising mental health awareness would reach in the years ahead.

What began as a student-led spark has ignited the annual countywide Get Your Green On (GYGO) campaign, held each May, now marking its tenth year. It stands as a testament to building a mental health movement that has reached every corner of

Palm Beach County, inspiring conversations and forging connections across student, government, business, nonprofit, and community leaders.

Come with us as we celebrate the milestones that have marked the movement.

### Why Green?

Green, the color for mental health awareness, symbolizes renewal, growth, and healing—reflecting the hope of recovery for those facing mental health challenges.



### 2016: Vision Lays the Groundwork

*"It was at a time when I was learning more about mental health online and the stigma. As an immigrant, our culture didn't look at mental health the way we do now. I thought it was important to raise awareness about mental health among my peers." - Claude Lamarre, former Atlantic HS student and youth GYGO founder*

- "Get Your Green On" becomes campaign name, inspiring all to wear green
- Activities include interactive art, mandalas, meditations, and extend to Village Academy and Carver Middle School in Delray Beach
- City of Delray Beach issues first GYGO proclamation



## 2017: GYGO CATAPULTS TO COUNTYWIDE MOVEMENT



Lauren Zuchman and Katherine Murphy,  
GYGO Co-Chairs

*"Birth to 22 was recognizing what was happening in Delray Beach and how successful they were in creating a movement. In 2017, they jumped in to take GYGO countywide."*  
- Lauren Zuchman, BeWellPBC executive director, GYGO co-chair

- Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures, launched in 2016, takes GYGO countywide
- Lauren Zuchman, then Healthier Delray Beach senior director, and Katherine Murphy, NAMI Palm Beach County CEO, become GYGO co-chairs and form planning committee, positions they still hold today
- Palm Beach County and the School District of Palm Beach County join campaign
- Campaign adds "trauma informed care" to increase awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)



Kenya Madison and her son, P.J.

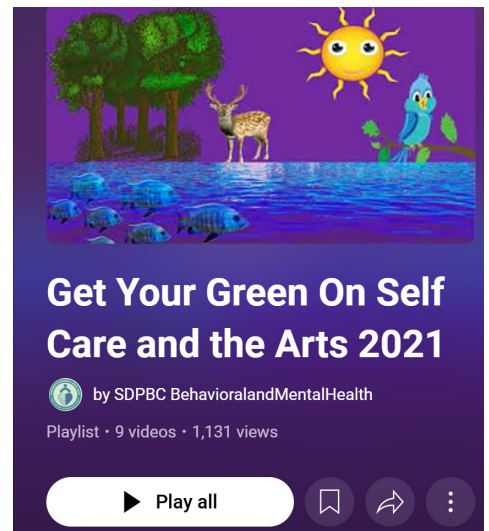
*"We started GYGO because people really needed resources and conversations about mental health to be normalized so they can move forward and get the support they need."*  
- Kenya Madison, Senior Director, Healthier Delray Beach and Co-Chair



United Way of Palm Beach County goes green



A Palm Beach County student celebrates GYGO



## 2020: COVID-19 Challenges Spark Innovation

*"As a freshman, I didn't know a lot about mental health, but I learned about it through GYGO."* -Stevencia "Stevie" Estime, former Atlantic HS student and youth GYGO founder

- GYGO Facebook page launches creating online space for community engagement
- First GYGO theme created for the COVID era, "Community healing and resiliency," that continued for years to follow
- Students lead "I feel calm when..." social media challenge to connect and share during pandemic

The School District of Palm Beach County launches GYGO YouTube channel featuring self-care and mental wellness activities created by district employees.

## 2021

- GYGO events go countywide, nearly every day of the month
- GYGO spins off GYGO 365, bringing greater attention to the movement every day and other mental health related months all year long



## 2022: Cities Across PBC Unite for GYGO

From Delray to the Glades, to a bingo night at West Palm Beach's Grandview Market in collaboration with 211, GYGO continues to create a groundswell of awareness for mental health with support from local media.

*"It's destigmatizing mental health as a normal thing to talk about. Through GYGO everyone can find something to do or learn about mental health. And we all support each other's events with everyone coming together with this one common theme and amplifying public offerings." - Katherine Murphy, NAMI Palm Beach County CEO*



## 2023: GYGO Unleashes Everyone's Inner Hero

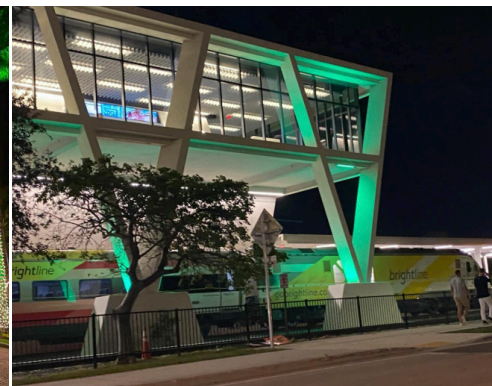
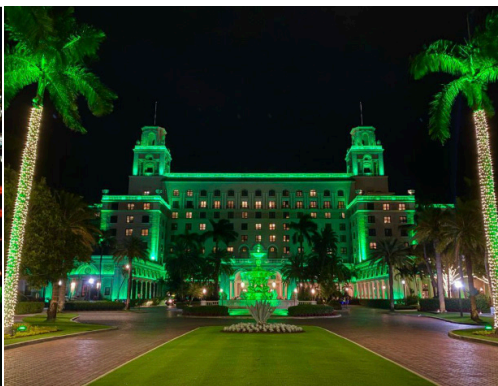
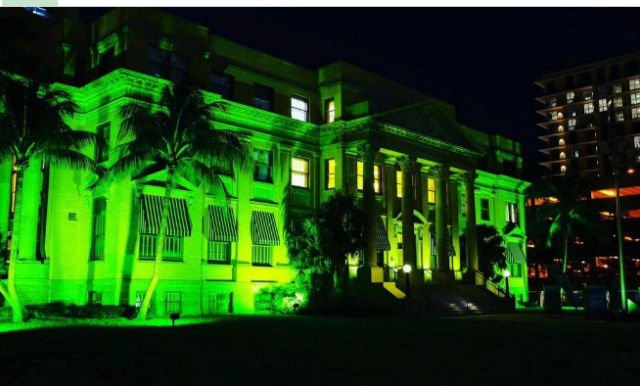
GYGO's campaign committee, in collaboration with Deon C. Jefferson and Kenya Madison, hosts a countywide signature event, "Express Yourself Fashion Art Ball 2.0," where guests were encouraged to dress as superheroes.



The Faulk Center for Counseling Annual Butterfly Release for Mental Health

## 2024: County Buildings Shine a Light on Mental Health

Palm Beach County History Museum, The Breakers Palm Beach, and Brightline glow green for GYGO.





## By 2024:

- Stakeholders from multiple sectors participate, including the school system, encompassing 180,000 students, family members, and staff, and Palm Beach County government, employing more than 5,000 employees
- Month-long celebrations include community-wide trainings, proclamations, family events, wellness challenges, buildings and structures lit up green, and a web-based behavioral health resource scavenger hunt
- 6,000 social media participants show visible support of the campaign by posting pictures of themselves wearing green and tagging their posts with **Get Your Green On** hashtags.



