

# CAMPAIGN FOR YOUTH JUSTICE

BECAUSE THE CONSEQUENCES AREN'T MINOR

## October 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



#### Visit to Missouri Youth Services

On October 7, 2010, several staff members from the Campaign for Youth Justice and Tracy McClard from FORJ-MO visited a juvenile correctional program run by the Missouri Youth Services Division.

The program serves approximately 40 youth, including youth prosecuted in adult criminal court. Two outstanding young people, Jonathan and Rufus, led the tour and responded to questions from the tour participants. On the tour, participants visited the classrooms, library, living areas and recreational spaces.

"It was a truly amazing visit," says CFYJ President and CEO Liz Ryan. "Missouri provides youth with an environment that fosters rehabilitation, positive youth development, and opportunities for youth to become successful adults. This program should be made available to all youth prosecuted in adult court in Missouri and we strongly encourage other states to adopt this effective approach."

Thanks to Scott Rowson, Larry Strecker, Loran Hume and Tim Decker for arranging this wonderful visit!

For additional information about Missouri's approach, visit: [www.missouriapproach.org](http://www.missouriapproach.org).




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### **"Your Neighbor's Child" Video Provides Eye-Opening Statistics**

"Your Neighbor's Child," a film produced by Wyoming Kids Count, debuted on Wyoming PBS on October 7, 2010 and was screened at several locations throughout the state. The film tells the story of how youth are treated in the criminal justice system in Wyoming. The film interweaves the stories of youth, with the observations of advocates, policy makers, and other leaders in juvenile justice in Wyoming.

Many of the individuals featured in the film share a general bewilderment over the way the Wyoming system treats its youth. The youth share stories of being arrested or having probation revoked for minor offenses such as smoking, of being housed in facilities in terrible conditions and far from their homes and families, and of being shackled and over-medicated while in those facilities. Among policy makers and leaders, there has been some frustration and uncertainty about how to effectively fix the system's failures but throughout the film is the thread of the stories of youth and the urgency about what is happening to them.

The film also tracks the steps that Wyoming has been taking to change its system. The state has recently passed legislation that focuses on reducing the number of kids put into secure facilities and standardizing assessments so that police officers have an objective way of deciding where to put a youth that gets arrested. These goals are supported through the use of alternatives to juvenile detention and by taking a mentoring approach to diversion, as opposed to a compliance approach.

The last portion of the film explores the potential for programs using these types of approaches. It looks at some of the organizations that are using these strategies and the

successes they have had serving Wyoming's youth. (For instance, one organization has decreased the percentage of kids who have their probation revoked from 60-80% to 12-20%.) The film ends reminding us of the youth and their stories and the importance of getting this right.

The message of "Your Neighbor's Child" is reflected in the quote from which the film's title is taken: "I would say to anyone who's willing to lock up a child in a facility with no windows and no room to exercise and no education . . . 'Would you put your child there?' And if you wouldn't put your child there, don't put your neighbor's child there. Because your neighbor's child is coming back to your neighborhood and they will bear the mark of that treatment."

To obtain a copy of the film, visit: <http://www.kidscount.wykids.org/Movie/Movie.html>.  
To learn more about juvenile justice in Wyoming, visit:  
[http://www.kidscount.wykids.org/WYKIDS/JJ\\_Resources\\_.html](http://www.kidscount.wykids.org/WYKIDS/JJ_Resources_.html).

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### **Minor Problems, Major Impact: Juveniles in the Adult Criminal Justice System**

On Wednesday, October 20, 2010, Grace Bauer and Jessica Sandoval of the Campaign for Youth Justice attended a conference at Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pennsylvania called "Minor Problems, Major Impact: Juveniles in the Adult Criminal Justice System."

The conference focused on youth prosecuted in adult court. There were three presenters and two workshop tracks. One of the presenters was Dr. Laurence Steinberg, Ph.D. Steinberg is a nationally and internationally renowned expert on psychological development during adolescence. Steinberg's lecture at the Mercyhurst conference focused on one major question: Does Developmental Science Matter? In this lecture, he argued that presenting science to policymakers can be helpful for understanding how the brain of an adolescent works differently than that of an adult. Steinberg then raised the question of whether immaturity should mitigate criminal responsibility.

