

# CAMPAIGN FOR YOUTH JUSTICE

BECAUSE THE CONSEQUENCES AREN'T MINOR

## June 2010 Newsletter

The Campaign for Youth Justice is a national organization dedicated to ending the practice of trying, sentencing, and incarcerating youth under the age of 18 in the adult criminal justice system.

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### ACROSS THE COUNTRY



#### Rally Protests Construction of a Jail to Hold Youth Awaiting Trial in Maryland

Jessica Sandoval

On Thursday, June 17, community members, families and youth organized a rally in front of Baltimore's City Hall to protest the plans to build a new jail for youth awaiting trial in adult

criminal court. As many as 120 people gathered in War Memorial Plaza to advocate for an open conversation on other ways to fix Maryland's justice system. The State of Maryland plans to spend \$104 million to house up to 230 youth awaiting trial in a brand-new facility, but those at the rally expressed concern that construction of a new jail is not the best use of

state funds. Protesters chanted slogans such as "Books Not Bars" and "Educate, Don't Incarcerate", advocating for the rehabilitation and education of youth offenders. Speakers at the rally included individuals from [Baltimore's Safe and Sound Campaign](#), the [Community Law in Action Center](#), and the [Campaign for Youth Justice](#), among others.

Groups urged that instead of spending over \$100 million for the construction and operation of a new jail for youth, Maryland's Governor, Martin O'Malley, should support legislation to stop automatically charging youth as adults, stop detaining youth in adult jails, only detain youth who may pose a risk to public safety, and reduce the youth population at the City's juvenile detention center by using and expanding community-based alternatives to detention. To take action on this issue by sending a letter to Governor O'Malley, visit [http://criminaljustice.change.org/petitions/view/no\\_new\\_jail\\_for\\_youth\\_in\\_baltimore\\_invest\\_in\\_alternatives](http://criminaljustice.change.org/petitions/view/no_new_jail_for_youth_in_baltimore_invest_in_alternatives).

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### **Colorado Governor Signs Direct File Legislation into Law!**

Jessica Sandoval

On May 25, 2010, Colorado Governor Bill Ritter (pictured at right) signed House Bill 1413 into law.

This legislation increased, to 16 years old, the minimum age at which certain youth, excepting those charged with murder and sex offenses, are eligible to be charged in adult criminal court by a prosecutor without a transfer hearing, a process known as "direct file." The bill also establishes factors that prosecutors must consider in determining whether to direct file and requires a 14-day notice of intention to direct file during which time youth can provide information to the prosecutor regarding the enumerated factors, excepting murder and sex offenses. The bill takes effect on July 29, 2010.



Congratulations to all those who were a part of supporting this important change in Colorado legislation!

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### **Arizona Takes Step to Limit the Prosecution of Youth as Adults**

Gordon Wilson

This spring, both houses of the Arizona State Legislature passed SB 1009 unanimously, and the bill was signed into law by Governor Jan Brewer on April 27, 2010. Under the new law, if a case involving a youth is filed in adult court, the case must be based on the child's age at the time of the alleged offense, not on the age at the time the charges are filed. Without this clarification, prosecutors can delay filing charges solely for the purpose of moving the case to adult criminal court, a situation which has been problematic in Arizona. In Arizona, there is no minimum age at which youth may be tried as adults, but youth are eligible for direct filing after they turn 14, and murder and other person felonies must be tried in adult court if the youth is over 15 years old. The passing of SB 1009, which goes into effect July 29, 2010, is one step in the right direction of juvenile justice reform in Arizona.

"We are thrilled; this is the clarifying change Arizona has been waiting for," says Beth Rosenberg of the Children's Action Alliance. "This was the original intent of the law and

this change ensures that troubled youth will be treated fairly."

Congratulations to everyone at the Children's Action Alliance for taking the initiative on this important issue! Thank you to everyone who supported the passage of this legislation!

The full text of SB 1009 is available [here](#). For more information on juvenile justice reform in Arizona, contact Beth Rosenberg at the [Children's Action Alliance](#) at [brosenberg@azchildren.org](mailto:brosenberg@azchildren.org) or 602-266-0707.