"To the founding GYGO Atlantic HS students, your vision, your dedication, and your ongoing belief in the power of change have left an indelible mark on our school and our community. You proved that age is no barrier to impact, and that passion can transform lives. You ignited a movement that continues to thrive and in doing so, you have inspired not only your peers but also me. I am, and always will be, incredibly proud of each and every one of you."  
- Nikoletta Loulis, Atlantic HS teacher and Teen Life in HDB coordinator



For their decade of commitment to GYGO, Kenya Madison, Katherine Murphy, and Lauren Zuchman were honored by Rhonda's Promise as "Mental Health Sheroes."

## 2025: What's ahead for the 10th annual GYGO campaign

From a classroom of a dozen students at Atlantic High School with a vision, to a mental health movement encompassing thousands of Palm Beach County community members, GYGO continues to evolve and grow. May 2025 will bring more residents taking leadership roles in events, building community connections and pride as they open conversations and reduce stigma. The 2025 campaign signature event hosted by Digital Vibez will take place on May 31st in Delray Beach, the heart of where it all began.

## GYGO Online...

GYGO resources offer ways for anyone and everyone to do or learn something to benefit their mental health. Go to [getyourgreenon.org](http://getyourgreenon.org) for activities and resources and join the ten-year celebration! **#GYGO2025 #GetYourGreenOn**



# Multicultural Youth Arts Festival



**“By providing a platform for young artists to share their voices, we aim to inspire and empower our community.”**



By Anthony Bacchus, CEO  
CAPE Universal, Inc | @CAPEUniversal

The Multicultural Youth Arts Festival (MYAF 2025) celebrates diversity, creativity, and self-expression.

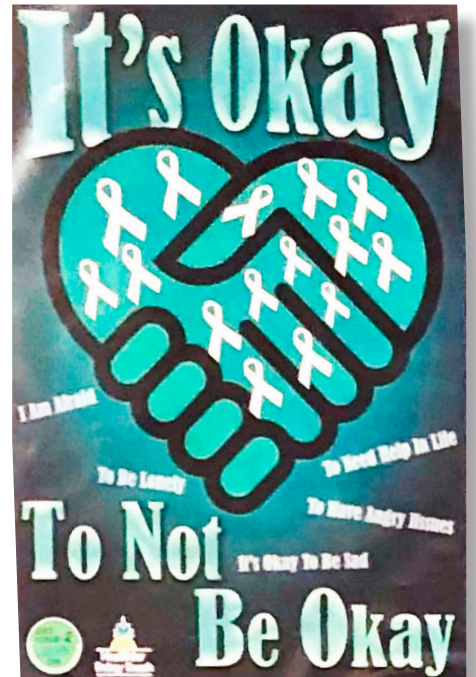
It was initially the Black History Youth Arts Festival and the vision expanded to a more diverse perspective.

The theme is self-Identity - inspiring children K-12 to embrace their culture.

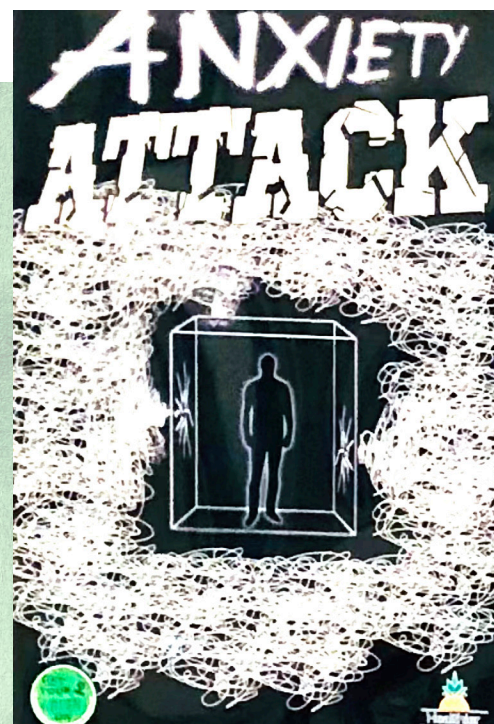
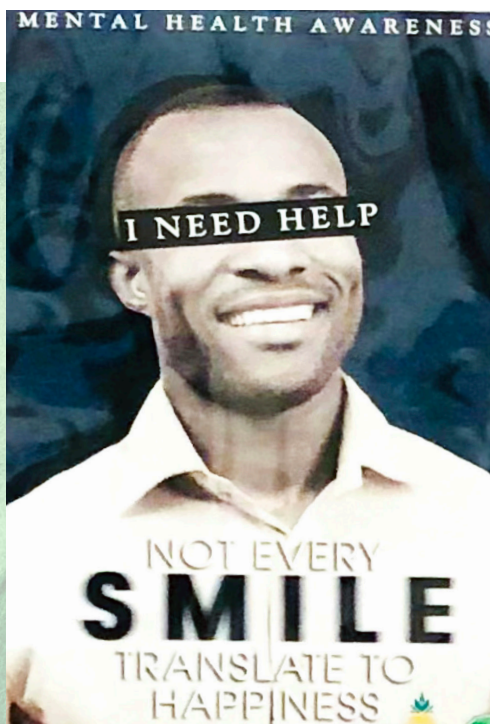
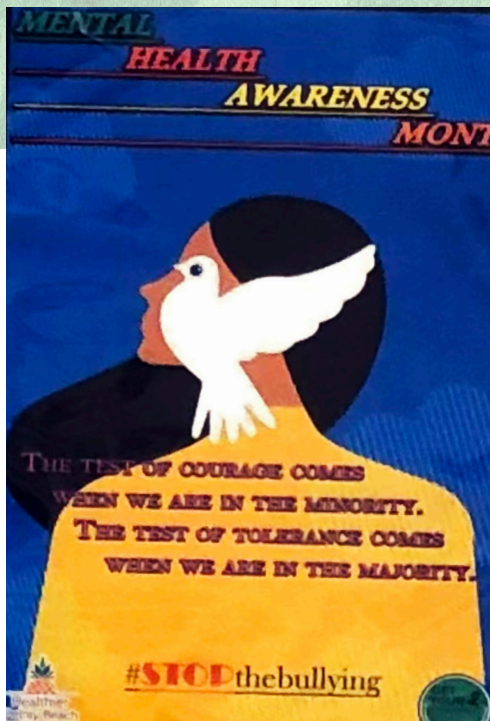
CAPE Universal created a platform for children to display their art and showcase their talents. We focus on youth art display, performances and entrepreneurship accompanied by organizations that empower youth networking with children, parents, teachers, the community and each other.

This year, we're supporting the Get Your Green On initiative by promoting mental wellness through art.

The GYGO-themed artwork, created by Atlantic High School students, demonstrates the impact of art on mental health and wellness. By providing a platform for young artists to share their voices, we aim to inspire and empower our community.







"This year, we're supporting the Get Your Green On initiative by promoting mental wellness through art."

**The Draw** is a space for creatives to share their art, poetry, spoken word, etc. and/or how their art helps themselves and others.

To contribute, send your article ideas to [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org) with "The Draw" in the subject line.





Palm Beach County is awash in shades of emerald, apple, celadon and mint this May as we celebrate 10 years of Get Your Green On!

