

CAMPAIGN FOR YOUTH JUSTICE

BECAUSE THE CONSEQUENCES AREN'T MINOR

August/September 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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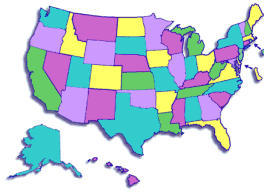
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ACROSS THE COUNTRY



Raise the Age Letter of Support- North Carolina

Brandy Bynum, Raise the Age NC Campaign

Dear Friends of Children,

Children are North Carolina's most vital and valuable resource and investing in them is investing in our collective future. Over 30,000 of our children are currently involved with the adult criminal justice system. Over 85% of these children have committed minor crimes, yet, for many, a single bad decision made when they were 16 or 17 years old will determine the trajectory of their lives. We all know adolescents do not think like adults. As a society, we do not permit them to vote for their leaders, smoke, drink alcohol or make major, life-changing decisions without parental consent, because we have determined they are not sufficiently mature enough to handle these responsibilities. Scientific research on the adolescent brain bears this out.

The areas of adolescent brains that regulate impulses, risk-taking and long-term decision-making are not yet fully formed, making them susceptible to the spur of the moment actions, peer pressure and lack of forethought that can lead to bad choices. Yet when these adolescent bad choices lead to a crime being committed, current North Carolina policy throws the science out the window and automatically prosecutes 16- and 17-year-olds in the adult criminal justice system - regardless of the severity of the crime and without any recourse to be remanded to the juvenile system.

North Carolina is one of two states that continue this practice. The rest of the country has realized that handling juveniles in the juvenile system is being smart on crime. When minors are handled in the juvenile system, fewer of them go on to commit another crime. Lower recidivism rates mean that long-term costs to society are lower, and more youth grow up to become successful, productive citizens.

A bill was introduced in the 2009 session of the N.C. General Assembly to gradually phase 16- and 17-year-olds out of the adult system and into the juvenile system, while retaining judicial authority to send minors to the adult system for any felony (see HB 1414, 2009 session). A legislative task force is currently creating an implementation plan for raising the age. The group will report out in January 2011. For more information about the task force, please visit <http://www.ncdjdp.org/taskForce.html>.

Grassroots support for the principles behind the bill to raise the age is crucial at this point in the process. Before they will act, state legislators must hear from constituents that we want these children's needs met. To that end, Action for Children is collecting signatures to our Raise the Age Statement of Principles. We hope you can join us. Please contact Brandy Bynum at brandy@ncchild.org or 919-834-6623 x237 to sign on to the Statement of Principles as an organization or an individual.

Get Children Out of the Adult System: Justice for Juveniles

Brandy Bynum

Please share this petition with everyone, especially the contacts you have in North Carolina!

When children go to prison, no one wins. Research shows that prosecuting children in the adult criminal justice system wastes young lives, fosters crime, does not increase public safety, and costs society more in the long run.

Youth charged with a crime should start in the juvenile justice system, with judges retaining their current authority to send minors to the adult system for any felony.

Evidence shows that the juvenile system - with programs tailored to how children think and learn - is more effective at rehabilitating youth. Fewer then go on to commit another crime, which means lower costs to society and more children growing up to become educated, employed citizens.

North Carolina is one of only two states in the nation that still prosecute all 16- and 17-year-olds as adults. Incarcerated children in North Carolina have no right to rehabilitative programming, mentoring, counseling, or even an education.

Tell North Carolina's leaders that it's time to join the rest of the country. Tell them to throw out this nearly 100-year-old law and put 16- and 17-year-olds in the juvenile justice system, where they can be treated, rehabilitated, educated, counseled, and prepared for a successful life.

<http://www.change.org/petitions/view/get-children-out-of-the-adult-system-justice-for-juveniles>



FORJ- MO Launch Event A Success

Jessica Sandoval, CFYJ Director of Field Operations

On Tuesday, September 21, 2010, the Families and Friends Organizing for Reform of Juvenile Justice (FORJ-MO) publicly launched a statewide campaign to end the practice of prosecuting children as adults in Missouri.

A panel discussion that included Tracy McClard, a parent advocate and founder of FORJ-MO, was joined by five other speakers at Centenary United Methodist Church, where they addressed a crowd of around 60 people. Many of those in attendance were students and community members. The panel included national and state experts, as well as some who have been personally affected by this issue.

Keynote speaker Dwayne Betts, a Campaign for Youth Justice Spokesperson and a published author and poet -- also incarcerated at a young age -- briefly spoke of his experience in prison and said the public should pay more attention to the issue of youth being in the adult system. "My mom didn't know that juveniles went to prison with adults, and when I went to prison she realized how terrible this was and that somebody should be doing something about this."