The second presenter was Dr. David Myers, Ph.D, a professor in the Department of Criminology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He has taught more than 15 college courses, specializing in research methods and quantitative analysis, juvenile justice, and delinquency.

Ultimately, Steinberg and Myers concluded that adolescents should not be held to the same standards of criminal responsibility or punished as harshly as adults. They both point out that over eight years of research and nearly \$20 million dollars spent has proved that incarceration has no impact on reoffending beyond the immediate effect of incapacitation. Steinberg and Myers also said that research has shown that substance abuse treatment reduces reoffending and that community based programs involving families are most cost-effective for juvenile rehabilitation.

The third presenter was Grace Bauer, a field organizer at the Campaign for Youth Justice. The mother of three children from Louisiana, Bauer's first experience with the juvenile justice system came when her son was sent to a juvenile correctional facility where he was abused and mistreated. Bauer became a passionate advocate for juvenile justice reform when it became clear to her that there needed to be serious changes made in the

correctional system.

In her presentation, Bauer shared her story and exposed some of the problems with our justice system, such as the fact that there is no system accountability for the treatment of youth and nowhere to turn for help or redress of grievances. She pointed out that many youth are suffering from extreme abuse with no one to turn to for help and are in facilities that are located nowhere near their families.

Since joining the Campaign in 2008, she has worked to unite parents and allies of children in six targeted states to change laws and practices that result in children being prosecuted and confined as adults. She has also led the development of the National Parent Caucus, a network of family members who have joined together to end the practice of trying, sentencing and incarcerating children as adults.



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### **Principles of Effective Juvenile Justice Coalitions**

Check out this terrific resource: "Principles of Effective Juvenile Justice Coalitions" presented at the National Juvenile Justice Network Annual Forum in New Orleans, Louisiana on July 15, 2010 by Robert M. Francis, Executive Director of RYASAP and one of the founders of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance. The article shows that effective community based and statewide coalitions focused on juvenile justice system reform can be a powerfully effective way of initiating and sustaining major system reforms. The purpose of this paper is twofold: (1) to describe a local juvenile justice reform coalition that sparked, built and fostered a formal statewide juvenile justice system reform organization; and (2) to describe the principles of coalition building that were instrumental in the development of these efforts.

To download the entire piece, go to <http://www.ryasap.org/dataresearch> and click on "Effective Juvenile Justice Coalitions."

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### **FROM THE HILL**

**Family Justice Act Introduced**



Juvenile Justice advocates, youth, and families were given a boost on September 29 when H.R. 6361, the Family Justice Act of 2010, was introduced by Healthy Families Subcommittee Chairwoman Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) just prior to Congress' fall recess. In introducing the bill, Chairwoman McCarthy noted that "current data highlights the need for stronger family engagement and independent oversight bodies to monitor facilities, improve conditions of confinement, and protect youth from abuses."

Recognizing the integral role families play in youth success upon release, the Family Justice Act seeks to increase family engagement through a grant program which will provide funds to a qualifying non-profit organization in a state. These funds will be used to establish monitoring panels that involve youth and families in developing better policies and practices to support youth's rehabilitation and to help reduce recidivism.

Pilot sites will create a monitoring panel with representation from a wide range of stakeholders including, incarcerated and recently incarcerated youth at the facility, families of incarcerated youth, youth/family-oriented non-profits with a criminal justice basis, state government, youth advocates, educational and mental health providers, and child welfare officials among others. The monitoring panel will be empowered to conduct a review and assessment of the facilities where youth are held, conduct confidential interviews of youth and facility staff, and will make recommendations to facility administrators to improve policies and practices, to increase communication, access and engagement between families, incarcerated youth and facility staff and to help youth successfully transition back into their communities.

Failures in communication, eroded trust, and feelings of futility in effectuating change have all been cited as barriers to family involvement in the juvenile justice system- these barriers hinder rehabilitation and can further strain relationships between incarcerated youth and their families. Families and youth often feel alienated from a system that demands changes in behavior but fails to provide assistance with or access to strong support networks or resources to address underlying issues that would empower families to assist in the rehabilitation of youth in the system.

