



RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTER



Support Today. Success Tomorrow.

LOOKING FORWARD

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

CLINICAL SERVICES

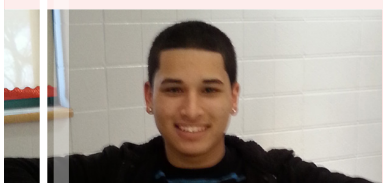
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS

SUCCESS IN ACTION



defining and finding success

At Leake & Watts, we understand that success means something different for each individual we support. Each youth comes to our RTC from a unique background with a unique set of challenges. We work with youth and their families to set individualized goals, define success, and provide the resources and the support to make it a reality.



When **Christian** graduated from The Biondi School in 2016, he was excited to go onto SUNY, where he is now studying new media. For Christian, though, this “new beginning” wasn’t his first. By the time he came to our RTC in 2013, he had already faced tremendous challenges. At age 9, Christian first saw a psychiatrist and was hospitalized for the first time at 10. He spent much of his early adolescence in and out of mental health treatment facilities and lived for



RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTER



a supportive environment
for all-around growth

The Leake & Watts Residential Treatment Center provides 24-hour care to ensure youth, ages 12-21, have the support and resources to overcome any number of challenges so they can grow personally, emotionally, and academically to thrive. At our scenic 33-acre campus on the Hudson River, we offer a wide range of academic, therapeutic, and clinical supports to help youth move beyond being defined by serious challenges to a life full of opportunities and hope.



Our enriched, structured program assists youth with emotional disorders, developmental disabilities, challenging behaviors and those who have been abused, neglected, or exposed to trauma.

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leakeandwatts.org

  @LeakeAndWatts

Leake & Watts is a leading nonprofit social service organization providing the most vulnerable children, adults, and families in the Greater New York City area, with the resources and skills needed to rise above adversity and positively direct their lives.

Focus areas include education, foster care, support for at-risk and court-involved youth and families, group residences for adults with disabilities, mental health, and health services. Founded in 1831, Leake & Watts has been at the forefront of evolving community needs and is now a positive force in the lives of more than 11,000 individuals annually. In 2014, Leake & Watts was honored as the Gold Winner of the New York Community Trust Nonprofit Excellence Awards.

For more information, visit leakeandwatts.org.



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a supportive environment for all-around growth

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Our enriched, structured program assists youth with emotional disorders, developmental disabilities, challenging behaviors and those who have been abused, neglected, or exposed to trauma.

Youth attend The Biondi Middle & High School on campus, where they receive full academic support as they recover class credits or engage in a full academic program - from a regents curriculum to one of several vocational programs. Outside school hours, educational and recreational activities, coupled with clinical services, develop each youth's ability to participate fully in the community and to return to a less restrictive environment as quickly as possible. In our therapeutic setting, residents learn effective problem solving, healthy coping skills, and adaptive behaviors. Self-esteem is enhanced, as is their ability to trust others and relate positively to the world.



Families are encouraged to engage fully in residents' lives, both serving an integral role in treatment planning and process, through family participation in campus activities, and visits home with door-to-door transportation for youth.

We provide youth with the [support today](#) to ensure they are prepared and inspired for [success tomorrow](#).

We build on each youth's strengths to create strong foundations for future success.

At the Leake & Watts Residential Treatment Center (RTC), we offer youth and their families a wide range of supports to help youth overcome various challenges — psychiatric and emotional disorders, intellectual / developmental disabilities, challenging behaviors and histories of abuse, neglect, and/or trauma — to redirect their lives. In addition to the academic supports at our Biondi School, we offer a multitude of therapeutic and clinical supports; opportunities for therapeutic recreation; community service activities and partnerships; life-skills and professional development; and unique opportunities that expose youth to new experiences, bring youth together to bond, increase self-confidence, and help youth envision brighter futures.