Another parent of a child who was in a Missouri adult facility was St. Louis resident Stan Greer, whose son died in a Missouri prison at 24. Greer recalled that he had little access to his son while he was in the adult facility.

The panel also included Joshua Kezer, who was wrongfully convicted of murder. Kezer served nearly 16 years for a crime he did not commit. He was sentenced to serve two consecutive 30-year terms. He was recently exonerated.

Other participants included the Missouri Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Coordinator Bob Perry and Capt. Gregg Ourth of the Scott County Sheriff's Department, the agency that reopened the Lawless case, leading to Kezer's exoneration.

Perry and Ourth addressed the issue of rehabilitation and how more youth should be given the opportunity to stay in juvenile facilities for counseling and education, rather than being placed in adult facilities where they are often victimized and abused.

By launching FORJ-MO, McClard hopes to make connections with other parents and the public to build allies and contacts.

McClard will hold meetings on the first Tuesday of each month, with the first at 6 p.m. Oct. 12 at Crossroads Baptist Church in Jackson, MO.

For more information on FORJ-MO, please visit www.forj-mo.org



Don't Throw Away the Key

Kate Duvall, Don't Throw Away the Key Campaign

Dear Friends,

Don't Throw Away the Key advocates turned out in large numbers for yesterday's meeting of the Virginia State Crime Commission. Thank you to those of you who made it to the meeting! It was made clear to the members of the Commission that there are many individuals who feel passionately that our system of trying youth as adults needs reform. The results of the Crime Commission's study

up to this point are available here. The staff will present their final findings at the December 8th meeting of the Commission. The Commission members will also vote on policy recommendations at that time. **So mark your calendars for December 8th at 10 a.m. to be in Richmond!**

There was a lively and informative discussion of the issues at the meeting. We would like to specifically thank the following advocates who spoke in favor of reform: W.E. Clark, III, Walter Fore, Lauren Whitley, Lillie Branch-Kennedy, Mollyna Ellerbe, Al Simmons, Andy Block, and Yvonne Byrd. We would also like to thank the Virginia Bar Association's Commission on the Needs of Youth and the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association for their remarks in support of increased judicial discretion.

The meeting was covered by the Richmond Times Dispatch and the article is available here.

Be on the lookout for future emails and advocacy opportunities from the Don't Throw Away the Key Campaign!

Kate Duvall

JustChildren

Legal Aid Justice Center

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Charlottesville, Va. 22903

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kate@justice4all.org

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FROM THE HILL



Senate Judiciary Committee Released Report on JJDP A Legislation

On August 5, 2010, the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee released its report on the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2009 (S. 678).

The report includes a section-by-section summary of the bill, as well as its history beginning in 1974, and the need for the reauthorization legislation. At its core, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act is meant to provide greater protections for children in the system.

The committee report cites recent studies issued by the Federal Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention at the U.S. Department of Justice on the negative impacts of prosecuting youth in adult criminal court and placing youth in adult jails and prisons. According to the report,

"After years of pressure to try more and more children as adults and to send them to adult jails and prisons, the Committee has considered carefully with this reauthorization whether that policy is working in the face of strong evidence to the contrary, and the fact that many States are moving toward reducing the number of youth tried as adults."

According to the report significant aspects of the reauthorization include:

- Placing commonsense limits on the pretrial detention of juveniles in adult jails and lock-ups and the detention of juveniles for status offenses.
- Encouraging States to continue working toward reducing racial and ethnic disparities in their juvenile justice systems.
- Expanding the allowable use of grant funds for mental health and substance abuse training and treatment.
- Encouraging States to devise strategies to eliminate the incidence of dangerous practices, unreasonable restraints, and isolation of juveniles through the increased use of training and best practices.
- Increases in Federal funding for prevention, intervention and treatment programs designed to reduce the incidence of juvenile crime.

For a copy of the report, visit:

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_reports&docid=f:sr280.pdf

CFYJ Responds to Call for Comments by the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

On August 2, CFYJ responded to the Coordinating Council's call for comments. The Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, an independent body within the executive branch of the federal government and chaired by the Attorney General, coordinates federal juvenile delinquency prevention programs, federal programs and activities that detain or care for unaccompanied juveniles, and federal programs relating to missing and exploited children. The request was issued regarding the Coordinating Council's examination of federal policies and practices that affect children, youth, and families in four priority areas: Education and at-risk youth; Juvenile reentry and transitions into adulthood; Racial/ethnic disparities in juvenile justice and related systems; and Tribal youth and juvenile justice.

The CFYJ response states that, "In order for the Coordinating Council to adequately address its four stated priority issues-education and at-risk youth, reentry, racial and ethnic disparities, and tribal youth-it must effectively deal with the issue of the approximately 200,000 youth being processed in adult criminal court each year."