Key provisions of H.R. 6361, the Family Justice Act, include:

- Administrators of the monitored facility will create an implementation team who have the authority to make changes recommended by the monitoring panel;
- Increased access to the monitored facility to allow community based organizations to conduct visits, to office space for entities acting in the interest of youth in the facility, to court-appointed attorneys to speak with youth on regular basis about the facility;
- Improved visitation and contact policies with youth in facilities by reducing visitation restrictions and transportation barriers;
- Incorporation of panel recommendations in quality and effective after care plans for youth;
- Increased dialogue between facility administrators, staff, and families through regular

updates on individual youth's status and integrating family input in medical, mental health, and educational decisions.

The Family Justice Act is a significant step forward in juvenile justice reform. By incorporating the very voices most directly impacted by the policies and practices of facilities where youth are held, this bill will increase communication and collaboration between juvenile justice system stakeholders to promote better outcomes for system-involved youth and their families.

Click here to encourage your representatives to support the bill!

[http://www.change.org/petitions/view/support\\_the\\_family\\_justice\\_act](http://www.change.org/petitions/view/support_the_family_justice_act)

For additional information on the Family Justice Act, visit:

<http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/component/content/article/59.html>

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### **Final Push on JJDP A Reauthorization in 2010**

Thanks to everyone who weighed in during the countdown "call for action" on the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) before the congressional recess! More than 15,000 letters were sent and numerous calls were made.

Congress adjourned without taking action on the JJDP A but will reconvene for a "lame duck" session on November 15, 2010. During the several week post-election "lame duck" session, there may be another opportunity for Congress to pass the JJDP A.

Given this potential opportunity, we invite you to join us for a final push to move the JJDP A reauthorization forward in the 111th Congress.

Here are several ways you can take action:

#### **1) Tell Congress (again!) to pass the JJDP A this year!**

Many of you have already contacted your congressional delegation and we are asking that you make one final "pitch" to them to get this bill to the President's desk this year. You can send letters (see links below), call, or send postcards.

Here are the links to send letters:

Senate:

[http://www.change.org/petitions/view/tell\\_the\\_senate\\_pass\\_juvenile\\_justice\\_reform\\_now](http://www.change.org/petitions/view/tell_the_senate_pass_juvenile_justice_reform_now)

House:

[http://www.change.org/petitions/view/tell\\_the\\_house\\_pass\\_juvenile\\_justice\\_reform\\_now](http://www.change.org/petitions/view/tell_the_house_pass_juvenile_justice_reform_now)

To order a packet of postcards, contact Courtney George at [jjnational@cfyj.org](mailto:jjnational@cfyj.org).

#### **2) Join us for "Youth Justice Action Day" on November 9, 2010**

Just before Congress reconvenes, we are hosting "Youth Justice Action Day!" This is an opportunity to reach out to youth who are directly affected by the juvenile and criminal justice systems to get involved in these efforts!

For ideas on how to take action, contact Daniel Lehrman at [jjfield@cfyj.org](mailto:jjfield@cfyj.org) to get a free "Youth Justice Action Day" toolkit.

### 3) Host a Holiday Visit for Your Congressional Delegation

Organizations and individuals can organize events for Members of Congress and their staff to visit youth participating in juvenile justice programs, community-based alternatives to detention or incarceration programs or housed at adult jails. The purpose of these visits is to raise policymakers' awareness of youth in these programs who spend their holidays in programs and facilities and to encourage them to help protect these youth by becoming leaders in reforming the juvenile justice system, reducing the prosecution of youth in adult criminal court and ending the placement of youth in adult jails and prisons.

To download a "Holiday Toolkit" visit:

[http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/Holiday\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/Holiday_Toolkit.pdf).



#### Advocates for DC Juvenile Justice Reform Speak Out

The juvenile justice system in the District of Columbia has undergone a series of reforms in the past five years. These reforms have been cited across the country as exemplary of successful juvenile justice leadership and systemic turnaround.

To better understand these developments, Councilmember Tommy Wells called a Public Oversight Roundtable on Thursday September 23, 2010 on the DC Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services' (DYRS) reform of the juvenile justice system.

Prominent national and local juvenile justice organization members, including Tracy Velázquez, Executive Director of the Justice Policy Institute; Nancy Gannon Hornberger, Executive Director of the Coalition for Juvenile Justice; Mishaela Duran, Director of Government Affairs for the National PTA; and Sarah Bryer, Director of the National Juvenile Justice Network attended the hearing and testified on the need for the continuation of DYRS reform.