In addition to wearing the color green to raise awareness by creating visible support and fostering safe spaces to talk openly about mental health and trauma, organizations are hosting events throughout the month and inviting the public to celebrate with them. **Please visit [GetYourGreenOn.org](https://www.getyourgreengoon.org) for a full calendar of events.**

Our goal in publishing the following resources is to provide information and serve as a source of hope. The Source is your resource to find what you need to thrive.

If you have something you'd like to share, we encourage you to email us at: [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org) and tell us about it so we might highlight it in a future issue.



## PALM BEACH COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES

PBC Youth Services is hosting numerous events throughout the month. All require registration prior to the event. For more information, please contact Cristal Montepeque at [cmontepeque@pbc.gov](mailto:cmontepeque@pbc.gov) or 561-233-4460

**Date: May 1, 2025**

**Event: [Introduction to Mental Health](#)**

**Time: 12:00pm-1:00pm**

**Location:** Zoom (email for registration link)

**Date: May 6, 2025**

**Event: [School to Prison Pipeline](#)**

**Time: 12:00pm-1:00pm**

**Location:** Zoom (email for registration link)

**Date: May 7, 2025**

**Event: [Disability: Culture, Treatment and Assessment](#)**

**Time: 9:30am-11:30am**

**Location:** Zoom (email for registration link)

**Date: May 8, 2025**

**Event: [Managing Anxiety and Depression](#)**

**Time: 12:00pm-1:00pm**

**Location:** Zoom (email for registration link)

**Date: May 10, 2025**

**Event: [2nd Annual Family Mental Health Day Camp](#)**

**Time: 9:00am-3:00pm**

**Location:** Okeethee Nature Park, 7715 Forest Hill Blvd, West Palm Beach, FL 33413

**Contact:** [YSD-Yfc-4pts@pbcgov.org](mailto:YSD-Yfc-4pts@pbcgov.org) or call 561-242-5714

**Date: May 14, 2025**

**Event: [Diagnosis and Treatment of Social Anxiety and Selective Mutism](#)**

**Time: 9:30am-11:30am**

**Location:** Zoom (email for registration link)

**Date: May 20, 2025**

**Event: [Acculturation](#)**

**Time: 12:00pm-1:00pm**

**Location:** Zoom (email for registration link)

**Date: May 21, 2025**

**Event: [An Introduction to Psychopharmacology and Other Biological Interventions in Child and Adolescent Healthcare](#)**

**Time: 9:30am-11:30am**

**Location:** Zoom (email for registration link)

**Date: May 22, 2025**

**Event: [Eating Disorders](#)**

**Time: 12:00pm-1:00pm**

**Location:** Zoom (email for registration link)

**Date: May 28, 2025**

**Event: [Application of Sanctuary within Therapeutic Practice](#)**

**Time: 9:30am-11:30am**

**Location:** Highridge Family Center, 4200 N Australian Ave #3622, West Palm Beach, FL 33407





## ALPERT JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE

**Date:** May 1-31

**Event:** **GYGO Scavenger Hunt**

**Time:** 9:30am-11:30am

**Location:** Goosechase App

**Contact:** Courtney Marx to Register: cmarx@AlpertJFS.org

**Information:** Hunt for Mental Health in May on the Goosechase mobile app. Go on missions to discover support, wellness tips, ways to feel your best and support others. Join the hunt as a single person or on a team. Hunt begins May 1st and ends May 31st. Prizes for top point earners and special gifts along the way.

**Date:** May 8-9

**Event:** **Mental Health First Aid:**

**Youth - Full MHFA training for adults working with youth**

**Location:** 5841 Corporate Way, Suite 200 West Palm Beach, FL 33407

**Contact:** Courtney Marx to Register: cmarx@AlpertJFS.org

**Date:** May 21-22

**Event:** **Mental Health First Aid: Adult - Full MHFA Training**

**Location:** 5841 Corporate Way, Suite 200 West Palm Beach, FL 33407

**Contact:** Courtney Marx to Register: cmarx@AlpertJFS.org



## FAULK CENTER

**Date:** May 15, 2025

**Event:** **Annual Butterfly Release**

**Time:** 3:30pm

**Location:** 22455 Boca Rio Rd Boca Raton, FL 33433

**Contact:** Jonathan Price: j.price@faulkcenterforcounseling.org

**Information:** The annual butterfly release is a family-friendly event with cake, cotton candy, popcorn and balloons with a special proclamation from the City of Boca Raton.

## PALM BEACH COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COALITION

**Date:** May 1-31

**Event:** **GYGO Scavenger Hunt**

**Time:** 9:30am-11:30am

**Location:** Goosechase App

**Contact:** SusanFoley@pbcchc.org

**Information:** Hunt for Mental Health in May on the Goosechase mobile app. Go on missions to discover support, wellness tips, ways to feel your best and support others. Join the hunt as a single person or on a team. Hunt begins May 1st and ends May 31st. Prizes for top point earners and special gifts along the way.

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS - PALM BEACH COUNTY

**Date:** May 6, 2025

**Event:** **Palm Beach County Proclamation for Mental Health/Trauma-Informed Care and Get Your Green On 10!**

**Time:** INFORMATION NEEDED

**Location:** Palm Beach County Robert Weisman Governmental Center, 6th floor Commission Chambers, 301 N. Olive Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

**Contact:** <https://facebook.com/gygopbc>

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS OF SOUTH FLORIDA

**Date:** May 10, 2025

**Event:** **Get Yo(Ga) Green On!**

**Time:** 11:00am

**Location:** Arcana Yoga. 312 23rd St #302, West Palm Beach, FL 33407

**Contact:** Sign up here

Yoga Studio to Get Yo(GA) Green On in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month and the Get Your Green On campaign! Yogi and studio owner Chrissie will be teaching a slow flow vinyasa class focusing on mindfulness which will not only help enhance physical flexibility and strength but also promote a sense of inner calm. This FREE event is inclusive, accessible to yogis of all experience levels and open to the community but space is limited. Bring a yoga mat, water, a towel and wear your favorite shade of green!



**The Source** is The Well of PBC Creative Team's pick of accessible behavioral health resources. Readers can email [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org) with "The Source" in the subject line with their favorite podcasts, books, book clubs, apps, groups, social media accounts, and other suggestions.





# Senior Year Is No Joke

Claudia Kirk Barto and her daughter Marina

By Claudia Barto

We all know that extracurricular activities are crucial for teenagers' behavioral health as they provide a valuable outlet for stress relief, foster social skills, build self-esteem, and develop important life skills like teamwork and leadership, all contributing to improved mental well-being and resilience.

So let me tell you about an amazing young woman—my daughter.

As a little girl, Marina Barto was passionate about the ocean and even wrote a letter to President Obama about the trash she saw volunteering at beach clean ups. As an elementary student, she became a co-founder of the student-led nonprofit Surface 71.

Surface 71 is committed to making a positive impact on our ecosystem through the refusal, reduction, and elimination of single-use plastics. As the two other co-founders were off to begin their college journey, Marina started her freshman year, as the president of Surface 71.