CFYJ recommendations include:

1. Ensure that the Council's analysis of federal policy and practice addresses youth

prosecuted in the adult criminal justice system.

2. Engage youth and their families directly affected by the juvenile justice and adult criminal justice systems in policy discussions in a meaningful way.

3. Support and prepare for a strong reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP).

4. Collect data on youth under 18 who are tried as adults.

For a copy of the CFYJ letter, visit:

<http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/Coordinating-Councils-Request-for-Public-Comments-7.23.pdf>

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RESEARCH AND POLICY

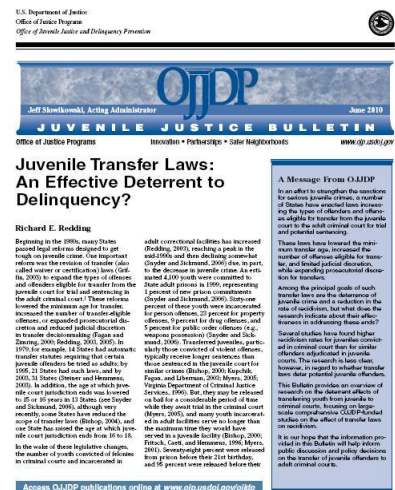
OJJDP Bulletin Examining Juvenile Transfer Laws Now Available in Print

Originally released online in 2008, the OJJDP bulletin "Juvenile Transfer Laws: An Effective Deterrent to Delinquency?" is now available for the first time in print.

Authored by Richard E. Redding, the bulletin confirms extensive research finding that transfer laws have had the unintended consequence of increasing, rather than decreasing, recidivism rates and suggests that any intended deterrent effect of these laws has been largely unsuccessful. Possible factors that increase recidivism include:

- The stigmatization and other negative effects of labeling juveniles as convicted felons.
- The sense of resentment and injustice juveniles feel about being tried and punished as adults.
- The learning of criminal mores and behavior while incarcerated with adult offenders.
- The decreased focus on rehabilitation and family support in the adult system.

The Bulletin also points to 2004 research revealing that juvenile offenders are largely unaware of transfer laws and how they are applied, rendering the question of deterrence moot. However, the



Access OJJDP publications online at www.ojjdp.gov/ojdp

Bulletin suggests "educating judges, prosecutors, court personnel, and legislators about the research on transfer may reduce the number of cases transferred to criminal court or the number of transferred cases that result in criminal sanctions."

The bulletin is available online at:

<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/publications/PubAbstract.asp?pubi=242419>

To order copies, visit:

<http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/ShoppingCart/ShopCart.aspx?item=NCJ+220595&repro=0>

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NATIONAL MOMENTUM

Our Children are Running out of Time Reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Now!

Congress is adjourning today! We may have only **a few more hours** to move forward fundamental federal juvenile justice legislation that will protect our most vulnerable children. Help keep children out of adult jails, end the over-incarceration of youth of color in the justice system, and devote more resources to effective juvenile justice programs that protect our young people and keep our communities safe.



Reauthorization of this important law is nearly 4 years overdue and Congress is scheduled to adjourn as early as **today**, leaving just 1 more day for them to act.

*[Click here to watch](#) a video featuring **Representative George Miller**, Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor talk about the prospects for JJJPA reauthorization.*

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Urge Congress to pass a reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act this year by signing the petitions below:

[Sign the House of Representatives Petition](#)

[Sign the Senate Petition](#)

Help us reach our goal of over 15,000 signatures by the end of September by forwarding this Action Alert to your networks.

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MEDIA WRAP

Preview of Missouri Campaign

Tracy McClard and Joshua Kezer were on our Juvenile Justice Matters radio show this month to discuss McClard's new campaign, Families and Friends Organizing for the Reform of Juvenile Justice of Missouri (FORJ-MO). The aim of the new effort, McClard said during the radio show, is to take youth out of adult facilities and place them in programs better suited to their age, such as Missouri's Dual Jurisdiction Program, which is operated by the Department of Youth Services.



FORJ-MO, dedicated to McClard's 17-year old son, Jonathan, who committed suicide while in adult prison, kicked off on Tuesday, September 21, at the Centenary United Methodist Church in Cape Girardeau. Kezer discussed how honored he felt to work with McClard and how he truly wished to work with incarcerated youth and lawmakers in order to stop the practice of placing youth in adult facilities. He discussed his own 16-year experience in jail, from the ages of 18 to 34, and stated that no young person should ever be exposed to the psychological and physical trauma that comes with being incarcerated with adults.