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### **Qing Hong Wu Granted US Citizenship!**

On May 28, 2010, Qing Hong Wu officially became a US citizen! CFYJ newsletters this spring covered the story of Mr. Wu, a New York man facing mandatory deportation due to disclosing an adult conviction when he was fifteen during his application for citizenship. Following extensive media coverage, community support, and petitions, New York Governor Paterson pardoned Mr. Wu on March 6 and created a Special Immigrant Board of Pardons to review cases of legal immigrants threatened with deportation for old or minor crimes. US Immigration and Custom Services reconsidered Mr. Wu's citizenship application and granted his citizenship at the end of May. Congratulations Mr. Wu!

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### **FROM THE HILL**



#### **Join us on July 7 for National Juvenile Justice Call-In Day!**

Erin Davies

As you have seen in the news, the US Senate and US House of Representatives have a crowded schedule this year leaving little time to act before the 2010 elections. Although many items remain on their agendas, three major juvenile justice initiatives remained stalled. **Time is running out on juvenile justice reforms this year!**

To revive the momentum and show support for these stalled initiatives, the National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition is sponsoring National Juvenile Justice Call-In Day on July 7: a day to push Congress to pass a comprehensive juvenile justice agenda. **We need your help - now is the time to weigh in with your Members of Congress to let them know that voters care about juvenile justice!**

On July 7, we need you to call Congress and express your support for:

- Reauthorizing the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), which is *currently three years overdue for reauthorization*. The JJDP, first enacted in 1974, promotes the use of effective community-based alternatives to detention, keeps youth out of adult facilities, reduces the disproportionate involvement of youth of color in the system, and promotes other research-driven best practices in the juvenile justice system.
- Increasing appropriations for juvenile justice programs, which were the only children's programs that received a decreased amount of funding in the President's 2011 budget. In order for States to make positive changes, they must receive the

federal support they need to prevent youth crime and rehabilitate juvenile offenders.

- Passing the Youth PROMISE Act to promote proven, cost-effective prevention-based strategies to reduce youth crime. Under Youth PROMISE (**P**rison **R**eduction through **O**pportunities, **M**entoring, **I**ntervention, **S**upport, and **E**ducation), representatives from the communities facing the greatest juvenile crime challenges will be able to develop a comprehensive plan to prevent youth crime through a coordinated prevention and intervention response.

**Action item:** On July 7, contact your two US Senators and your US House Representative and ask them to **make juvenile justice a priority in the 111th Congress** by:

- **Reauthorizing the JJDPA;**
- **Increasing juvenile justice appropriations; and**
- **Passing the Youth PROMISE Act.**

Call the US Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask for your Senators' and/or Representative's office.

For more detailed talking points or if you have any questions, please e-mail Kelly Latta with CFYJ at [jjnational@cfyj.org](mailto:jjnational@cfyj.org). Thank you for your help!

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## RESEARCH AND POLICY

### New Youth Justice Facts Available!

Check out the Campaign's new "Youth in the Justice System" fact sheet for the most updated information on juvenile crime and youth prosecuted in adult court. The fact sheet is available online at [http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/FS\\_KeyYouthCrimeFacts.pdf](http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/FS_KeyYouthCrimeFacts.pdf).

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## NATIONAL MOMENTUM



### Spread the Word through Join the Movement Monthly Advocacy Activities

Thanks to all those who have become a part of our Join the Movement campaign! Let's continue to spread the word about this important initiative against the prosecution of youth as adults. It is through your growing support and actions that we make change happen!

We ask all of you to participate in Join the Movement through our *\*new\** monthly Advocacy Activity suggestions. July's Advocacy Activity is:

### Independence Day Vigil

While we celebrate the independence of our nation on July 4 there are countless youth incarcerated in adult prisons that are waiting for their independence from this unjust system. As an alternative to fireworks, light up the night with candles and hold a vigil for

juveniles incarcerated in adult jails and prisons. For a "how to" guide on holding a vigil, go to <http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/Downloads/ParentTools/VigilGuidewebversion.doc>.