**“As a little girl, Marina Barto was passionate about the ocean and even wrote a letter to President Obama about the trash she saw volunteering at beach clean ups.”**



Making the transition to high school at Alexander W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts after COVID was stressful as was finding additional board members to run the organization. She knew she couldn't do it alone and began creating succession plans by looking for students from other schools and in various grades. Over the years, she has been able to balance her role while maintaining a high GPA in her rigorous courses. She is active in five school clubs and organizations and she participates in three county wide organizations, is involved in three varsity sports - cross country (captain), soccer, track & field - is an altar server at St. Ann Catholic Church and Marina works part time.

It hasn't been easy.

During that time, I was diagnosed with uterine cancer and underwent surgery, chemo and radiation. Marina saw our community rally around our family and support us through my cancer journey but then, suffered the heartbreak of both her grandmother and grandfather passing away within months of each other.

So to say there was a tremendous amount of stress is an understatement!

However, through it all - Marina has had her community. Her family, her friends and all of the organizations, clubs and teams she is involved in.

Now as a high school senior, Marina has had the added challenge of applying to colleges and scholarships. To help center herself and manage stress related to her extracurriculars, Marina uses exercise, cooking and spending time at the beach.

She also tries to set realistic goals, communicate openly with trusted adults like her teachers and coaches.

She is an incredible young woman whose drive inspires me on a daily basis and I am so proud to be her mom.

## Marina has several leadership roles at school:

- **Philanthropy Tank Club Dreyfoos Chapter, Vice President, August 2023 – Present**
- **National Honor Society, Community Outreach Coordinator, March 2024 – Present**
- **Girl-Up Dreyfoos Chapter, Secretary, August 2023 – Present**

Girl Up was founded by the United Nations Foundation as the first-of-its-kind initiative dedicated to supporting adolescent girls' education, health, and safety.

- **Harvest Horizons Dreyfoos 4-H Club, Founder & Co-President, August 2024 – Present**
- **Athletic Honors Society, Member, August 2022 – Present**

## And in the community:

- **4-H Teen Leadership Council**
- **PBCSD Youth Climate Coalition**
- **Keep PBC Beautiful**

## Awards:

- **Keep Florida Beautiful 2024 Outstanding Youth Champion**
- **College Board AP Scholar with Distinction Award 2024**
- **Palm Beach County School District Environmental and Conservation Service Department**
- **Student Achievement Award for Outstanding Service Recipient 2021**

**The Fountain** is the space for youth contributors and youth-related topics.

To contribute, send your article ideas to [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org) with "The Fountain" in the subject line.



# The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department

Celebrates the 10th anniversary of the **Get Your Green On** campaign

& looks forward to continued partnership to grow brighter futures!



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For more information



**Congrats on 10 years!**

**LAFRANCE**  
 PROJECT

# Congratulations!




**Mental Health Scavenger Hunt**  
 May 2025

- Download **GOOSECHASE** app
- Play as a guest or set up free account.
- Find **GYGO HUNT '25** or join code **K45E9Z**
- Create your own team or fly solo.
- Complete missions. Earn points.
- Improve mental health and awareness of local resources.
- Share with others!
- Win random prizes.
- Hunt from May 1st - May 31st.

JOIN US

For more Mental Health Awareness events go to [www.pbcbirthto22.com/gygo/](http://www.pbcbirthto22.com/gygo/)

For Hunt Help contact [Prevention@pbcchc.org](mailto:Prevention@pbcchc.org)





**Our Mission:**  
 We inspire and fund solutions for better health in Palm Beach County through community collaboration.




**Celebrating 10 YEARS**  
 Get Your Green On! #GYGOPBC

[PalmHealthFoundation.org](http://PalmHealthFoundation.org)





## Palm Beach County is proud to celebrate ten years of **Get Your Green On!**

By BeWellPBC

1 in 4 adults and 1 in 5 youth (ages 13 to 18) experience serious mental health concerns. 60% of adults and 50% of youth in need of treatment do not receive help due to limited/no knowledge of their mental health needs, barriers to receiving care, or fear and shame.

Get Your Green On is committed to creating visible support and fostering safe spaces to talk openly about mental health and trauma, so we hope you will join us this year by wearing green and showing your support on social media.

SCAN QR CODE  
TO WATCH



From community events to county-wide campaigns, **The Real** shows us what's really going on in the county.

Submit your event photos or news to [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org).





## The BeWellPBC Effect: Lighting the Way to Behavioral Health and Wellness

The BeWellPBC 2024 Impact Report reflects the collective strides we've taken to enhance mental health and well-being throughout Palm Beach County. Through collaboration, advocacy, and community-driven initiatives, we've expanded access to behavioral health resources, challenged the stigma that at times has been attached, and empowered individuals to take charge of their wellness journey.

Inside our report, you will find key milestones, inspiring stories of impact, and the tangible progress we've made in fostering a stronger, more connected community.

In collaboration with community partners, we continue to embrace our lofty goal:

***"We envision a community in which every person in Palm Beach County feels hopeful, supported, connected, and empowered."***

Together we will continue to shape a future where mental well-being is prioritized for all.

**Join us in this ongoing movement!**

Visit [www.bewellpbc.org](http://www.bewellpbc.org) to explore our journey and discover how you can be part of what's next.

SCAN TO READ  
2024 IMPACT REPORT





*Congratulations to 10 Years of Mental Health  
Awareness and Trauma-Informed Care!*



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*Thank you for your support.  
We value our partners!*







# Empower Healthcare: Breaking Barriers to Build a Healthier Future

Dr. Jingga Oglesby-Brihm, DNP, APRN, ANP-C  
Founder, CEO and Chief Medical Officer | Empower Healthcare, Inc | @EmpowerHC4All

Founded in 2020, Empower Healthcare was created to bridge the gaps in healthcare access, particularly in medically underserved areas.

Our founders, inspired by their work in the Glades community, recognized the pressing need for equitable healthcare resources. Their mission became clear—to meet the community where they are and provide essential healthcare services, ensuring no one is left behind.

At Empower Healthcare, we believe in helping residents of the Glades, “Break the Chains of Past Healthcare Disparities to Reimagine a Healthier Future.”

Our patient-focused approach strengthens the community by increasing access to primary care, women’s health services, chronic disease management, cancer screenings, and HIV prevention and treatment. These services are accessible in-clinic, virtually, or through house calls, making healthcare more convenient and accessible for all.

## Key Programs

### Chronic Disease Management (CDM)

Chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension require continuous care and support. Our CDM program offers an integrated approach to managing these conditions, including screenings, check-ups, treatment coordination, and patient education. By meeting with either a primary care provider (PCP) or a social worker monthly, patients receive personalized guidance to understand and adhere to their treatment plans, improving their quality of life while reducing long-term healthcare costs.

### Women’s Health

Thanks to the Florida Department of Health’s Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection and Prevention Program, we have expanded our services to include pap smears, clinical breast exams, and specialized gynecological referrals. Beyond treatment, we empower women with knowledge about their health, helping them make informed healthcare decisions.





# EMPOWER *Healthcare*

INCORPORATED

## HIV Prevention and Treatment

As an active participant in the End the HIV Epidemic initiative, we provide education, prevention, and treatment services for HIV/AIDS. Our specialized clinic, trained by the American Academy of HIV Medicine, offers PrEP and NPEP services to prevent HIV transmission, with the capacity to initiate rapid-start therapy for those newly diagnosed.