Listen to this program and others on JJ Matters:

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/jjmatters>

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GET ORGANIZED

Support and Information Network for Families

Grace Bauer

This column is dedicated to families of children incarcerated in the adult criminal justice system or at risk of becoming involved in this nation's irrevocably broken criminal justice system. Why, one might ask? I would reply, "Families, across the country, are struggling to figure out how to help their children, in systems that likely do not provide a way for families to do the one thing that comes naturally to them, help your child when he/she is in trouble." Instead, families find themselves trying to navigate legal systems with no legal skills, understand criminal justice systems when few, if any, do, all while the criminal justice system and others treat us as the problem and leave us unable to help our child.

I offer my shoulder to the Grandmother in Indiana, whose 15-year-old grandson has spent over a year in an adult jail awaiting trial. A few weeks ago this boy was found guilty and sentenced to 60 years, despite the fact the family sold their home to secure legal defense and are now raiding other assets to pay for the appeal attorneys. Sadly, all of this takes place simultaneously to her son's 6 year old murder case coming to trial. I have a hard time imagining how incredibly difficult her life is at this time. A grandson in prison, possibly wrongly convicted, a child with a low IQ that keeps asking his Grandmother when he will get to come home and having to sit day after day in your son's murder

trial. Stop for just a moment and put yourself in her place and imagine this to be your child or grandchild.

I offer my ear to the mother in Oregon whose son is expected to take a plea for 89 months without any sense of what zealous legal defense means. Turn off, for a minute, the defense mechanism you may have inside your mind that says "He deserves it or he must have done something horrible to be in this position." He doesn't and he hasn't! He is a young man, with serious mental health problems that has been accused of a crime. At the worst, he may indeed be guilty but we will never know one way or another because he will not get adequate legal defense, let alone "zealous" defense. He will do as hundreds of thousands of others have done before him, he will accept the plea offered because he has been threatened and made to be rightly afraid of being a child of color in a racist criminal justice system.

Do others who don't have children housed in prisons, understand the everyday efforts made by families to remain in touch and helpful to their own child? From the for-profit prison telephone industry, the attorney that doesn't consider you to be the client and therefore feels as if he/she can do a poor job because the child doesn't have the capacity to make good decisions on their own behalf, the prison policies that subject young people to unimaginable fear, brutality and neglect to the Department of Corrections policies that house children hours from the only family they have, the law makers who allow our children to be treated as adults while they are children, all to appear "tough" on crime and lastly, the leaders of government that sanction and feeds this country's addiction to incarceration, through our tax dollars.

The Campaign offers all families a place to come together and seek information, understanding and support through the National Parent Caucus. The National Parent Caucus (NPC) stands ready to hear from those who, in one tragic moment, find themselves and their children ensconced in a system and it's far reaching tentacles of imprisonment, legal defense and laws and policies that, to most, make no sense. The families that belong to the NPC have hard won experience to share with others who now labor under the burdens of the criminal justice system.

Do you know a family that could benefit from the support of other families? Does your reform effort need families to make it stronger and more sustainable? Do you receive calls and letters from families and are unsure of how to help them? Please contact Grace Bauer at Familiescantwait@yahoo.com so we can offer them the support and information they are seeking.

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DWAYNE'S COLUMN



On July 8, 2010 I gathered around a Department of Justice conference table with nine other representatives of the voice of the youth, though truthfully the voice of the youth is a slippery term at best. We were a motley group - some had been to prison, some to juvenile detention centers, several had been in foster care or homeless, one man had been one of the lost boys of Sudan. We were invited to speak about the issues most pressing to society's youth, the morning an example of the justice department extending a hand to the unheard youth affected by policies in foster care, the juvenile justice system and prison that are eviscerating the futures of the nation's most needy and troubled youth. Though I fully believe that the Coordinating Council fully intends to address the issues brought before them at the public hearing, I also believe that these issues are not new and in fact have been brought up repeatedly in the past.

The meeting accomplished little measurable movement in the direction of including representatives of the young in decision-making that will impact them. Yet, "representatives of the young" is just as dangerous a term as "voice of the youth." As I said in the meeting, the Coordinating Council represents many agencies with many individuals who have the concerns of young people at the center of their work. The problem now, as the problem has always been when talking about underrepresented groups, is a failure to have more people close to the problems these committees address on the actual committees. What is truly desired is input on a regular basis from people who have first-hand experience on how the institutions in question have failed, and an expertise on the issues acquired through work and study.

That morning, the Campaign for Youth Justice was represented by three people who had in some way been in direct contact with the criminal justice system and presented a model for effective involvement by representatives of the voices of youth. The three of us had not been offered the responsibility to speak, solely because we were in the criminal justice system and/or juvenile justice system. We have training and skills that are independent of our interactions with the justice system. The Coordinating Council could easily do this, yet nothing has happened.

