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# Our West Side Story

A LEGACY OF CARING A TRADITION OF RESPECT



SUMMER 2021



## MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**May Dugan Center** is remaining vigilant in providing a safe place for life saving programming that meets the needs of the many vulnerable people in our community. This is especially important for people who need in-person clinical services. Our *Mental Health Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)* as well as the *Substance Use Disorder IOP* began in-person group sessions on July 6th because we know this pandemic has added much stress and strain to people facing mental illness and addiction.

While we are looking forward to welcoming back all of our clients, staff, and community members, we are committed to doing so with everyone's safety in mind. 90% of our staff have self-reported they are vaccinated, but for clients and community members who may not be vaccinated, we will continue to wear masks. We will continue to hold drive-thru food distributions, deliver food to people who are at risk of illness, and provide walk up by appointment food distribution for people who lack transportation— all to ensure variants of the COVID-19 virus are not spread through *May Dugan Center* programming.

**None of this is even possible without the support of you!**

Supporting *May Dugan Center* is supporting your community. By donating to *May Dugan Center*, you are actively helping to remove barriers for people who face poverty and social disparities. *May Dugan Center* is a welcoming, safe space for all people— and no one in need is ever turned away. Help ensure that's always the case by supporting *May Dugan Center*.

In Gratitude,

Rick A. Kemm, MNO  
Executive Director



*Johnson & Johnson*

## VACCINES AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION: A PERFECT MATCH

It took a little creative thinking, but **May Dugan Center** and Neighborhood Family Practice found a way to vaccinate people where it was convenient. "It makes sense to bring the service to people who need it most," said Rick Kemm, *May Dugan Center's* Executive Director. "In collaboration with Neighborhood Family Practice, we offered the Johnson & Johnson vaccine during our May and June food distributions."

42 people received the vaccine, like Fernandez who wanted to make sure he and his family were protected. "My mom and I are around my kids all the time," said Fernandez. I don't want to get them sick." He continued, "It was great cause I don't need to come back in 30 days," referring to the one shot dose of Johnson & Johnson.



Graduates alongside supporting friends and family celebrated with great big smiles!

Graduates, including our youth, gathered together beaming with pride!

A beautiful day worthy of congratulatory celebration!

"In diversity there is beauty and there is strength."  
— Maya Angelou

Nearly 20 students achieved ESOL certificates!

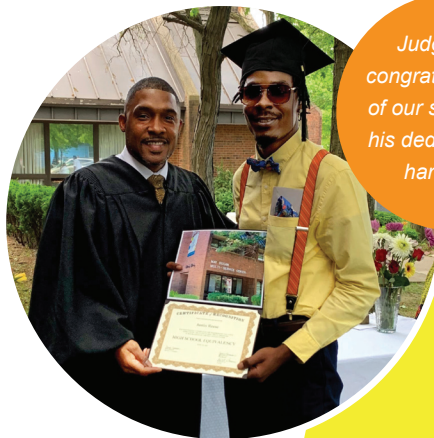
## IT WAS A GRADUATION LIKE NO OTHER

### Education Center Celebrates its Students' accomplishments

The students came to their graduation celebration dressed with big smiles. Surrounded by proud families and proud **May Dugan Center** teachers, 30 students were recognized for their achievements. Judge Michael Ryan, Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, Juvenile Division presided over the celebration.

It had been a tough year and achieving their GED certificate, English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) certificates and citizenship was no small feat. "In 2020, Education Resource Center programming had to go virtual," said Sarah Edelman, Education Resource Center Director. Edelman continued, "many students did not have wifi, computers, or the space needed to study. We provided the public wifi at *May Dugan Center's* parking lot so that our students could work on their lessons, learn how to access zoom and apply for jobs. Our teachers and students pulled together to devise a virtual learning environment that supported students and job seekers in achieving their goals— even in the face of these insurmountable challenges."