## Community Medical & Outreach Initiatives

We focus on preventing and managing diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and mental health concerns through screenings, referrals, and interactive educational experiences. These initiatives equip individuals with evidence-based, practical strategies for maintaining a healthier lifestyle.

## PEARLS for Older Adults

The Program to Encourage Active Rewarding Lives (PEARLS) helps older adults combat loneliness and depression. Participants engage in one-on-one or group sessions over 6-8 weeks, working with a PEARLS Coach to develop coping strategies and improve overall well-being.

## Cardiovascular Disease Prevention

Early detection is crucial in preventing serious heart conditions. Our QuantaFlo screening for Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD) identifies blood flow blockages in the legs, allowing for early intervention that could be lifesaving.

Empower Healthcare is more than just a clinic—it's a movement toward accessible, equitable, and community-driven healthcare. By prioritizing education, prevention, and personalized care, we are reshaping the future of healthcare for the Glades community and beyond.

491 E Main Street • Pahokee Florida 33476

Phone: 561-867-7850

[www.EmpowerHealthcare4All.org](http://www.EmpowerHealthcare4All.org)



**The Word** is a broad topic space for contributing writers (a.k.a the community) to share your stories of behavioral health or anything self-care related i.e. fitness, health, educational, parenting, hobbies, wellness, etc. To contribute, send your article ideas to [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org) with "The Word" in the subject line.





# To Support and Serve



**NonprofitsFirst**

“Now, more than ever, we are committed to providing support, tools, and guidance to other nonprofit organizations.”

By Claudia Mariaca,  
Director of Development and Marketing | Nonprofits First | @nonprofitsfirstorg

Times of uncertainty are always stressful, especially for nonprofit organizations. One of the biggest questions we face is, “Where is our funding coming from next?” At Nonprofits First, we understand and share the challenges and concerns of the nonprofit community. During these complicated moments, it is crucial to focus on our missions and our goals in serving the community around us.

Now, more than ever, we are committed to providing support, tools, and guidance to other nonprofit organizations. Our education and capacity-building programs, membership benefits, and accreditation services offer many nonprofits the information they need to survive and thrive during difficult times.

Our education programs are designed to equip nonprofit leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complexities of the nonprofit sector. Through workshops, seminars, and online courses, we cover a wide range of topics, from fundraising strategies to governance and compliance. These programs help organizations build their capacity to achieve their missions effectively.

Membership with Nonprofits First comes with a host of benefits, including access to a network of like-minded organizations, exclusive resources, and discounts on our services. Members can connect with peers, share best

practices, and collaborate on initiatives that strengthen the nonprofit community as a whole.

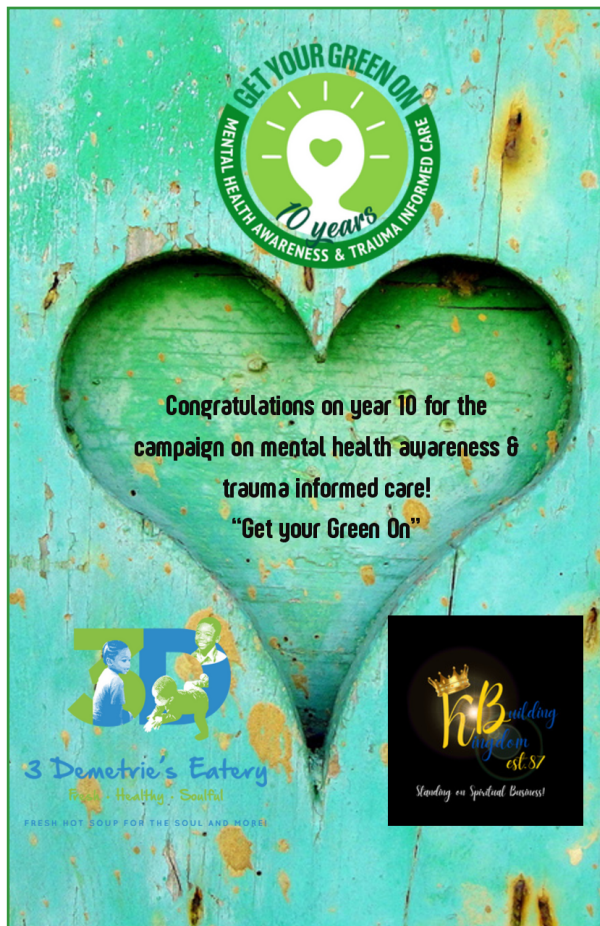
Accreditation is another cornerstone of our support system. Our rigorous accreditation process helps nonprofits demonstrate their commitment to transparency, accountability, and excellence. Accredited organizations gain credibility with funders, donors, and the public, which can lead to increased funding opportunities and greater community trust.

In these challenging times, it is more important than ever for nonprofits to stay focused on their missions and leverage the resources available to them. At Nonprofits First, we are dedicated to helping organizations navigate uncertainty and continue making a positive impact in their communities.

By providing education, membership benefits, and accreditation, we empower nonprofits to not only survive but also thrive, ensuring they can continue to serve those who need them most.

**The Reservoir** is the cultural space for contributors to highlight customs, celebrations, holidays, rituals, and more. To contribute, send your article ideas to [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org) with "The Reservoir" in the subject line.







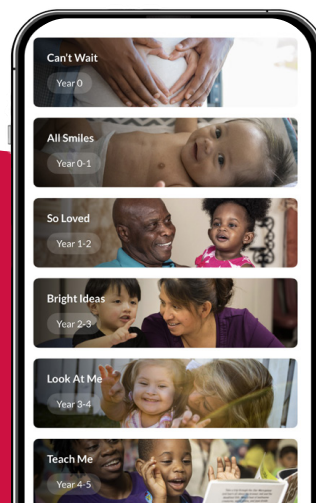
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FOR AN AMAZING 10 YEARS OF  
AMPLIFYING MENTAL HEALTH AND  
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Visit [www.centerforchildcounseling.org](http://www.centerforchildcounseling.org) to learn more.



Center for Child Counseling is a proud supporter of the **Get Your Green On** campaign!

Congratulations to Get Your Green On on 10 years of raising awareness about mental health and promoting trauma-informed care.







“In many ways, community-driven events act as the heartbeat of the Desi experience abroad. They create familiarity in foreign lands, provide comfort in shared traditions, and reinforce values that might otherwise fade with time. Through festivals, music, dance, food, and rituals, we not only keep our culture alive but also introduce it to those outside our community in a welcoming, inclusive way.”

## Bringing the Desi Community Together: The Power of Puja, Functions, and Cultural Events

By Minal Doshi, Wellington Desi Association

As we approach Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, it's a time to reflect on the importance of cultural unity and the role of traditions in fostering a sense of belonging.

For many in the South Asian (Desi) diaspora, organizing pujas, functions, and community events is not just about religious rituals or entertainment—it's about preserving identity, strengthening intergenerational connections, and building a supportive network that feels like home away from home.

The Wellington Desi Association is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to focus on celebrating the joy of Desi festivals and bring the community together.

There are other associations and groups which have a broader charter to celebrate other functions, some regional and some which reach even further. By collaborating, we ensure that the events are scheduled to drive higher participation across multiple weeks, particularly for a few major cultural events.