Sitting at the table I realized that many of us had no idea how to actually make a life, make a career out of our passion for helping young people that does not involve service work. Direct service is great, but there is a plethora of people doing that kind of work - and what is really needed is a way for some of us to be in the positions that the representatives in the agency are in currently. Moreover, what of us who are not suited for direct service? How do we become decision makers - not just theoretically, but how would I become a Department of Justice employee with three felonies? I believe that there are practical problems like that, which can be dealt with immediately. We need people to be more than representative voices to appear at a meeting and talk about concerns. I, for one, would love to actually be able to engage in a manner in which there is a standard of skill and knowledge that everyone expects me to have - skill and knowledge that is not a product of me having survived prison, but a product of a college education, years of field work, study and training. I think of the American Bar Association as an example. They publish a series of standards on various justice issues, and periodically revise these standards. Recently, they revised the Juvenile Justice Standards, and amongst the collection of defense attorneys, prosecutors and Judges invited to be a part of the revision process was I. Not only did I get to play a role in the crafting of language, but I had the opportunity to have my voice heard in a way that will definitely impact the ABA's stance on certain

issues in regards to juveniles in family court and in the criminal justice system.

One young man who had lunch with me afterwards remarked that he could no longer complain, because he'd had an opportunity to talk with the people who have power. I understand his sentiment - but it is not mine. A voice is a very important thing to have, but tangible influence is far more important. Tangible influence is what we lacked before the meeting, and it is what we still lack, now that the meeting is over. There is no doubt that young people who have been affected by these issues and are able to contribute to a search for manageable solutions are readily available throughout the District and all across the country. It is time for agencies to begin to appoint youth to councils such as this one, and to hire qualified youth to work for agencies that have oversight over youth policy; but, maybe, more importantly it is time for many of us who are aware of these issues to advocate not only for change, but for the development and training of a generation of leaders.

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VOICES



After surviving repeated instances of sexual abuse as a child, Norman fell in with the wrong crowd and began acting out. He was arrested at age 16 and is currently serving his sentence in prison in Pennsylvania. He writes:

"I have always been respectful to everyone and I play basketball so I don't have problems with guys in here. In jail, I show respect to also get it. There are programs for people in prison but it seems that a lot of people who are doing life get put at the back of the waiting lists. I truly have been lucky in this aspect of getting tons of programs and schooling; they have stress, anger [management], G.E.D., and vocational classes here.

I'm white and I don't think my color had a factor in my criminal trial but I do believe that being from a poor family did. If I was a rich kid, I would have been treated differently.

Some people don't want to change but a ton of us do. I believe that we should have an opportunity at parole. Also, there should be programs to help young kids stay out of these places; not Scared Straight, but a program where the kids are shown more respect... I would also install programs that have an outreach to the community to build bridges between us inmates and the community. It tears our families' and our hearts apart when we get our visits and we are left behind.

I am doing life without parole but I have hope that it will change one day, and if I get out I'm going to look for a job and stay active. I have a great support system and family and friends who love me, so I should be OK. I would also like to get involved with talking to juveniles about my situation and let them know I speak from experience. I'd like to be married and start a family one day.

People told me that I was smart and could go places but I never cared about my potential until after I came up to the state prison system. Now I am living a positive life and learning so much. I hope to one day continue my personal growth on the outside. I have even started a scholarship in memory of my victim with the blessing of his family. Let us live towards a positive future."

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PASSIONATE VOLUNTEERS

Featured Volunteer: Rachel Beers

Rachel Beers volunteers at the Campaign weekly by answering prison correspondence from currently incarcerated individuals and their families. Rachel is a native of Ambler, Pennsylvania, a town just outside of Philadelphia. She studied at the Lyndon B. Johnson School at the University of Texas at Austin where she received her master's degree in Public Affairs.



Rachel was drawn to the Campaign for Youth Justice because she feels that the issue of juvenile justice reform impacts not only the individuals who are directly involved in the system, but our society as a whole. "How we treat children is a reflection of our values and priorities," she explains, "and the work of the Campaign reflects the direction I hope we are heading in."

Though her current job is far removed from advocacy work, Rachel feels that she is really making a difference through her volunteer work with CFYJ. In her spare time she enjoys baking, running, reading Jane Austen novels, and rooting for the Philadelphia Phillies.

We thank you for your help and support, Rachel!

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ON THE CALENDAR

Please join us in October as we celebrate National Youth Justice Run/Walk month!

