



FAVARH - THE ARC OF THE FARMINGTON VALLEY

# Spotlight on Staff

YOJAIRA EVANS

ASSISTANT MANAGER, BEAR WOODS

Yojaira Evans (pronounced Ja-HI-ra) was recently promoted to Assistant Manager at the new Bear Woods Apartments in 2020. She started with Favarh as a GSE job coach in 2016 and worked for two years as the first job coach at BeanZ Café in Avon - an assignment she describes as, "Amazing!"

Yojaira came to Favarh with experience having worked in home care and hospice for Masonicare. About hospice work, she says, "It is wearing on you. I had a 14 year old boy that passed away while I was with him, and after that I needed to take a break." During her time in hospice, she helped many families and patients with end-of-life care, especially in the nursing homes. "Most of them didn't have any family and they were always so glad to have you there."

Yojaira is not a stranger to working two or more shifts. After finishing in 9 AM to 3 PM shift at Favarh, she would often travel to Torrington for a 5 PM to midnight shift for DDS. Being short staffed at Bear Woods, she again finds herself filling in for multiple shifts as part of her new responsibilities.

Her mother and grandma, two strong women, raised her up in Bristol together with a sister and two brothers. "They made me the person I am today," she confirms. Today she lives in the same town with her two kids, Jaivion (16) and Dwight (10), and Dwight's father, her partner of 15 years.

Yojaira sites motherhood as her biggest accomplishment in life. "Being a mother has been amazing. Especially at my young age and I

did so well." She had her first son at the age 15. "Yep. I made a mistake and I had to grow up fast. But he too made me who I am today."

She says taking care of her kids has also been her biggest life challenge. Caring for them and work at the same time, trying to find sitters, finding money for day care, and being able to work around all that responsibility.

What she likes most about Favarh is coming into work and seeing her individuals. "I always tell them, I'm their person. They can tell me about anything. They love sharing news about themselves. Girl trouble, boy trouble."

She says teaching them makes her happy. She shares how one of her individuals didn't have much confidence in herself. So every day, she would have a 10-15 minute conversation about feelings to start off the day, about work and low self-esteem, and feeling overwhelmed, and nervous. Reassurance made a big difference in her individual's work and personal life. "I kept saying, 'You are good enough.' After a few months she got it, and she would come to work with a smile on her face."

When asked what advice she would give to someone aspiring to work for Favarh, Yojaira says, "Go for it. It's one of the best feelings. To me it feels like every minute that you spend is actually changing a life." She explains it may be big or small. A conversation one day with an individual can lead to your advice being used two weeks later. "You're just making a difference, every second, every minute."