



*Employee
Excellence*

AWARDS 2026

May 20, 2026 | Alhambra Ballroom

Honoring Longevity and Success



Rising Ground Employee Excellence Evening

ARRIVAL & RED CARPET INTERVIEWS

WELCOME & DINNER IS SERVED

ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2026 LONGEVITY HONOREES

2026 EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENTS

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CLOSING REMARKS

Red carpet & audience
segments hosted by:





5 Years of Service

Alisha Izquierdo - JJI Functional Family Therapy

Ashley Dove - Enhanced Family Foster Care

Ashley Samuels-Johnson - IDD

Berioska Reyes - Passage of Hope

Betsy Pilarte - Passage of Hope

Candy Guillen - Passage of Hope

Carmen Marie Soto Diaz - Paths to Success

Charisma Baez - Parent Advocacy Initiative

Charlene Flynn - IDD

Christine Crawford - IDD

Clarimar Capellan - Paths to Healing

Denise Derrick-Thomas - Finance

Denise James - IDD

Eddie Delgado - Passage of Hope

Emely Marie Martinez - Paths to Healing

Faith Grant - IDD

Fauzia Shaibu - RTC

Giovanna Rodriguez - Passage of Hope

Gladys Amofah - IDD





5 Years of Service

Glenny Badia - Passage of Hope

Jacqueline Gary - Finance

Jordan Augustus - Enhanced Family Foster Care

Kay-Ann Nelson - IDD

Kedisha Forrester - Runaway Homeless Youth

Kevin Quinn Marchman - Paths to Success

Leon Pryce - IDD

Lixmel Diaz-Morrobel - Passage of Hope

Moya Rodney - IDD

Nana Serwaa - Enhanced Family Foster Care

Nga Bui - Paths to Healing

Nissan Hill - IDD

Okenya Haylett - Parent Advocacy Initiative

O'Wayne Dalhouse - IDD

Paul Mieszkowicz - Finance

Purificacion (Ping) Maquiran - Finance

Raul Capcha - Passage of Hope

Raymond Wilkins - RTC

Rosheena Riley - IDD





5 Years of Service

Scottie Coleman - Justice For Youth and Family

Shamaine O.A. Sears - Paths to Healing

Shanice Sinclair - Enhanced Family Foster Care

*Shannon McCarroll - Atlas Functional Family
Therapy*

Tiffany Brissett - Enhanced Family Foster Care

Tiffany Cooper - Enhanced Family Foster Care

Tracy-Ann Skeen - IDD

Tyrice Graham - Justice For Youth and Family

Unique Gadson - Enhanced Family Foster Care

Valerie Torres - Passage of Hope

Verina Walker - IDD

Veronica Castillo - Family Resource Center

Victoria Estrella - Passage of Hope

Willie Anderson - Justice For Youth and Family

Xiaodan Li - Finance

Yessenia Valdes - Early Head Start

Zuleima Padilla - Passage of Hope



10 Years of Service

Aggie Stefanowicz - Behavior Health

Allescya Blakeney - Health Services

Aneka Mathieson - SILP

Awilda Ortiz - Passage of Hope

Christina Galletti - Center Based Respite

*Dana Justine Russell - Performance Evaluation
Management*

Danielle Naghi - Paths to Success

Danielle Lockley - Runaway Homeless Youth

Egdabel Alvarado - Preventive Services

Erik Bishop - RTC

Eulex Sampson - Enhanced Family Foster Care

Jacqueline Morel - Passage of Hope

Janitzabeth Matos - Passage of Hope

Jeze Erazo - Programs

Karla Hernandez - Passage of Hope





10 Years of Service

Leony Ramirez - IDD

Lorenzo Darnell Douglas - IDD

Luis A. Diaz - IDD

Luis Santana - Enhanced Family Foster Care

Marcel Suarez - Finance

MaryAnn Van Nostrand - Paths to Success

Migdalia Bernardez - IDD

Nancy Hruska - Institutional Advancement

Neville R Roberts - IDD

Rohee Ramnath - My Next Move

Samuel Loza - RTC

Sandra Yamileth Rivas - Passage of Hope

Thereah Ivey - Enhanced Family Foster Care

Travonya Chambers - IDD

Valerie Charmaine Maragh Dacosta - IDD





15 Years of Service

Ade Edwards - IDD

Erika Lyn Miller-Bridges - Paths to Success

Jameka Trice - IDD

Kadiatou Diallo - IDD

Lisa Diaz - IDD

Pansy Williams - IDD

Rozalia Fertil - IDD

Shawn Canty - Runaway Homeless Youth

Victor Combay - IDD

West Cruz - RTC

Yaneik Pennicott - IDD





20 Years of Service

Kerryann Hinds - IDD

Maria Lucio - REIO

Vonder Akinduyi - Enhanced Family Foster Care



25 Years of Service

Devery Gillenwater - Runaway Homeless Youth

John Agyeman - IDD

Michael Keane - Justice For Youth and Family

Mojisola Obadeyi - Enhanced Family Foster Care

Sandra P Barker - IDD

Shirletta Gordon - RTC

Tamika Hamilton - RTC





30 Years of Service

Brian White - RTC
Sharmin Jones - RTC

35 Years of Service

Christine Questel-Leon - RTC

40 Years of Service

Angela Boothe - Human Resources



Employee Excellence Award Recipients



Impact: Claudia Harrison, IDD

Medical Support Professional

“Claudia’s impact at Rising Ground is both measurable and deeply personal. She has supported countless individuals with consistency, compassion, and a strong commitment to person-centered care. Her presence brings calm, reassurance, and continuity for both staff and individuals.”