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## **National Parent Caucus Celebrates One Year Anniversary; Hosts July 1 Call**

July marks the one year anniversary of the National Parent Caucus (NPC)! The NPC, a project of CFYJ, is a space in which families can come together for support and to share ideas and information about the juvenile justice system and the reform efforts. The Caucus hosts monthly calls, coordinates a database of families and allies, disseminates information on best practices within juvenile justice and updates on grassroots reform efforts, and serves as a clearinghouse for parents needing information and support as well as connections to the larger movement focused on making change.

After one year, the NPC has a network of families and allies in over 30 states! When we began these calls we had no idea of how many folks would join us. The response has been astounding! We have heard from activists in Louisiana working to end the school-to-prison pipeline, a mother in Missouri holding a 5K run to bring attention to children tried in adult courts and locked away in cages with adults, a campaign in New York to reduce the outrageously high cost of staying in touch with incarcerated children, mothers doing presentations at schools and other public gatherings to bring attention to this barbaric practice, and many others! It has been our good fortune to have so many passionate and wise people come to the calls and share what they are doing to impact these ineffective and damaging laws and policies!

The work and activities on the NPC continue in July with our monthly call. On July 1, we will talk with families and community about the struggle in Baltimore, Maryland to stop the building of a 230 bed facility designed to cage more of our young people. We will learn what steps have been taken, find out what has worked, and what they intend to do next.

The call will take place on July 1, 2010, beginning at 5:00 PM EST, 4:00 PM CST and 2:00 PM PST. Those who would like to participate should call 866.524.0621 and use code 7831935097. Everyone is welcome! Invite parents you have met during visiting hours, in court, or on the street to join us for this call. We know it will take all of those deeply affected to come together to tear down these systems that oppress and cage our children and communities!

For more information, check out the [NPC website](#) or contact Grace Bauer at [Familiescantwait@yahoo.com](mailto:Familiescantwait@yahoo.com).

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## **MEDIA WRAP**

### **Local Media Covers Rally Protesting Construction of a Maryland Youth Jail**

On Thursday, June 17, community members, families and youth organized a rally in front of Baltimore's City Hall to protest the plans to build a new jail for youth awaiting adult charges. (See "Rally Protests Construction of a Jail to Hold Youth Awaiting Trial in Maryland" above). Various media outlets attended the event in which as many as 120 people gathered



in War Memorial Plaza and chanted slogans such as "Books Not Bars" and "Educate, Don't Incarcerate". This rally was covered by WBAL-TV, [The Afro-American Newspaper](#), and appeared on the front page of [The Baltimore Sun](#).

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### June *Juvenile Justice Matters* Discussed JLWOP

This month's edition of *Juvenile Justice Matters* (JJM) discussed the pivotal *Graham v. Florida* Supreme Court ruling on sentencing juveniles to life without parole (JLWOP). JJM hosted Marsha Levick, the Deputy Director and Chief Counsel for the [Juvenile Law Center](#) (JLC), and Bryan Gowdy, the attorney for Terrance Graham -- both had roles in the case. Levick and the JLC wrote an amicus brief on behalf of Graham while Gowdy argued Graham's case before the Court. On the show, Levick and Gowdy discussed their thoughts on the ruling and how they see it affecting the justice system in the months and years to come. To listen to our discussion of the Supreme Court's JLWOP decision, click [here](#).

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## GET ORGANIZED

### CFYJ Hosts First Leadership Institute for Families

Grace Bauer

In May, the Campaign for Youth Justice had the pleasure of hosting 17 family and community members from 11 states in Baltimore for the first Leadership Institute for Families. This was a unique and unforgettable gathering of knowledge, wisdom and passion!

Originally, CFYJ believed the Institute would teach families and community members about the oppression of the juvenile and criminal justice systems, how oppression impacts our communities, and how to reform these systems and affect change. Instead, it was CFYJ that walked away with lessons learned and renewed energy. It seems we see over and over again that there is much to be learned from the families and community members that are directly affected by our country's addiction to incarceration.