### Why Organizing Puja and Community Events Matters

For immigrants and second-generation South Asians, life in the diaspora often comes with a struggle to maintain a connection with cultural roots while adapting to a new environment. Traditional gatherings, whether religious,

social, or cultural—serve as bridges between these two worlds. They offer a space where we can celebrate our heritage, educate younger generations, and provide a support system that extends beyond family ties.

In many ways, community-driven events act as the heartbeat of the Desi experience abroad. They create familiarity in foreign lands, provide comfort in shared traditions, and reinforce values that might otherwise fade with time. Through festivals, music, dance, food, and rituals, we not only keep our culture alive but also introduce it to those outside our community in a welcoming, inclusive way.

### The Art of Organizing Puja and Functions

Organizing a successful puja or function requires more than just logistics—it requires a deep understanding of the cultural significance behind the event and a commitment to bringing people together. Here's how we approach it:

#### 1. Choosing the Occasion

From religious celebrations like Diwali, Navratri, and Durga Puja to secular events like Independence Day and cultural festivals, each function serves a purpose. Some are centered around devotion, while others focus on cultural heritage, language, and the arts. We have successfully planned and celebrated Holi and Diwali over the past four years through the Wellington Desi Association.



## 2. Location to Maximize Participation

Since many South Asians in the diaspora don't have easy access to traditional temples or cultural centers, finding a space to hold events can be a challenge. We rent community halls, or county parks or hotels where people can gather comfortably. The setting plays a crucial role in recreating the atmosphere of a Desi celebration.

## 3. Involving the Community

One of the most rewarding aspects of organizing these events is the way it brings people together in the planning process. Volunteers from all age groups pitch in—elders guide the rituals, parents help with logistics, and younger generations contribute their skills, whether in social media promotion, decorations, or performances. The collaboration over the years has strengthened the community bonds. We've had numerous youth and teen volunteers to help with various activities across various events.

## 4. Inclusivity

While these events are deeply rooted in South Asian traditions, we make them accessible to a diverse audience. We ensure that we explain the purpose of the event to those who may not be familiar with them, whether they're young children or non-South Asian attendees. This helps foster cross-cultural appreciation and exchange of values and ideas.

## 5. Blending Tradition with Current Needs

To bridge the second-generational gap, we adapt aspects of our events to resonate with younger audiences. This could mean incorporating fusion music, using digital tools for organizing, or blending traditional prayers with community discussions on contemporary issues affecting the Desi diaspora. We have several local DJs who blend the right type of music to celebrate the occasion just as important as the other aspects of the event.

## 6. Food: A Unifier

Food is a universal unifier in the Desi community. From samosas and biryani to sweets like gulab jamun and rasgulla, cuisine plays a crucial role in our events. The act of cooking together, serving traditional dishes, and sharing meals strengthens the communal spirit. Food also serves as an entry point for those unfamiliar with our traditions—everyone, regardless of background, can appreciate a good plate of Desi food. There are several fantastic Indian restaurants who all from time to time have been part of these events.



## The Impact of These Gatherings

Beyond the celebrations themselves, these functions leave a lasting impact on the community.

- **Strengthening Identity:** For younger generations, participating in pujas and cultural events fosters a sense of pride in their heritage. It gives them a deeper understanding of their roots and a sense of belonging in a world where they often navigate multiple cultural identities. The local temples and places of worship celebrate most religious events and recreate the environment one would experience at home in India.
- **Providing Emotional Support:** The diaspora experience can be isolating, especially for recent immigrants or those without immediate family nearby. These gatherings offer a space to share experiences, seek advice, and create friendships that feel like extended family.
- **Preserving Language and Arts:** Whether through bhajans, classical dance, or poetry recitations, cultural events help keep South Asian languages and art forms alive. They give young artists and performers a platform to showcase their talents and engage with their cultural history. The local temples have children and youth programs where value-based education is imparted, along with music and language classes. There are several small groups in communities which do prayers and bhajans monthly where many turn up to have a prayerful evening and followed by Prasad (consuming the offering to the Lord).
- **Bridging Generational Gaps:** Older generations often worry that their traditions will be lost over time. By involving youth in organizing events, we ensure that these customs are not just sustained but also evolve in ways that remain relevant to new generations. It is amazing to see the youth always show up to drive these events and become future leaders in the community.

**The Depth** digs deep into faith and fellowship at the neighborhood level. Email [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org) with "The Depth" in the subject line for a chance to be featured.



## Why Do You Choose to Live a Life of Service?



### Julie Khanna

I live a life of service because everyone has something to give—be it time, talent, experience, resources, connections, or money—and because someone has helped every one of us along the way. We don't get through this alone.



### Katrina Blackmon

I choose to live a life of service because of my faith and commitment to my family and community to offer my time, talent, and treasure to help uplift and support them on their journey towards dreams/goals. The best use of my time is when I am investing in the relationships around me. I have seen the transformative power of helping people and organizations tell their stories. My passion lies in creating and being a part of the narratives that bring communities closer together. Ultimately, the love of Christ inside of me drives me to continuously evolve, teach, encourage, and serve those around me.



### Twila D. Taylor, PsyD

I have spent my entire professional career as a clinical psychologist working to improve the lives and mental wellbeing of those in my community. I have primarily worked for Palm Beach County, specifically with youth and families. As I reflect back on my choices, not only to become a psychologist, but also to work with groups experiencing disadvantages, I can't help but note my own roots. My sister and I were raised by my mother, who was divorced with 2 children under 4 by the time she was 22. We lived week to week and relied on government assistance to obtain housing. Despite barely making ends meet, my mother instilled in me the belief that I could go to college. It wouldn't be easy, but I could do it. And so I became the first one on my mother's side of the family not only to graduate college, but also obtain a doctorate. My choice to live a life of service is directly correlated with my upbringing. I want to give back to youth and families who are facing adversity far beyond what I ever faced. By leading a life of service, my goal for the youth and families I work with is to instill hope and highlight the resiliency within them, just as my mother showed me how to be resilient and overcome adversity. After all, hope and resiliency are essential for healing.



### Pastor Lawrence

I have been giving back to the community all my life. I have truly enjoyed the changes it has created in the community. You will never know the differences you can create in the lives of people. It is an honor to live a life of service in the Glades because I am from here. I am especially grateful to be able to give back to my community as I understand the needs. The fact is, I genuinely care about the residents in the Glades community.



### Ron Dixon

I choose to live a life of service because I believe in the power of giving back and uplifting others, especially those who need a second chance. Serving my community allows me to create meaningful change and be a source of hope and guidance for those navigating difficult transitions. Through service, I continue to grow as a leader, learning valuable lessons about empathy, resilience, and connection. Most importantly, I serve because I know that small acts of kindness and support can transform lives, just as they have transformed mine.





# Congratulations GYGO 10 Years of Mental Health Awareness & Trauma Informed Care



We envision a community in which every person in Palm Beach County feels hopeful, supported, connected, and empowered.

[www.bewellpbc.org](http://www.bewellpbc.org)





“Finding the right behavioral health provider is an important step in ensuring you get the support and care needed for you or your loved one.”