We work together with youth, parents, and others involved in the best interest of each youth to develop plans that meet each youth's specific needs and desires. Having participated in the planning process, youth take ownership of their treatment plan and are motivated toward their own success. Our program consists of the following supports and services:

- 24-hour care in a therapeutic environment with comprehensive services and creative approaches to engage youth,
- staffing ratios of at least one staff member per three residents,
- guidance from psychologists, social workers and psychiatrists who encourage residents to engage in self-exploration and develop coping skills through individual, group and family therapy,
- attendance at The Biondi Middle and High School, where youth engage in a full academic program with extracurricular activities. Youth can recover credits or engage in a full diploma program, pursuing a New York State Regents or Local diploma with opportunities to engage in several vocational and work-study programs,
- a system of rewards and behavior modification employing PBIS - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, a positive behavior incentive program which guides each resident's behavioral improvement and growth based on our agency's core values of respect, achievement, safety and responsibility,
- recreational, educational and therapeutic activities such as art, drama, dance and athletics, and
- volunteer opportunities in the community such as assisting in a local food pantry, caring for seniors, or contributing to a greener community.



We accept referrals for boys and girls, ages 12-20 years in grades 7-12, who can participate in special education classroom settings for up to 12 students from Committees on Special Education (CSEs) and County Departments of Social Services (DSS). Our RTC considers youth with a wide range of behavioral, emotional, developmental and mental health challenges. To learn more and start the admission and intake process, contact us:

914.375.8880 • admissions@leakeandwatts.org
leakeandwatts.org/residential-treatment-center





better understanding residential treatment at leake & watts

At Leake & Watts, we understand that choosing a residential placement for your child is a serious decision requiring much thought and care. We aim to ensure that all of your questions are thoroughly answered so you and your child can make a fully-informed decision. We encourage you to read the FAQs below as well as ask additional questions when you meet with our staff. We are here to help and support you as you make this important decision and look forward to partnering with you to help your child to achieve success.

What is the Leake & Watts Residential Treatment Center?

Licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and New York State Education Department (NYSED), the Leake & Watts Residential Treatment Center is a co-ed program providing 24-hour residential care to middle school and high school-age youth who require intensive therapeutic and educational support. Located at our 33-acre campus in Yonkers, New York overlooking the Hudson River, we provide a structured, therapeutic environment with comprehensive services, teaching residents effective problem solving and healthy coping skills, as well as other adaptive behaviors.

How many youth are at the program and where do they come from?

The Leake & Watts Residential Treatment Center (RTC) supports up to 90 youth at any given point in time. Youth are referred either by their local school district Committee on Special Education (CSE) and placed in partnership with families or are referred by local County Departments of Social Services (DSS) outside of New York City. Youth are from throughout New York City and surrounding counties, including but not limited to Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Dutchess, Orange, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties.

What type of educational services will my child receive?

Youth at the RTC attend The Biondi School, a fully accredited special education school for grades 7-12 located on campus. In addition to the youth who reside on campus, the school also educates approximately 200 other youth who attend as day students. An educational curriculum based on the New York State Core Curriculum includes traditional subjects such as math, reading, science and social studies, as well as art, music, physical education, and computer and technology skills. Our program participates in all New York State standardized tests and is licensed to grant the full range of New York State diplomas and vocational certifications. Students benefit from small classes of no more than 12 students, as dictated by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

What is the plan for CSE referred youth once they have graduated from high school?

Upon graduation or discharge, students referred by their local school district return home to the responsibility of their families in the community.

What are the living arrangements at Leake & Watts?

Youth live in single-sex cottages in groups of 10 to 14 of similar age and need. Rooms are singles or doubles. Nutritious breakfasts, snacks, and dinners are prepared by the cottage staff, and lunches are provided at The Biondi School. Leake & Watts provides all bedding, toiletries, and school uniforms. Families can provide any special items they desire so long as they are within safety standards.

How secure is the campus? Safety and security is paramount to us. The relationships that staff build with youth are the foundation of our work and foster a safe, secure environment. Staff utilize these relationships when working with youth to manage their behavior. We maintain a 3:1 staff-to-resident ratio at all times, and support staff provide additional supervision and support as needed. Supervision is coordinated at all times by an Administrator on Duty who is the center of all communication on campus. In accordance with New York State regulation, the RTC is an open setting and does not have locked doors or gates. However, entrances and exits are monitored by staff 24/7 and cottage doors have a delay/alarm system. One-to-one supervision can be arranged to ensure safety, as needed, in collaboration with a youth's referral source.