Sunday, October 17:

Louisiana: National Campaign for Youth Justice/Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FLIC) 5k Run/Walk

Time: 9:30 am (Registration begins at 8:00 am)

Location: Audubon Park, Shelter 10

For more information contact: Ernest Johnson at ejohnson@fflic.org



Sunday, October 24:

Illinois: National Campaign for Youth Justice 5k Run/Walk

Location: TBD

For more information contact: Grace Warren at gracewarren@sbcglobal.net

Missouri: Families and Friends Organizing for Reform of Juvenile Justice (FORJ) will sponsor its first national 5k Run/Walk

Time: 2:00pm. (Registration begins at 12:00pm)

Location: North Cape County Park

2400 County Park Dr.

Cape Girardeau, MO, 63701

Registration form and info available at: <http://www.caperoadrunners.org>

For more information: Contact Tracy McClard at (573) 837-7346

Medals to top 3 finishers in each age group in run and walk. Trophies to overall male and female winners in 5K Run.

North Carolina: National Campaign for Youth Justice 5k Run/Walk

Location: Greensboro, NC

For more information contact: Sadric Bonner at

sadricbonner@yahoo.com or Ruth Ann Foster at

ruthannfoster@triad.rr.com

Virginia: National Campaign for Youth Justice 5k Run/Walk

Location: TBD

For more information contact: Almeta Harrington at

almeta@favyouth.org

Wisconsin: National Campaign for Youth Justice 5k Run/Walk

Location: Riders Club Rd. - OHS Soccer Fields

Onalaska WI 54650

For more information contact: Vicky Gunderson at vicgundy@aim.com



Please also join us for the following upcoming events:

October 5: National Parent Caucus Call

Time: 5:00pm

For more information: Contact Grace Bauer at familiescantwait@yahoo.com

October 11: Raise the Age in North Carolina Forum

Time: 11:30am

Location: TBD

For more information: Contact Valerie Pearce at valerie@cfcrights.org

October 12: Families & Friends Organizing for Reform in Missouri- Monthly meeting

Time: 6:00pm

Location:

Crossroads Baptist Church

East Jackson Blvd.

Jackson, MO 63755

For more information: Contact Tracy McClard (573) 837-7346

October 14: Baltimore Youth in the Adult Criminal Justice System Forum

Time: 10:00am

Location:

OSI-Baltimore

201 North Charles Street, Suite 1300

Baltimore, MD 21201

RSVP required. Contact OSI Baltimore at www.soros.org

October 16: Raise the Age in North Carolina Forum

Time: 11:00am

Location: TBD

For more information: Contact Tonya Atkins at tonya@forsythfutures.org

October 23: Raise the Age in North Carolina Forum

Time: 2:00pm

Location:

Durham Public Library

300 N Roxboro Street

Durham, NC 27701-3414

For more information: Contact Rob Thompson at rob@nccovenant.org

October 23: Youth Justice Day in DC - Potluck community picnic

Time: 12:00-2:00pm

Location: Anacostia Park

For more information contact: Shanta' Gray at sgray@cfyj.org

October 25: Raise the Age in North Carolina Forum

Time: 5:30pm

Location:

Wilmington Downtown Library

201 Chestnut Street

Wilmington, NC 28401

For more information: Contact Rob Thompson at rob@nccovenant.org

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TAKE ACTION, SPREAD THE WORD



Brittany Brown, Fellow

Brittany, originally from Georgia, joins CFYJ this semester from Northeastern School of Law in Boston, Massachusetts. She attended the University of Georgia as an undergraduate with a major in International Affairs. After completing her undergraduate degree, Brittany joined Teach for America, a national organization with the goal that all children receive an adequate education. After her experiences at Teach for America, she realized that there was a population of young people flowing directly from the school system into the criminal system. Brittany knew that kids were committing crimes as early as age twelve and she couldn't imagine that they would become productive citizens if placed in the adult system, especially knowing their backgrounds. Brittany gained an interest in the Campaign because she wants to give all children a chance and ensure that they have the services they need before they are "thrown away." In her free time, Brittany enjoys traveling, live music, and exploring all that DC has to offer.

Monette Buchanan, Fellow

Monette comes to the Campaign from New Orleans, LA. She is in her junior year at Dillard University where she is studying Sociology and Criminal Justice. Monette is interested in the Campaign because she believes that it will bring her closer to her future career goals and she has a strong interest in youth justice issues. She explains that she developed an interest in these issues because of the things she has seen back in New Orleans. Monette seeks knowledge on what can be done to change the system. Upon graduation, Monette hopes to continue on to Law School with goals of ultimately becoming a juvenile prosecutor because she believes that the position is abused and she wants to make positive changes. In her free time, Monette enjoys reading the Bible and enhancing her academic and professional skills.

Lauren Coffey, Fellow

Lauren joins the Campaign from Littleton, Massachusetts. She is a senior at Assumption College studying Sociology, Criminology, and Human Services & Rehabilitation. Lauren developed an interest in CFYJ because she feels passionately about reforming the many issues in our justice system, especially at the juvenile level. She believes that everyone deserves a second chance and she wants to work with youth because she feels that they are still very impressionable and have so much

potential. Lauren also is interested in learning more about advocacy work in the non-profit sector. Upon graduation, Lauren hopes to obtain a job in which she is able to advocate for youth in some way. In her free time, Lauren loves going to the beach, spending time with friends and family, volunteering, and cheering on the New England Patriots.