Innovation: Edwin Grullon, Training

Training Specialist

“Working with Edwin is always an opportunity to explore new ideas and push boundaries, often grounded in the simple but powerful question: ‘How can we do this better?’ He is thoughtful, proactive, and deeply invested in the work.”



Accountability: Rosa Robles, Behavioral Health

Mental Health Clinician

“One of Rosa’s most impressive achievements is her mastery of the balance between clinical excellence and operational necessity. She is not only a vital part of our team’s culture but a vital driver of our long-term sustainability.”



Employee Excellence Award Recipients



Connections: Luz Holder, Maternal-Infant Health

Family Support & Resource Specialist

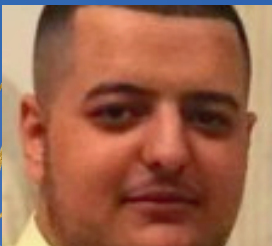
“Luz consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to build meaningful relationships with the community and the families we serve. She takes the time to truly connect and understand their needs, always looking for ways to support them beyond the program.”



Tenacity: Gabrielle Norris, EFFC

Case Planner


“Gabrielle’s natural state is orderly, focused, and prepared. Between her steady presence, sharp instincts, and just the right dash of humor, she has become someone the unit deeply relies on and genuinely enjoys working with.”



Service: Andrew Moubarek, HR

HR Coordinator

“Andrew has been an exceptional addition to the HR team. He consistently leads the way on key HR initiatives, is willing to help in any situation, and seeks every opportunity to put a smile on the face of his colleagues.”



Employee Excellence Award Recipients



Respect: Karlha Del Jesus, Preventive

FFTCW Interventionist

“Karlha has been a helpful peer to work with and always helps when needed. She has come on visits with me when I had issues with clients and even checked on a client for me when I was out sick.”



On Task/Achievement: Samantha Humphrey,

RTC Child Care Counselor

“Samantha consistently demonstrates the ability to identify concerns before they escalate. She not only minimizes crises, but often prevents potential crises altogether, which has proven to be an invaluable asset to our unit.”



Safety: Breyona Johnson, Paths to Success

RAPP Coordinator

“Breyona exemplifies confidence, assertiveness, kindness, enthusiasm, empathy, and warmth, all of which come together to create an intangible sense of safety around her.”



Employee Excellence Award Recipients



Responsibility: Tisha Reynolds, Ames

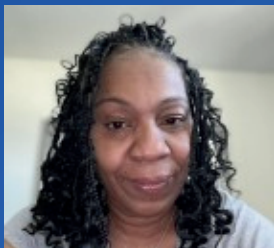
Head Teacher

“Ms. Tisha is the epitome of responsibility. She ensures that all teachers are prepared and ready for the day. She is always willing to cover teacher breaks and consistently stays late to assist with planning. Additionally, Ms. Tisha has counseled two of our teachers through their student teaching, helping them achieve their master’s degrees.”





Manager of the Year



Frontline Manager - Darnell Lovelace, JYF

Assistant Resident Manager

“Darnell’s consistent pursuit of excellence, teamwork, and professionalism has strengthened the organization. It is inspiring to see how her efforts continue to set a benchmark for others to follow. Both staff and youth love seeing her in the facility and she always brings a different kind of energy when she is around.”



Middle Manager - Sampson Mapp, RHY

Assistant Director

“Sampson leads from the front, ensuring a safe, structured, and supportive environment where you feel seen, respected, and held accountable. His leadership is hands-on and rooted in a genuine commitment to second chances and better futures for the youth we serve.”



Manager of the Year



Program Manager - Jovan Reyes, POH

Director of Clinical Services

“Jovan has shown great commitment, responsibility and efficiency towards her responsibilities and always made herself available to assist, respond and collaborate for any needs with her team and program management, PEM and external parties. Jovan's expertise and willingness to support her team/program have impacted program operation/practices tremendously.”



Admin Manager - Makido Scott, IT

Senior Director

“Makido leads by example. He is observed to have a strong relationship with his team and leads with calmness. His team are team players and communicate with respect. IT is what keeps us running and able to allow us to do our jobs. We appreciate you Makido!”

Employee of the Year



Admin EOY: Chris McEntree, Finance

Billing Specialist

“Chris consistently goes above and beyond, demonstrating a strong dedication to ensuring that all tasks are completed accurately and timely. His willingness to extend himself reflects a deep sense of ownership and responsibility for the work we do.”



Program EOY: Craig Philip, Early Head Start

Family Advocate

“Craig demonstrates a deep commitment to treating all families, children, and colleagues with dignity, empathy, and professionalism. He approaches every interaction with cultural sensitivity and an understanding of the diverse backgrounds of the families he serves, ensuring they feel heard, valued, and supported.”



Program EOY: Malaysia Wesley, RRH

Lead Youth Peer Advocate

“Malaysia consistently demonstrates a level of dedication, professionalism, and commitment to service that truly sets her apart. She approaches her responsibilities with a solutions-oriented mindset and an unwavering commitment to getting the job done.”



Thank You!

- *2026 Longevity Honorees*
 - *2026 Employee Excellence Award Recipients*
 - *Alhambra Ballroom*
 - *DJ Good*
 - *HR Department & Employee Experience Planning Teams*
 - *Alan Mucatel - CEO, Rising Ground*
 - *Dishon Ahing - Director of Community Outreach &*
 - *Engagement Rising Ground Board of Directors*
- Rising Ground Marketing Department*
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Employee Excellence