What types of therapeutic services are provided?

Understanding that every youth's situation is unique, the RTC provides a range of therapeutic services to treat and support each resident. Employing the evidence-based Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model, we encourage behavioral change through a system of identifying positive behaviors and acknowledging those behaviors. Our behavior modification system allows each resident to work on individualized goals. Individual and group counseling is provided by therapists and social workers at both The Biondi School and RTC. Clinicians can also make community referrals for families as needed. We also offer an extensive job readiness program, anger management counseling, specialized after-school Learning Center, substance abuse counseling, and a recreation program promoting growth and positive change.

What types of medical services are provided? Our on-campus clinic, staffed by registered and licensed practical nurses, operates from 7 AM to 9 PM daily. All medication is managed through the clinic. The clinic also provides regular health examinations and treatment of minor illnesses, and coordinates all necessary medical services in the community. These services are supplemented by medical practitioners who are at the clinic on a part-time basis and psychiatrists who provide crisis management and monitor all psychotropic medications. For emergencies, our local Emergency Room is at St Joseph's Hospital about a mile away. If you prefer your child to continue with a medical provider in your community, wherever possible, we can provide transportation to and from medical visits so that medical services can continue uninterrupted.

How do you support parental and family involvement?

Leake & Watts works in partnership with families regarding the care and treatment of their children as we strive together to help them achieve success. Each family is connected to a Social Worker who acts as the primary communication link between family members and the program. Regular planning conferences regarding each youth are conducted with the participation of families, and youth maintain their family connections through regular visits and phone calls.

Can youth visit home or must they remain on campus?

To support positive family connections, residents begin home visiting after they have had the opportunity to settle into the program (after about 30 days). Each family, together with the social worker, creates a home-visiting schedule for weekends which meets their individual and safety needs. Youth also spend longer periods at home with their families during school breaks. Door-to-door transportation is provided for residents on their visits home. Recreation and trips are provided for residents who remain on campus over weekends and on breaks.

Am I responsible for supplying my children with anything at the program?

Families are responsible for supplying adequate clothing for their child. Youth can also bring any personal items that will help them to feel comfortable, but we strongly urge families not to send their child with any items of great value, as we cannot replace items that are lost, stolen, or broken. Youth must also remain on their family's medical insurance during their stay.

What is Leake & Watts overall?

Leake & Watts is a leading nonprofit social service organization providing the most vulnerable children, adults, and families in the greater New York City area, with the resources and skills needed to rise above adversity and positively direct their lives. Focus areas include education, foster care, support for at-risk and court-involved youth and families, group residences for adults with disabilities, mental health, and health services. Founded in 1831, Leake & Watts has been at the forefront of evolving community needs and is now a positive force in the lives of more than 11,000 individuals annually through 47 programs at 28 sites across the greater New York City area. In 2014, Leake & Watts was honored as the Gold Winner of the New York Community Trust Nonprofit Excellence Awards. For more information, visit leakeandwatts.org.

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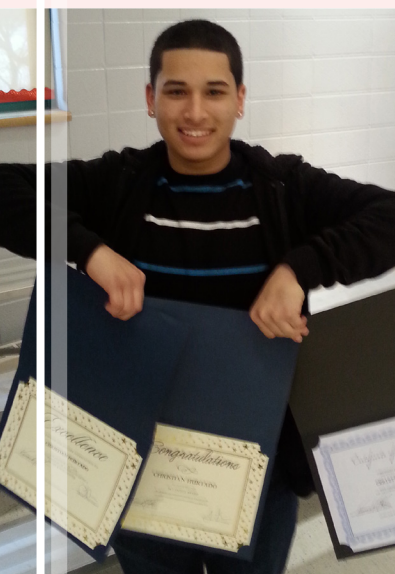
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS

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When **Christian** graduated from The Biondi School in 2016, he was excited to go onto SUNY, where he is now studying new media. For Christian, though, this “new beginning” wasn’t his first. By the time he came to our RTC in 2013, he had already faced tremendous challenges. At age 9, Christian first saw a psychiatrist and was hospitalized for the first time at 10. He spent much of his early adolescence in and out of mental-health treatment facilities and lived for eight months in a therapeutic foster home. As a consequence, he fell behind in his school work. Christian also faced conflict at home, struggling to cope with his LGBTQ identity, and regularly fought with his mother. By taking full advantage of the many opportunities at our RTC and The Biondi School, Christian caught up in school, enough to graduate with a Regent’s diploma, and the emotional and therapeutic progress he made was even more impressive. With teachers and mentors focused on helping him work through his emotional and behavioral issues, Christian learned to cope with his anger and mental-health challenges, developing a positive sense of self-esteem and responsibility that has prepared him to succeed in life. “I know that being here really helped me a lot,” Christian said. “Going to college was a great next step. A college degree can take you places, and **now I know that I’m going places!**”

“The Employment Program has helped me to be more professional and gain work experience, which will help me later on in life. Working at the Garden really taught me a lot about nature, as well as how to grow my own vegetables.”

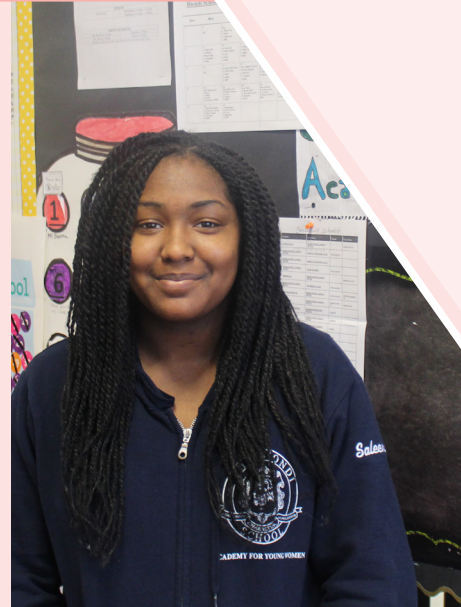
• **Shaday**



“Going through the employment process has helped me with being more responsible and taught me the importance of things like a résumé and being to work on time. And I’ve learned that different soils affect the plants and their health.”

• **Nia**

Saleena came to our RTC in 2016 an introvert facing issues with depression and low self-esteem. Her emotional challenges often translated into aggressive behavior, difficulty receiving positive constructive criticism from youth and adults alike, and regular anger-management issues. At our RTC, she received counseling to address these issues, while staff encouraged her to try new things. They recognized and rewarded positive behaviors, which were seen more and more often. At The Biondi School, she worked diligently and flourished, being accepted into the Girls Academy, making Honor Roll. As part of the employment program, Saleena worked on campus doing clerical work, developing professional skills she'll need as she pursues her dreams of going to college and becoming a computer programmer. In less than a year, Saleena returned to her family in the Bronx and continues to attend The Biondi School as a day student. The once shy girl is now a role model among her peers, recognized by her infectious smile and outgoing personality. "I've changed in many ways. My mindset has changed about how I handle situations. It just helps you to grow, especially working made me learn new skills and how to be patient. You've just got to really take advantage of the program, and that's what I did," she said. **"It's great when you're around people who want to better themselves."**



When **Carlos** came to our RTC, he had already been in many placements, first in the foster care system he entered at a young age and then in residential and psychiatric-care placements. None seemed to be helping. He arrived with a history of violence, emotional challenges, and attachment issues,

as well as an intellectual / developmental disability. Once at Leake & Watts, however, Carlos began to change. He was incredibly active in all activities, took advantage of all opportunities our RTC had to offer, and connected with his peers and treatment team. Through the mentoring program, he connected with Denmark, who he still keeps in touch with. Carlos always anticipated his regular outings with Denmark, who provided vital support and encouragement to Carlos as he developed independent living skills and coping skills to deal with his challenges. As Carlos neared 21, RTC staff advocated with the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities to ensure that Carlos would be eligible for the supports he needs throughout his life. From the RTC, Carlos moved to a group home upstate and has since moved into a supervised apartment with a roommate. Carlos credits Leake & Watts not only for the logistical support that has helped him transition into adulthood but for the personal growth that has allowed him to thrive despite past challenges. "I enjoyed being there, the good friends that I had, the best staff I ever had, the trips we went on. I had fun times there," Carlos recalled. "I learned a lot from everybody. The staff helped me control my anger, budget my money, how to clean my room. Now, I have my own apartment. **The RTC made that possible.**"



"I just love that we get to experience new things that most of us don't get to experience at home."