Courtney George, Fellow

Courtney, a Policy Fellow at CFYJ, is a student at Georgetown Law. She is originally from Georgia, but completed her undergraduate work at the University of Miami as a Criminology and Psychology student. Issues of juvenile justice contributed to Courtney's decision to go to law school. She was drawn to the Campaign because she wants to learn even more about these issues and about advocating from a policy perspective. When she has free time, Courtney is a fan of cooking, listening to music, and exploring DC.

Satinder Kaur, Fellow

Satinder's family is originally from India, but she was born and raised in New York. She is a junior at Georgetown University pursuing a major in History with minors in French and Italian. Satinder is a Media Fellow at the Campaign and is looking forward to having the opportunity to do media projects. Furthermore, she agrees with the ideals of the Campaign, explaining that everybody deserves a second chance. After her undergraduate study, she hopes to join the Peace Corps with a placement in Africa. In her free time, Satinder enjoys running and reading.

Dan Lehrman, Fellow

Dan is a sophomore at George Washington University, but originally hails from Forrest Hills, NY. The Political Science major and Classics minor was drawn to CFYJ because he feels strongly about what the organization stands for and thinks it's great that CFYJ defends people that need defending, making an effort nationally and state-to-state to help kids. This is Dan's first internship, but he works for a program at GWU where he advocates for kids having problems with judicial systems in schools. Dan feels that no one should be thrown into a system in which they are overwhelmed, and he wants to help raise awareness for these issues in any way possible. In his free time, Dan enjoys relaxing, cooking, hanging out with his friends, and going to Nationals games.

Lakeiya Maxwell, Fellow

Lakeiya is a recent graduate of Georgetown University Law Center. She attended Cornell University for her undergraduate work with a major in Industrial and Labor Relations. She is originally from Chicago, Illinois. Lakeiya worked helping young adults find employment in Chicago and developed an interest in issues concerning youth and their involvement in the criminal justice system. In her free time, Lakeiya enjoys spending time with friends, reading, and watching made-for-tv movies!

Chris McVeigh, Fellow

Chris, a senior at American University, joins the Campaign from Acton, Massachusetts. He is a senior majoring in interdisciplinary studies. His major is a combination of Communications, Law, Economics, and Government. Chris pursued an internship at the Campaign because of some interesting classes he had taken in this field. The Campaign is Chris' second internship, as he previously interned with Students for Sensible Drug Policy. When he has free time, Chris likes to play soccer.

Rachel Vorsanger, Fellow

Rachel, a senior at George Washington University, originally hails from Queens, New York. She is a Criminal Justice major, with a minor in Fine Arts and Art History. Rachel began looking into CFYJ because a close family friend worked at the Campaign in the past. As she researched the organization, she gained interest in pursuing an internship because she felt strongly about the cause and felt that it would be a good fit for her. She is a Media Fellow at the Campaign this semester. Rachel studied abroad in Madrid in the fall of 2009 and hopes to go back to Spain after graduation. In the limited free time she has, Rachel enjoys photography, reading, and exercising.

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~ Newsletter edited by Lauren Coffey ~

HOW YOU CAN HELP



How You Can Help

At the Campaign for Youth Justice, we believe that it will take grassroots campaigns across the country to change the flawed and ineffective policies and mandates that have sent thousands of youth into the adult criminal justice system. The misinformation, myths and media hype that propelled states to enact tougher penalties, especially in the 1990's, that have failed miserably must now be confronted with accurate research and the firsthand accounts of those who have suffered from the impact of these laws.

Please support the National Parent Caucus!

The National Parent Caucus is a space in which families can come together for support, information and to share ideas. Through this network of families and allies we envision a place for families to give and receive information and experiences, to learn about what works, what doesn't, what has been tried and successful and what has failed. It will be a place to find resources and support and to make strategic decisions about what actions to take to achieve our goals. Here is a list of some of the National Parent Caucus activities:

- Create a cooperative set of principles that will extensively ensure the improvement of the lives of our children in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.
- Provide support, information and assistance for the individual needs of families and their children.
- Provide support, technical assistance, strategic planning, and execution of grassroots efforts for reform.
- Create an institution of useful and timely materials on juvenile justice issues and events.
- Engage families in juvenile justice issues on the local level and include them in activities related to federal legislation in the best interest of all children.