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# 5 Things to Look for In a Behavioral Health Provider

By Julie Khanna

Sometimes, making the best choices for ourselves is as obvious as purchasing a pair of comfortable shoes, avoiding foods that don’t make us feel good, or taking a long-needed walk to relieve the day’s stress.

But what happens when we are tasked with choosing something not as obvious—like a behavioral health provider to support needs that aren’t as apparent?

Finding the right behavioral health provider is an important step in ensuring you get the support and care needed for you or your loved one. The field of behavioral health is vast, and understanding services can feel overwhelming. Many individuals struggle with this essential healthcare decision, often overwhelmed by credentials, specialties, and treatment philosophies. Common services include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Behavior Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Exposure Therapy. The search for a provider or therapy becomes particularly daunting during periods of personal distress. Whether you’re seeking therapy or a peer, knowing what to look

for can make the process more effective and improve the outcome. Research published by the National Institutes of Health indicates that strong provider-patient relationships correlate with better treatment outcomes, highlighting the importance of finding the right match.

Here are five things to consider when choosing a behavioral health provider.

## 1. Credentials and Specialization Matter

Behavioral health encompasses numerous professional designations—psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, peers, and counselors, each offering unique perspectives and customized treatment. Your specific needs should guide your selection. If being referred by a licensed specialist, speak to them about which discipline is best for your needs. If you are self-referring, ask the behavioral health provider questions about their qualifications and outcomes to see if they have experience supporting your specific needs.



## 2. Therapeutic Approach

Different providers practice varied therapeutic approaches. Cognitive-behavioral therapy focuses on identifying and changing thought patterns, while psychodynamic approaches explore unconscious influences on behavior. Humanistic therapies emphasize personal growth and self-fulfillment.

Ask your provider to explain their methods and discuss how their approach aligns with your goals and preferences. Don't hesitate to ask questions about their techniques to ensure they fit you well.

### 3. Ask yourself: Are you comfortable talking to this person?

Therapy requires vulnerability and trust and it is essential to feel at ease when beginning your behavioral health journey. Cultural congruence, lived experience, and social acceptance are imperative to the provider-patient relationship.

Also, a less clinical but equally important measure is to trust your gut. You want to feel safe sharing protected information and experiences in a way that is received without judgment or bias. If you just feel like it isn't a good fit when pairing with a behavioral health provider, that is a valid reason to find one that is.

## 4. Accessibility and Cost Transparency

Consider the logistics. Can you easily access the provider's services? Take into account location, hours, extended and weekend hours, and whether they take virtual appointments if needed. You will also want to inquire if they take insurance and any other fees. Palm Beach County has many free behavioral health resources. BeWellPBC and 211 are two great resources for finding free resources and services available.

## 5. Ongoing Education

The field of behavioral health is experiencing rapid growth and Palm Beach County is actively investing in the workforce pipeline to sustain the landscape's upward trajectory and meet the community's needs. When choosing a provider, finding someone who stays informed about the latest resources, understands current policies and changes and utilizes the most recent evidence-based practices is essential.

The Well of PBC, the county's largest behavioral health publication, offers valuable insights and news about the industry. Be sure to ask your provider how they stay up-to-date and engaged—hopefully, reading The Well of PBC is one of their go-to resources!

Choosing the right behavioral health provider can significantly impact your recovery and overall health. By considering these five criteria, you can make a more informed and confident decision.

Remember, it's okay to try a few providers before finding the one that feels like the best fit for you.

## 10 Questions to Ask your Behavioral Health Provider:

1. What is your area of specialization?
2. Do you have additional or specialized training in working with youth (if applicable)?
3. Do you have experience working with individuals who have similar concerns or challenges as mine?
4. What does progress in therapy look like, and how do you measure it?
5. What is a typical session like, and what can I expect as we work together?
6. How do you stay up-to-date on current behavioral health literature, evidence based practices and community resources?
7. Do you provide treatment plans or goals?
8. How do you handle crises or urgent situations?
9. What are your thoughts on medication management (if applicable)?
10. What's your policy on confidentiality?

**The Providers** is a space for providers, practitioners, thought leaders, and systems change leaders to share.

To contribute, send your article ideas to [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org) with "For The Providers" in the subject line.





"Mental health matters for everyone, and support should be available to all youth, no matter their circumstances."

## Building Bridges: Youth Services and Justice Department Unite for Mental Health Awareness Month

By Brittany Grimshaw, PsyD

Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow | Palm Beach County Youth Services Department  
| Residential Treatment and Family Counseling Division | @PBCYSD

In May 2025, a group of clinical psychology post-doctoral fellows from the Youth Services Department Education & Training Center is joining forces with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to provide important mental health education to young people involved in the justice system.

This initiative aligns with Mental Health Awareness Month and its "Get Your Green On" campaign, representing a vital move toward trauma-informed care in juvenile justice settings. The training program breaks away from traditional classroom methods and creates an engaging atmosphere for young people to explore mental health topics relevant to their lives.

The goal is to make mental health less intimidating and build trust between participants and mental health professionals by meeting youth where they are.

What sets this program apart is its focus on practical, real-world applications.

Participants learn how to identify common mental health challenges, understand the effects of trauma, and develop healthy coping strategies. Most importantly, they discover how to find support services and recognize when to seek help. By launching this initiative during Mental Health Awareness Month, the message is clear: mental health matters for

everyone, and support should be available to all youth, no matter their circumstances.

The program, coordinated by DJJ Gang Prevention Coordinator Marcia Bahia, MS, and Randi Taylor from Palm Beach Youth Academy, brings together a talented team of post-doctoral fellows: Sara Barr, PsyD; Amber Snedden, PsyD; and Brittany Grimshaw, PsyD. Their combined expertise ensures that participants receive high-quality, evidence-based mental health education.

As communities across the country wrestle with youth mental health issues, this partnership between mental health experts and juvenile justice services offers a promising model for integrated support systems. It shows how removing institutional barriers can create better pathways to mental health awareness and healing for vulnerable young people.

**Beyond The Couch** highlights non-traditional mental health outlets and resources in Palm Beach County. To contribute, send your article ideas to [thewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:thewell@bewellpbc.org) with "Beyond the Couch" in the subject line.



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**Congratulations, GYGO!**  
Here's to a decade of championing  
**Mental Health Awareness & Trauma-Informed Care!**

**GET YOUR GREEN ON**  
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS & TRAUMA INFORMED CARE  
10 years

Unity3 Palm Beach's desire is to passionately assist sole proprietary owners, small to medium-sized businesses, and nonprofits to create, inform, and execute the narrative to their individual stories.

"Let us do the Work,  
to help you work your Vision"

**Unity3 Palm Beach**  
Awareness Engagement Collaboration  
Inspire Impact Ignite

**Katrina Blackmon**  
kblackmon@unity3palmbeach.com

**Congratulations**

on a decade of  
**Getting Your Green On**  
in Palm Beach County!  
#YouAreFlawless

**GET YOUR GREEN ON**  
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS & TRAUMA INFORMED CARE  
10 years

**The Flawless Foundation**

**HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY GYGO!**

The Get Your Green On campaign has touched thousands of lives over the past 10 years.