• **Andrew**



"Before I came here, I was really shy and quiet and didn't like speaking to people. Since then, that's changed, and I've made a lot of friends here. This has been the best thing that's happened to me."

• **Ashley**

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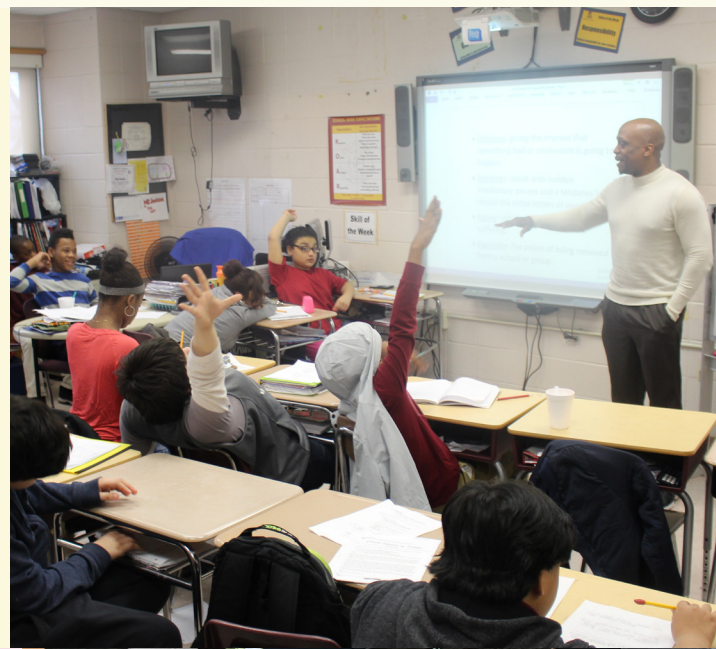
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS



fostering independence through learning & academic achievement

Many of the youth who come to us have fallen behind in school and faced challenges to succeeding in a traditional academic setting. All RTC residents attend The Biondi Middle & High School right on campus, where we develop individualized plans with each youth to get them back on track and headed toward high school graduation.

The right support in an appropriate environment is critical to everyone's success. Many of the youth at our RTC have not found the support or environment they need in traditional public schools, while some have fallen considerably behind due to placement in long-term care facilities. Attending The Biondi Middle and High School, youth at our RTC receive individualized attention and educational plans so they can increase confidence, learn, and achieve academic and personal success. At this fully accredited non-public school, we provide 12-month specialized education services for RTC youth, as well as about 200 day students in 7th through 12th grade with social and emotional difficulties, as well as academic deficits. Coupled with therapeutic and clinical services, students receive individualized support in small classes (no larger than a 12:1 student-to-teacher ratio) as they pursue a full academic program — to attain a Local or Regents diploma with the opportunity to participate in one of our vocational certificate programs — and engage in a full range of athletic and recreational programs.





EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE

With an eye toward the future, The Biondi School makes sure students have the skills — academic, professional, and personal — for successful futures. For RTC youth who look to return to their home school prior to graduation, credit recovery is possible. Within the New York State Core Curriculum, Biondi students also have the opportunity to earn a Regents or Local diploma, which can lead to college enrollment, or to pursue vocational studies to enter the workforce directly upon graduation. Through the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) program, we offer various vocational and work-study opportunities. The Young Women's and Young Men's Academies provide additional academic support to empower, mentor, and provide post-graduation planning to college-track students. Biondi students are well prepared to succeed on their own, personalized path to success.

THERAPEUTIC SUPPORTS

The therapeutic and clinical supports available through our RTC are also a key component of The Biondi School experience. Clinical treatment and behavior modification plans are coordinated between RTC and Biondi staffs and are incorporated into the educational experience. The Biondi School also applies Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in the classroom and across activities, while the school is staffed by licensed clinical psychologists and social workers, registered nurses, mental health counselors, and crisis prevention/intervention specialists.