For the month of October, we are asking you to participate in our "Fall 2010" Campaign. With this Campaign, you can donate \$2.10, \$20.10, \$200.10, \$2,000.10, and even \$20,000.10! Every donation made will help our Parent Caucus grow to over three hundred families.

To donate, go to <http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/donate.html>.

Tell a friend, to tell a friend, about the "Fall 2010" Campaign by forwarding this email.

Let's work together to build The National Parent Caucus.

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CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES AT A GLANCE

Why start a "campaign" on "transfer" in your state?

Liz Ryan

[We are asked regularly why we take a campaign approach to ending the practice of prosecuting youth in adult court and thought we'd start a series of conversations in our newsletter to discuss all the various aspects of a "campaign."]

There are many reasons to start a transfer "campaign" in your state. Here are our "top five":

First, youth of color are most disparately impacted by policies that require the prosecution of youth in adult court and placement in adult jails and prisons. In 2008, CFYJ launched a "Race & Ethnicity" policy brief series to document the disparate impact of prosecuting youth of color in the criminal justice system. The results are devastating and show overwhelming and growing disparities at every stage in the juvenile justice system, with the most disparate impact at the point of transfer to adult court.

Second, this is the most broken part of the juvenile justice system where the research has definitively shown that sending youth to adult criminal court actually increases crime. Major research institutions, the US Department of Justice, Scientists at the Federal Centers for Disease Control, and heads of national professional associations and organizations have all stated unequivocally that prosecuting youth in adult court does not work.

Third, the point at which youth are placed in the adult criminal justice system is a major dividing line between whether our society "gives up" on a child or not. Essentially when a child is placed in adult criminal court - through whichever legal statute - we are saying as a society that this young person is beyond rehabilitation, that this child is not worth investing in, that this child's life is not worth saving. It is the "point of no return" as most state laws do not allow for sending children back to the juvenile justice system once they are under adult court jurisdiction.

Fourth, the consequences of prosecution in adult criminal court for youth are life-long. By prosecuting children in adult court, children are precluded by law from participation in rehabilitative programs. These children are negatively impacted for the rest of their lives. This is the equivalent of the scarlet letter that a child must bear for the rest of their lives that is virtually eraseable and follows a youth whenever they apply for employment, education or other opportunities.

Fifth, it is winnable and the public is supportive. In the past five years, some states have made major changes to their state policies and in nearly a third of the states, some incremental changes have been made. The public strongly supports revising state policies. According to public opinion polling, the public strongly supports investing in rehabilitative approaches to help youth, not prosecution in adult

court or placement in adult jails and prisons. Bottom line, "transfer reform" is possible.

Next month we'll discuss steps you can take before launching a transfer 'campaign' in your state. Please share your feedback, comments and ideas on this article! We'd also like to know what questions you have about campaigns and what topics you'd like to see in future articles. Please contact Liz Ryan at lryan@cfyj.org.

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CALL FOR STORIES

Did you have contact with the adult criminal justice system when you were 17? Do you know someone (a family member, mentee, student, etc.) who had such contact at 17?

We need your stories!

In Massachusetts, all 17-year-olds charged with a crime are automatically tried and sentenced in the adult criminal justice system - despite the fact that for most other purposes 17-year-olds are not considered adults. This policy reduces public safety, is out of step with the vast majority of other states, violates international standards, and is contrary to what we know about adolescent development.

Citizens for Juvenile Justice is gathering stories of people who were prosecuted, tried, sentenced, or incarcerated in Massachusetts as adults for crimes allegedly committed when they were 17. We plan to use these stories to show how being tried and sentenced in adult court, or confined in adult facilities, affects a young person.

Your privacy will be protected: we will not share or release your name or other identifying information in these profiles. The power of your story is in the facts and emotions you relate to us, not in your name.

We need less than an hour of your time so that we can meet with you to conduct a brief interview.

Your experience can make a big difference in Massachusetts. Please share it with us now. Contact us to participate in this important project or to ask any questions you may have.

Save the Date for our next Juvenile Justice Forum!

Join us for a panel discussion on gangs on Wednesday, November 3, 3:00-4:30 at the Boston Bar Association. This event is free and open to the public.

Citizens for Juvenile Justice

101 Tremont Street, Suite 1000
Boston, MA 02108



Citizens
for
Juvenile
Justice

Tel: 617-338-1050

Web: www.cfjj.org

A message from North Carolina Action for Children:

We need to hear from North Carolina's youth, young adults and families affected by the juvenile and/or adult criminal justice systems. In partnership with the Covenant with North Carolina's Children, Action for Children will conduct a "Youth Speak" initiative to collect and disseminate to legislators and other key officials the stories of youth and young adults impacted by N.C.'s treatment of 16- and 17-year-olds as adults.

We need your stories!

Please contact brandy@ncchild.org to share your story.

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