Hundreds of events, trainings, and activities have helped connect our communities and unite us for  
**Mental Health for All!**

Congratulations from  
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## United for Brighter Futures Alliance Celebrates 10th Get Your Green On Campaign

The GYGO campaign highlights a key priority that youth and young adults elevated in the new Youth Master Plan 2.0: **Mental Health.**

On February 18, 2025, Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures hosted its 8th Annual Task Force Meeting at Westgate Recreation and Community Center. The highlight of the evening was the unveiling of the Youth Master Plan 2.0, a culmination of 11 community conversations across Palm Beach County (PBC) with youth ages 12-22, parents, service providers and community members. Attendance exceeded 200 participants, with over 100 youth and teens representing over 30 agencies, high schools and various communities within Palm Beach County, young adults, parents, community leaders, agency representatives and system partners.

The evening kicked off with dinner and a warm welcome by Dr. Lisa Williams-Taylor of Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County and Elisa Cramer of Palm Beach County Youth Services Department, representing the two backbone agencies of the Birth to 22 collective impact initiative. After a

brief recap of the community conversation and data collection processes, participants were introduced to the new Youth Master Plan 2.0 ("YMP 2.0") and the Action Areas resulting from the input of more than 700 young people: **Mental Health, Economic Stability, Educational Achievement and Safety.**

To help explain the importance of B22 involvement, several attendees gave individual testimonials: Judge Kathleen Kroll, Administrative Judge, Juvenile Division, 15th Judicial Circuit; Julie Seaver, Compass Community Center Executive Director; Mindy Hanken, Pace Center for Girls Executive Director; Ms. Gloria, Pace Center Parent; and Madinah, a Pace Center Youth. After this motivational moment, all 180 participants broke out into three discussion groups, taking a deep dive into Mental Health/Safety, Economic Stability/Safety, and Educational Achievement/Safety. Each group was tasked with creating two shared goals to serve as the driving force of our collaborative approach to addressing complex issues surrounding the action areas.



After much discussion and brainstorming, several aspirational goals materialized, including:

### **Economic Stability**

- Provide free bus passes to youth ages 12-22.
- Host annual job fairs for high school students and recent graduates.
- Collectively commit to securing jobs for 50 young people each year.

### **Mental Health**

- Address the root causes of mental health crises among young people through peer specialist programs, located support in the communities where youth live, and universal parent education that progresses as the youth progresses.
- Initiate coordinated mental wellness activities that are planned by youth, for youth, in ways that resonate with youth.

### **Educational Achievement**

- Enhance educational support and resources by offering more PSAT/SAT preparation programming and increasing one-on-one tutoring for coursework.
- Foster safe and inclusive learning environments by creating meditation sports during lunch/free periods to manage stress and reduce classroom distractions (limiting cell phone usage).
- Enhance career and life skills education by increasing paid internship and job training opportunities while establishing more career programs within high schools.
- Address mental health in schools by implementing weekly mental health programs and expanding access to counseling services for students.
- Boost parental involvement by scheduling activities during hours convenient to working parents and offer parent-child communication workshops,
- Leverage technology to enhance learning experiences and utilize digital assignment tracking systems.
- Create a system where students can attend any/all schools in the K-12 system.
- Expand to include all schools in The School District of Palm Beach County.

What's next? Young people, parents, community members, youth-serving agencies, businesses, system partners and funders are invited to serve on the Action Teams to help bring these goals and objectives to fruition. By learning together, aligning and integrating our actions, we can achieve an impactful and sustainable change for our young people in Palm Beach County.

**“Young people, parents, community members, youth-serving agencies, businesses, system partners and funders are invited to serve on the Action Teams to help bring these goals and objectives to fruition.”**



For more information: Go to <https://pbcbirthto22.com>, or email [PBC-Birthto22@pbc.gov](mailto:PBC-Birthto22@pbc.gov), or scan the QR code below.







"Today I am living like I never dreamed possible and if God could do it for me, He can do it for anyone."

## From Being an Inmate to Living My Best Life

By Evert Doyle | Co-Director | The Anchor House

**M**y name is Evert Doyle and I'm 56 years old. I've been to prison four times due to a serious drug addiction that had me do things that normally I would never do.

June 20, 2008 was the day I decided I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. I was in prison serving an 11 year sentence when I called out to God and begged Him to help me get off drugs and become the man I didn't know how to be.

I was using drugs in prison just like on the streets and I just didn't know how to stop.

God heard me that day and from that moment, I did everything I could to better myself. I went to the chapel for every church service, attended A.A. and N.A. meetings and also signed up for GED classes.

Seven years later on November 15, 2015, I was released from prison and had earned my GED.

I signed up for a Men's Transition Program called The Anchor House in Lake Worth, got a job working for Regal Paint Benjamin Moore and got involved in a great local

church called Common Grounds Church in Lake Worth.

I attended Men's Bible Study every week and got involved in ministry work, so I could help others. After staying at Anchor House for 20 months, I was promoted at my job and was even able to buy my own home after five years being out of prison!

The new year ushered in new blessings and I became the new Co-Director of The Anchor House. Now, I get to help lead men coming out of prison to become productive members of society.

I also go back into numerous prisons to share with the "Men In Blue" how God has transformed my life and give them hope that if a once hopeless drug addict can change his life, then so can anyone.

I never used drugs again from that day I cried out to God sitting in an unairconditioned 100 degree cell.

I didn't know how I would do it but God made a way!

Today I am living like I never dreamed possible and if God could do it for me, He can do it for anyone.





"Mental health is our ability to live fully, engage with others, and respond to challenges."

Photo ©KPho

The Department of Behavioral and Mental Health In the School District of Palm Beach County supports Get Your Green On in 2025! Students, families and staff are encouraged to highlight the importance of mental health and wellness during the month of May, Mental Health Awareness and Trauma Informed Care month.

We believe that:

**Mental health is our ability to live fully, engage with others, and respond to challenges.** Youth mental health can be understood as how they (youth) relate to others (social), how they feel (emotions), and how they act (behavior). It connects to resiliency (the ability to bounce back after tough times) and is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

**It's OK to be OK. It's OK to not be OK.** It's OK to ask for help. Oftentimes young people are OK. They are managing their relationships, emotions, thoughts and behaviors. Sometimes they may struggle with how they relate to others, managing their emotions or managing their behaviors. When this happens, it is OK to ask for help.

**Schools have highly trained and skilled professionals in place to support student mental health.** Any parent with concerns about the social, emotional or behavioral well-being of their child should contact their child's school.

Schools and communities are encouraged to Get Our Green On together by:

- Wearing green on May 15, 2025, and recognizing the School Behavioral Health Professionals for the unique contributions they make to support mental wellness.
- Implement mental health awareness programs and teach mental wellness lessons.
- Implement brief wellness practices that are provided for teachers, students, employees, and parents in May and throughout the year.

During Mental Health Awareness and Trauma-Informed Care Month, and every day of the year, remember, "It's OK to be OK. It's OK to not be OK. It's OK to ask for help."





**WE ARE A**

## Palm Beach County-wide behavioral health and wellness initiative

If you are a resident, community member, provider, business, organization or system leader that shares our passion to change the status quo, take action and Join the Movement!

To learn more visit [www.bewellpbc.org](http://www.bewellpbc.org) or  
contact us at [bewell@bewellpbc.org](mailto:bewell@bewellpbc.org).

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