ATHLETICS & RECREATION

Extracurricular activities play a large role in strengthening self-confidence and giving students the tools to succeed, opening students' eyes to new experiences that enhance what is learned in the classroom. These richly diverse experiences encourage them to develop skills, work with others and increase self-esteem through accomplishment. Our Athletic and Recreation Programs provide opportunities including team competition with other schools in sports such as basketball, volleyball, track, and football; aquatics instruction and lifeguard certification; field trips to museums, sports activities, concerts, and cultural events; and arts, music, and crafts to encourage self-expression and exploration.



THE LEARNING CENTER

The Leake & Watts Learning Center is dedicated to providing enriched educational supports to all RTC students after school hours. In the center of campus, the Learning Center offers each student an interactive environment that includes computers, media, books, and group learning opportunities that support the learning that occurs in the classroom. The Learning Center is staffed by an Educational Coordinator who ensures homework completion and works closely with The Biondi School to develop learning plans, tutorial supports, and alternative learning strategies with the goal of ensuring that all of RTC students have the support needed to succeed in school.

LOOKING FORWARD

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

CLINICAL SERVICES



individualized supports to help youth overcome adversity

The youth at the Leake & Watts Residential Treatment Center face a wide range of challenges, and many of those intersect to create complex obstacles that we help youth to overcome. Through individualized treatment plans employing an array of supports, we work with youth and their families to provide them the resources, skills and support to redirect their lives and envision a brighter future.

SOCIAL WORK COORDINATION

Our team of Social Workers make sure that each youth at the RTC receives the services and supports needed to succeed in life. The Social Worker acts as the primary connection for the youth and the family and is responsible for providing individual and family counseling, scheduling family team conferences, post-intervention crisis meetings, academic monitoring, IEP attendance, coordination of visitation, participation in behavior modification plans, and treatment team services. The Social Workers partner with direct care staff and Biondi School staff to coordinate and support treatment plans for each youth.

FAMILY TEAM CONFERENCES

Leake & Watts believes that family involvement is paramount to a successful treatment plan. In addition to encouraging families to visit and engage in campus activities, as well as home visits, we utilize the **Family Team Conferencing** model where youth, family and the treatment team come together regularly to develop and review each youth's treatment plan. Our Social Workers partner with each family to focus on the issues that led to residential placement and develop strategies to assist the youth and the family effectively manage challenges and ensure a smooth transition back home. We also work closely with each family to link them to community-based services near them to ensure that support systems are in place after successful program completion.



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Our RTC provides individually tailored mental health services to the youth placed in our care. Our team of mental health professionals at the RTC includes the Director of Behavioral Health Services, a psychiatrist, a psychologist, and Master's-level Social Workers, all of whom are active participants in the care of the youth. Individual, group, and family therapy, in person or by teleconference, assist the youth and their families to explore the issues that led to their placement and develop the skills and behaviors that will enable them to return safely to their communities. Additionally, comprehensive psychological, psychiatric, and psychosocial evaluations, along with medication monitoring and management are all available to youth at the RTC. Therapeutic recreation and socialization opportunities are provided to all youth, as well as specific services aimed at addressing issues of domestic violence, substance abuse, healthy peer relationships, and anger management. When psychiatric crises arise that reach the level of warranting in-patient psychiatric treatment, we partner with local acute-care hospitals.

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

One of the primary roles of any treatment program is to assist youth to learn, or re-learn, safe and socially appropriate behaviors that will allow them to successfully participate in the community after graduation. Our behavior modification program, developed by the Leake & Watts treatment team to partner with PBIS, is dedicated to increasing pro-social and pro-self behaviors for each resident. This is achieved by focusing on increasing behaviors that are desirable rather than attempting to decrease behaviors that are problematic. Through this process, both the staff and youth spend a significant amount of time learning and reinforcing the skills that are needed for the youth to be successful in life after their time at Leake & Watts has ended. Youth placed in the RTC receive individualized behavior modification plans that are reviewed each day by the youth and our direct care staff. Behavior Modification goals and charts are created and reviewed by the RTC Treatment Team and the youth.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS (PBIS)