Xochitl Bervera, previously Co-Director of [Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children](#), created the curriculum and served as the lead trainer for the Leadership Institute for Families. Xochitl's extraordinary talents in working with those most affected helped to create an ideal environment for learning from one another and sharing the experiences that led people to apply for the Institute. During the two-day Institute, participants examined successful campaigns on behalf of children involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems, learned about how oppression affects all of us in varying degrees, and how together we can bring change.

The Campaign feels fortunate to have had such wonderful teachers and is thankful to all who participated in the Leadership Institute for Families. The success of the Institute is best described by its participants, some of whose comments are below.

Those interested in the wisdom of the Leadership Institute for Families should connect with the [National Parent Caucus](#) (NPC). The NPC hosts monthly calls for parents, families and allies to share information about the juvenile justice system and the reform efforts. NPC's July call will take place on July 1 at 5:00 PM EST, 4:00 PM CST and 2:00 PM PST. Anyone interested in participating should call 866.524.0621 and use code

7831935097. Please contact Grace Bauer at [Familiescantwait@yahoo.com](mailto:Familiescantwait@yahoo.com) for more information on the NPC and the Leadership Institute for Families.

Here is what several participants had to say about the Leadership Institute for Families:

- **Ernest Johnson**, father of a son charged as an adult in New Orleans and a Community Organizer for Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children says, "The room was filled with energy. Everyone gave so much of themselves! It provided me with an urgency and understanding that these systems must come down.... We must continue to use the information we learned from the Institute to develop a force that demands change for our youth."
- **Pete Shevlin**, father of a son charged as an adult in Charleston, South Carolina reflected by saying, "It is difficult to find folks who understand the many facets of child imprisonment. The dedicated attendees not only understand the effects of child imprisonment, they shape the discussion and direction of the movement to reduce crime and violence through improved treatment of juvenile offenders.... Without the Campaign's organizing efforts, I fear that American children will increasingly suffer and the country will become increasingly more violent year after year. Learning from such a wide range of activists has not only provided examples for me to follow but lifted my spirit and provided much needed energy to continue."
- **Sadric Bonner**, a mother from Greensboro, North Carolina comments, "Out of all the workshops I have attended, this one left me with the thought of a village atmosphere of brothers and sisters born to collectively support one another and impact lives, leaving a legacy of trailblazers to follow."
- **Sheila Montgomery**, mother of son tried and incarcerated as an adult in Portland, Oregon says, "Often times the family voice is not heard when dealing with the system.... The training gave me tools that I will be able to use ... in Oregon to try to make changes to our unjust system. Words cannot even begin to say how thankful I was and am for having this opportunity.... The group quickly connected from the beginning and bonded so much that when it was down to our last time to speak many of us were in tears."
- **Grace Warren**, from Chicago, Illinois and mother of incarcerated son, says, "I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to attend the training class at the Leadership Institute. By learning the background of the juvenile justice system it has motivated me to move forward in action. Before the class I felt I was fighting a losing battle, [but] now I feel like I can make a difference. With the awareness and education I received at the Institute I am capable of organizing a group of families and friends ... for a cause [through] a tactful strategy. "

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## VOICES



### **Lisa, North Carolina**

Lisa's son turned himself in to the authorities after a probation violation. After two days in jail awaiting trial, her son called her to tell her that he was in a cell by himself. Fearing her son's depression and suicidal history, Lisa called the jail and asked that

he be placed on suicide watch and not left alone. The jail, which has no record of Lisa's call, took no action whatsoever, and the Sheriff's Office, which was aware of Lisa's son's suicidal history, did not pass this information on to the jail. Tragically, Lisa's son was found unconscious in his cell about seven hours later, hanging by a bed sheet from a railing in the handicap bathroom. He died the next morning at the hospital.