**All together 30 students were recognized for achieving their goals. 10 received their full GED certificate and 19 achieved ESOL certificates and one student was recognized for earning his US Citizenship.**



Judge Ryan congratulating one of our students for his dedication and hard work.

## JUDGE MICHAEL RYAN GIVES HEARTFELT COMMENCEMENT SPEECH

Judge Ryan did not have an easy childhood. He knew the trauma of a family challenged by addiction, poverty and hunger. As a child, going to the library was a reprieve where he would try to "read every single book that they had in there — to find a way to escape from reality."<sup>1</sup>

In speaking to the students graduating from the **May Dugan Center's Education Resource Center**, Judge Ryan is able to relate to the barriers and injustices they face. The students knew they were listening to someone who understood their challenges and who could relate to their realities.

The Judge's message to our students: do not let society define you. Go out and break down the boundaries of your frame.

Congratulations to all of our students for their hard work. We are proud of each of you and wish you success in breaking down the boundaries of your frame.

1. Source: <https://www.npr.org/2017/02/24/516834391/a-difficult-childhood-inspires-a-dad-to-do-better>



Please consider supporting the **May Dugan Center** through a **monetary donation**. Your donation goes directly to helping people enrich their lives and communities— just like our *Education Resource Center* graduates. Go to [maydugancenter.org/donate](https://maydugancenter.org/donate) to make a donation that will make a great impact in your community.

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## MAY DUGAN CENTER'S MENTAL HEALTH INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAM (IOP) HELPS PEOPLE STRUGGLING TO FIND BALANCE

**May Dugan Center's** Mental Health IOP "helps people with mental illness move the needle from suffering from their illness to living with it", said Samantha Brown, LPC, NCC, the program's mental health therapist. Brown continued, "Mental illness can be overwhelming. When unmanaged it can lead to hospitalizations, and negatively impact daily life."

With funding from The Three Arches Foundation, The Mental Health IOP at *May Dugan Center* was designed to help people diagnosed with severe mental illnesses to find balance. Because there are so few Mental Health IOPs in our community, hospitalization is the usual route for care. Hospitalization keeps the patient safe, but it also removes them from their loved ones and community— making re-entry into the community difficult.

"Non-hospital day treatment programs are rare to come by which is what makes this program unique. Our program allows clients to remain a part of their communities and continue their daily routines while receiving treatment," says Brown. "Our approach gives our clients the ability to utilize their newly gained skills in real time while receiving support from mental health professionals and their support group, who are living similar truths".

"This program helps people manage their illnesses, communicate their needs, and take back control of their lives."

~ Samantha Brown, LPC, NCC

## Success Story!

Living his truth is a recent graduate of the program, Kal. He came to May Dugan with severe mental illness, self-harming behavior and substance use disorder. After completing the intensive program, Kal now maintains gainful employment, a new relationship, lives on his own and is maintaining his sobriety. Kal believes that if he continues to use the skills he learned in Day Treatment, his success in maintaining his life will continue.

Both Roberta and Doug will be sorely missed by the May Dugan Center family!



## HAPPY RETIREMENT TO ROBERTA AND DOUG!

After a combination of over 50 years serving people, the **May Dugan Center** celebrated the retirement of Roberta Taliaferro, Director of Behavioral Health Services and Doug Vest, Case Manager and Outreach Worker for people living with HIV/AIDS. Their decisions to retire brought many staff members together to celebrate two people who gave much of themselves to their clients as part of the *May Dugan Center* staff for many years. Wishing them well in their future plans, we will always remember that they made a difference to so many people who needed their skills and assistance.

DID YOU KNOW

**May Dugan Center's** Continuing Our Commitment to the Community capital campaign will add group therapy rooms, telehealth counseling rooms, and modern in-person therapy rooms. The result will be a facility that will enhance programming to meet the complex needs of 225 more people each year needing mental health counseling and addiction services. Please consider donating to our campaign by going to [maydugancenter.org/campaign](https://maydugancenter.org/campaign).