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MCCOY Hires New Staff to Focus on Supporting Youth Workers & Youth-Serving Organizations

Working with youth is one of the most important jobs there is. Professional youth workers help young people become healthy and productive adolescents and grow into adulthood by focusing on assets and building caring relationships. For over fifteen years, Marion County Commission on Youth (MCCOY) has provided a wide range of learning and networking opportunities for youth development professionals and youth-serving organizations. To continue drive this effort MCCOY has hired Shaunette Byers, Community Initiatives Coordinator, to lead both the Learning Network and Youth Program Quality Improvement/Assessment (YPQA/I) initiatives.

The core priorities of MCCOY's Learning Network are to enhance the skills and knowledge of local youth workers, to foster greater connections among the local youth service field, and to provide opportunities to reflect on and expand the developmental opportunities for youth in our community. The Learning Network provides low-cost learning opportunities in an environment that encourages participants to share their own experiences and knowledge, including the Advancing Youth Development curriculum, workshops, monthly youth-worker meetings and special learning events like conferences and forums.

In addition, MCCOY offers YPQA/I, a research-tested approach to measuring the quality of the youth experience and promoting the creation of environments that tap into the most important resource of any youth program – a young person's motivation to attend and engage. In this approach, MCCOY leverages tools created by the Center for Youth Program Quality, a joint venture of the Forum for Youth Investment and High/Scope. After facilitating internal and external program assessments, MCCOY helps participating organizations analyze the results and create a plan for quality improvement. MCCOY supports implementation of these improvement plans through training and technical support.

Shaunette Byers, a South Bend, IN native, has dedicated her life's work to serving others through a multitude of avenues. For more than 10 years she has worked for non-profit community-based organizations. In 2002 she graduated from Indiana University-Bloomington with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Telecommunications and in 2007 she received her Master of Science degree in Community Psychology from Martin University. While in her undergraduate program, in addition to working with youth at the local Boys and Girls Club, Ms. Byers served as an Associate Instructor for the Telecommunications Department at Indiana University.

After spending some time gaining experience at WTHR Channel 13 and various youth serving agencies including the Boys and Girls Clubs of Indianapolis, Bloomington and St. Joseph County, Shaunette served as the Teen Program Coordinator for the Forest Manor Multi Service Center. She then went on to become a part of an innovative movement of secondary schools dedicated to developing students' personal qualities, social reasoning, and communication skills through real world learning. As College Transition Counselor at Indianapolis Metropolitan High School, one of the Big Picture Learning schools, she not only developed applied curricula and programming geared toward preparing students for post secondary education, but also directed the school's student leadership program. Most recently, Ms. Byers worked for the national Big Picture Learning Network as the High School to College Coordinator for the Alternative High School Initiative (AHSI).

MCCOY (Marion County Commission on Youth) is the youth services intermediary for central Indiana whose mission is to champion the positive development of youth through leadership on key issues and support of the youth worker community. MCCOY's vision is that every young person in central Indiana has opportunities to thrive, learn, engage and contribute.

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