"Every day is a challenge for me," says Lisa, who is having difficulty getting answers or even information about what happened to her son. "The doors are closed to parents in investigations, so the only way to find out what happened is to file a lawsuit.... [This is] a cold and tragic way to deal with this." Lisa wants policies that place youth in adult jails to change because she has learned firsthand that nonviolent offenders are treated like the worst criminals, and children are placed in segregation because adult facilities cannot accommodate juveniles. She says, "Juveniles have no place to go... [my son] shouldn't have had to die in jail."

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## **CFYJ WELCOMES SUMMER FELLOWS**

### **Elizabeth Collins-Wildman, Fellow**

Elizabeth is a native New Yorker entering her senior year at Carleton College in Minnesota where she studies Mathematics, co-facilitates interfaith activities, and manages the college's house for student activism. She has a strong interest in justice policy research and children's rights. Elizabeth has previously worked at the US Bureau of Justice Statistics and New York Advocates for Children and has volunteered at a Minnesota state prison. As a CFYJ Fellow, she hopes to learn more about juvenile justice from an advocacy perspective through her work on Campaign research and policy reports.

### **Eileen DeLeon, Fellow**

Eileen joins the Campaign from New Rochelle, New York. She is a recent graduate of The City College of New York where she studied Economics and English Literature. She found the Campaign through the Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship, a program that supports undergraduates through three summers of challenging internships. Through the Fellowship, Eileen has developed a passion for the nonprofit sector and an interest in public policy, which led her to CFYJ. She is excited to learn more about developing grassroots campaigns through her work at the Campaign on national outreach and field organizing.

### **Nicholas Guindon, Fellow**

Nicholas comes to CFYJ from York University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. His academic interests include astronomy, technology, philosophy and international studies. He enjoys sailing and has spent time as a sailing instructor for children. Nicholas became interested in juvenile justice through a personal connection when two girls he knew were sentenced as juveniles for the first degree murder of their mother. This was the first premeditated murder by females under 18 and the first matricide by youth in Canada. Nicholas applied for an international internship through Global Experiences, who suggested CFYJ.

### **Kelly Latta, Fellow**

A native of Philadelphia, Kelly is entering her second year at Harvard Law. She graduated from Cornell University with a degree in Classics, and before entering Law school, she taught English at a middle school in China. She has interned for the District Attorney in Philadelphia and found CFYJ while looking for organizations that focus on youth issues and advocate for effective alternatives to mass incarceration.

**Megan McQuiddy, Fellow**

Megan, a native of Richmond, Virginia, is entering her third year at Georgetown Law. She became interested in criminal justice reform after taking a number of classes in deviance and social control as an undergraduate at the College of William and Mary. As a law student, Megan participated in the Street Law Clinic through which she had the opportunity to teach law in a second-chance high school in DC. Through the clinic, she came to know students affected by both the welfare and juvenile justice systems and became passionate about the need for reform. Megan is thrilled to be working with CFYJ this summer, and upon graduation, she hopes to stay in DC and continue to work to reform the systems affecting youth and families in our society.

**Scott Reed, Fellow**

Scott, originally from Alpharetta, Georgia, joins CFYJ from Harvard University where he studies Government. He came to CFYJ to explore the field of juvenile criminal justice and his interests in advocacy work and the nonprofit sector. As a Media Fellow, Scott works on compiling weekly news updates for the Campaign, and is excited to learn how a nonprofit organization makes use of the various forms of media. Scott is considering a career in law and enjoys politics, the environment, football, and basketball.

**Rosemary Taveras, Fellow**

Rosemary comes to CFYJ from Queens, New York. She is a recent graduate of Brooklyn College where she studied Psychology with minors in Puerto Rican and Latino Studies and English. She is interested in juvenile justice reform because she thinks it is an important issue that is too often ignored. She learned about CFYJ through the Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship and was immediately drawn to the Campaign's mission. In her free time, Rosemary enjoys cooking and playing the guitar and is excited to explore Washington, DC this summer.