Our RTC uses PBIS, a proactive and preventive system focusing on promoting positive behaviors. Behavior expectations are set by staff in all aspects of the program and when residents meet or exceed expectations, the behavior is acknowledged reinforced, and rewarded by staff. Residents are rewarded with verbal praise, points, and "Gotcha's"- a token reward system, where residents can accumulate the Gotcha's to purchase items such as gift cards and other items of their choice. Success is often celebrated with tangible items, trips, award ceremonies, and public acknowledgements. The goal of this program is to increase the frequency of positive behaviors with the ultimate goal to reduce undesirable behaviors.

SUPPORTING LGBTQ YOUTH

Leake & Watts has considerable experience working with youth who struggle to come to terms with their LGBTQ identity and the impacts it may have on their emotional state, self-esteem, ability to socialize, and relations within the family, at school, and in the community at large. In addition to our in-house supports, we partner with community organizations to provide additional supports when needed.

MEDICAL SERVICES

The RTC has an on-site medical clinic to oversee all health care services for youth in our care. The clinic manages all medication, provides regular health examinations and treatment of minor illnesses, and coordinates all necessary medical services in the community. Registered and licensed nurses are on-site daily from 7 AM to 9 PM, and other medical practitioners supplement services as needed, including psychiatrists who provide crisis management and monitor all psychotropic medications.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELING

Substance abuse education is a part of the programming that is universal to all youth at our RTC, given the vulnerability of this age group to substance use. For those youth who demonstrate a need for substance abuse services, we can also offer both group and individual counseling utilizing an evidence-based harm-reduction model for substance use. As needed, we may also refer to outpatient treatment programs as recommended by the treatment team to address a youth's specific needs.

LOOKING FORWARD

A HOLISTIC APPROACH



creating a nurturing setting for personal growth

At Leake & Watts, our approach is person-centered and holistic. Fostering discovery of self and the world around them, we provide well-rounded programming through enriching and therapeutic opportunities for learning, creativity, fun, and expression to help youth move past their obstacles and pursue their dreams.

THERAPEUTIC RECREATION

Our Recreation Program is a year-round program that gives youth the opportunity to explore their interests, create informal learning opportunities, develop their creativity through exposure to the arts, engage in physical fitness, bond with one another, and just have fun.

After school, residents are able to participate in a series of programming areas such as: arts & crafts, Zumba, yoga, group sports, Fashion Club, Guitar Theory, special educational guest speakers, Let's Grow Together, Mentoring Programs, vocational services, music & dance performances, swimming, board games and community service.

These programs are organized, structured, and adult-supervised. Our goals are to encourage individuality, create positive social relationships, and develop better ways to resolve conflicts.

On-campus amenities include:

- Indoor and outdoor swimming pools
- A full-equipped gymnasium
- An outdoor basketball court
- Our Teen Center with community meeting space, games, and entertainment.





FIELD TRIPS

Providing youth with opportunities to explore the world, learn, grow, and bond is a key part of our holistic approach. Regular field trips and activities in and around the New York City area provide youth with new and enriching experiences. Recent field trips have included the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum in Baltimore, snow tubing in upstate New York, the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, Six Flags, and various theatrical productions in New York City, among others.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We understand the vital importance of engaging youth in the community and exposing them to opportunities to serve and to learn. Youth at our RTC take part in a number of community service events and benefit from many community partnerships. One key example has been the “Let’s Grow Together” program, a partnership between the RTC and the Yonkers Police Department. At least once monthly, youth and officers come together in an informal setting to learn from one another’s experiences and share perspectives. Through our partnership with the Food Bank for Westchester, area schools, and other programs, we have ample community-service opportunities for youth to take part in civic activities and engage with new populations, such as coat and food drives and advocacy walks.



FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

We understand the vital role family plays in ensuring the success of youth and the importance of the family relationship in overcoming obstacles. We provide easy access for home visits for youth through door-to-door transportation and encourage the engagement of families in residents’ lives. Beyond engagement in the treatment process through Family Team Conferencing and family counseling, we invite families for special events and celebrations of success on campus throughout the year. Social work staff collaborate with residents and their families to strengthen this vital connection, support families in the care of their children, and assist with residents’ eventual return home, to a local school, or another less restrictive setting.





preparing youth for successful tomorrows

In all our work, our primary focus is to ensure that youth are fully prepared and have the tools they need to successfully return to the community. We prepare youth to move forward and lead the most fulfilling, productive lives possible. We provide youth with the supports to overcome challenges, live independently, take part in the workforce and thrive throughout their lives.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

Leake & Watts believes that our youth have the power and capability to make successful transitions from residential care to life in the greater community. While most youth return home to their parents or relatives, some may transition to other systems such as those operated by the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities or Office of Mental Health. We believe that regardless of their discharge plan, all youth need adequate preparation that includes ongoing opportunities to practice independent living skills prior to exiting residential care. Based in a holistic approach to independent living skills development, we have established the following practices and opportunities:

- All youth complete the Individual Life Skills Assessment upon intake.
- All youth then participate in the creation of an Individual Life Skills Plan.
- Youth participate in the Leake & Watts employment program.
- Youth participate in monthly independent living skills workshops.
- Youth participate in daily life skills activities that practice and reinforce the acquisition and mastery of Independent Living skills.
- Youth exiting Leake & Watts care develop a transition plan to ensure that they have adequate supports and skills to succeed upon their return to the community.

MENTORING

The Leake & Watts Mentoring Program brings RTC youth together with positive adult role models. Relationships are fostered between youth and their mentors through group and one-on-one outings each month. Mentors provide youth a sense of permanency by offering individualized attention and care beyond clinical and program services. Youth have the opportunity to engage in educational, civic, and cultural activities while gaining exposure to an adult role model from whom they can shape their own lives. The program promotes positive change and growth in attitude, behavior, and skills while promoting greater self-esteem, trust, respect, and understanding.





INTERNSHIPS & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Leake & Watts RTC maintains a number of relationships within the community to ensure youth have ample opportunity for professional development and real-world experiences. In addition to on-campus opportunities, we maintain ongoing relationships with employers within the community, providing youth with opportunities to work and pursue internships that allow them to explore various career areas that might be of interest to them. Additionally, we partner with several employment programs for youth facing diverse challenges. We also have relationships with a number of corporate partners who volunteer as professional mentors and host workshops and mock interviews for youth. Through interaction with actual workplaces and experienced professionals, youth gain skills and insights into future opportunities and what's needed to make them a reality.



EMPLOYMENT READINESS

Having the skills to find a job, create a résumé, apply, get hired, and keep a job are essential life skills. The goal of the Leake & Watts RTC Employment Program is to provide each resident with a comprehensive employment opportunity that teaches positive working skills and prepares him/her for jobs in the community, while allowing youth to explore potential career paths. The Employment Program offers trainings and hands-on experiences based on each youth's individual needs and capacities. The Employment Coordinator ensures that all youth receive employment readiness training that is appropriate to the resident's level of understanding and intellectual functioning, while career planning and vocational training are coordinated with the vocational program at The Biondi School. Various jobs are offered on campus and in the community. The goals of the Employment Program include:

- Guide and train youth on employment readiness and protocols, job search, job application processes, job norms, job interviews, résumé and job development training.
- Enhance and develop skills related to obtaining and keeping a job.
- Teach leadership, responsibility, and self-confidence.
- Provide financial literacy training to all youth.
- Employ youth, initially on-campus, then in the community.
- Create an employment portfolio that includes vital records, photo IDs, résumé and bank account information.



THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

A unique feature of our RTC is in our Community Garden. Operated in partnership with the Food Bank for Westchester, the garden provides fresh fruits and vegetables to community members in need, as well as an on-campus job opportunity. Youth can get paid to join the garden team and plan, plant, care for, and cultivate the garden. As youth develop greater skills, they then have the opportunity to take on a supervisor role. Youth also organize and prepare meals with fresh food grown themselves for a hands-on farm-to-table experience right on campus, sharing the fruits (and vegetables) of their labor with friends as well as the community.