**Gordon Wilson, Fellow**

Gordon, originally from San Francisco, California, has lived in every corner of the Bay Area. As a rising junior at Chico State University, he studies Communications and has minors in Marketing and Exercise Science. Gordon developed a passion for juvenile justice reform while growing up when many of his friends became involved in the system. He loves being an advocate for youth because he believes every child can be rehabilitated, and he is excited to spend this summer with CFYJ learning more about the juvenile justice system. In his spare time, Gordon enjoys playing basketball and working out.

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**ON THE CALENDAR****July 1: CFYJ Turns Five!**

On July 1, the Campaign for Youth Justice turns five! We plan to celebrate with a cake and thank everyone who has contributed to efforts around the country to end the practice of trying, sentencing, and incarcerating youth in adult criminal court! Please mark your calendars and join us for a "virtual" birthday celebration!

**July 1: National Parent Caucus Hosts Monthly Call**

On July 1, the National Parent Caucus (NPC) hosts its monthly call for parents, families and allies to share information about the juvenile justice system and the reform efforts. The call will take place at 5:00 PM EST, 4:00 PM CST and 2:00 PM PST. Anyone

interested in participating should call 866.524.0621 and use code 7831935097.

### **July 7: National Juvenile Justice Call-in Day**

On July 7, 2010, the National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition will be hosting a national call-in day to push Congress to pass a comprehensive juvenile justice agenda. We need you to contact your Members of Congress and ask them to make juvenile justice a priority in the 111th Congress by: (1) Reauthorizing the JJDPDA; (2) Increasing juvenile justice appropriations; and (3) Passing the Youth PROMISE Act. Look for the action alert in this newsletter! If you have any questions, contact Kelly Latta at 202-558-3580 x 17 or by email at [jjnational@campaignforyouthjustice.org](mailto:jjnational@campaignforyouthjustice.org).

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## **TAKE ACTION, SPREAD THE WORD**

**Call, Call, Call** your Senators and Representative on July 7 using the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121. Urge your Members of Congress to (1) Reauthorize the JJDPDA; (2) Increase juvenile justice appropriations; and (3) Pass the Youth PROMISE Act. Time is running out for comprehensive juvenile justice reform!



**Contact** Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley and tell him, "No New Jail for Youth in Baltimore! Invest in Alternatives!" The State of Maryland is on the verge of building a new jail for youth charged as adults, spending more than \$100 million dollars! Send a letter to Governor O'Malley [here](#).

**Honor and Raise Awareness** through participating in July's Join the Movement Advocacy Activity! Hold a vigil on July 4 in honor of incarcerated youth who have lost their freedom. For a "how to" vigil guide click [here](#).

**Ask** for your own "Join the Movement" take action kit! Send an email to [jointhemovement@cfyj.org](mailto:jointhemovement@cfyj.org).

**Encourage** parents and families who have been directly affected by punitive policies that try youth as adults to join the National Parent Caucus at <http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/parents-resource-center/local-parent-group-listing.html>.

**Follow** CFYJ on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/justiceforyouth>.

**Send** your story of a youth tried as an adult or refer a friend to participate in the Case Profiles Project at <http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/tell-us-your-story.html>.

**Listen** to past episodes of the *Juvenile Justice Matters* radio show at <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/jjmatters>.

**Join** the Campaign for Youth Justice on [Facebook](#) and connect with hundreds of advocates across the country.

**Visit** the Campaign's YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/jjreform>.

**Read** JJ Today, *Youth Today's* blog on juvenile justice at <http://youthtoday.org/talk/comments.cfm?topic=20>.

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## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### Celebrate 5 years with the Campaign for Youth Justice!

On July 1, 2010, the Campaign for Youth Justice celebrates five years of dedication to ending the practice of trying, sentencing and incarcerating youth in the adult criminal justice system.

We are encouraged by the recent wins in a number of the states in 2010 and the momentum must continue! With your help, we can expand grassroots campaigns on the ground in new states to show support for reform.

Help us launch campaigns in new states in 2010 by donating \$5, \$50, or \$500!

To donate, click [here](#).

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~ Newsletter edited by Julie Kudrna ~

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