In addition to organizational testimony, Chairman Wells heard a firsthand account from Jermaine Hailes, who had been prosecuted in adult court. Jermaine Hailes, a DC youth who was tried as an adult and incarcerated, called for the continuation of DYRS reform. He offered a unique perspective about youth within the justice system, and talked about how the youth are commonly moved between different facilities during their sentences. He emphasized how this practice tends to affect youth seeking to reenter into society, "When you are released into society, they shun you because you have a felony conviction on your head - which hinders myself and many others from moving forward socially and professionally, and seems to encourage us to return to the kinds of situations that landed us in prison in the first place." The full transcript of his testimony is available at the Campaign for Youth Justice website: [www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/youth-testimony.html](http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/youth-testimony.html)

Following Jermaine's remarks, Liz Ryan, the President and CEO of the Campaign for Youth Justice, discussed her concerns about the juvenile justice system. Liz Ryan's testimony touched on the effectiveness of the DYRS reform during the past five years, but she expressed concern about recent developments in the juvenile justice system. Ryan testified, "I am very troubled by reports that DYRS may be considering actions which could result in more involvement of youth in the adult criminal justice system."

In a subsequent letter to future Mayor and current Chairman Vincent Gray, Ryan expanded upon the concerns she highlighted in her testimony from the September hearing. In the letter sent to Chairman Vincent Gray on September 30, 2010, she focused on concerns including the five-fold increase in the use of isolation or "lockdown" in the last two months and the reports that DYRS was possibly considering actions that could result in an increase of youth involvement in the adult criminal justice system.

Ryan ended her letter to the Chairman with a series of policy recommendations which were developed at citywide roundtable discussion. She wrote, "The policy recommendations include the safety of children in custody at New Beginnings and other facilities, the need for community-based alternatives to detention and incarceration, reducing disparate treatment of youth of color in the justice system, and reducing prosecuting youth in the adult criminal justice system and placement in adult jails and prisons."

A full transcript of Liz Ryan's testimony is available at the Campaign for Youth Justice website: [www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/cfyjtestimoy92310.pdf](http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/cfyjtestimoy92310.pdf).

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## RESEARCH AND POLICY

### JustKids Partnership Releases Report on Transfer

In Maryland, the Just Kids Partnership, an alliance between Community Law in Action; the Public Justice Center; and United Parents of Incarcerated Children and Youth, seeks to reduce the number of youth who are charged and tried as adults, advocate for policies that transfer fewer youth to the adult criminal justice system, and increase the number of effective community-based programs and practices that serve youth. The Partnership's efforts include the recent release of a data driven report entitled, "Just Kids: Baltimore's Youth in the Adult Criminal Justice System: A Report of the Just Kids Partnership to End the Automatic Prosecution of Youth as Adults." The report suggests that the practice of transferring youth to the adult criminal justice system should be deemed unnecessary and impractical.

The Just Kids Partnership followed 135 individual cases of youth charged as adults in Baltimore city and found that:

- Nearly 68% of the youth awaiting trial in Baltimore's adult criminal justice system had their cases either sent to the juvenile court system or dismissed. Despite the high percentage of reverse transfer, on average, youth spend almost 5 months in adult jail before a hearing to consider whether the youth should be returned to the juvenile system.
- Only 10% of the youth actually tried in the adult system received sentences of time in adult prisons.

· Only 13 of the 135 cases in the study that began between January and June of 2009 had been resolved by August of 2010, and therefore, 90% of the youth spent up to 16 months in adult facilities with no conviction and no mandatory rehabilitative services.

The report also presents "smart on crime" recommendations to remedy Maryland's failing "tough on crime" strategy of automatically charging youth as adults. They suggest that the State reduce the inappropriate and unnecessary prosecution of youth in adult court, end the placement of youth in adult jails while awaiting trial, limit court hearing and trial delays, ensure reliability of information presented to the judge during waiver and transfer hearing, guarantee treatment opportunities for older teens, safeguard the safety of youth convicted in adult system, and strengthen data collection.

The full text of the report is available at <http://www.justkidsmaryland.org>.

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## NATIONAL MOMENTUM

### CFYJ Hits the Road to Urge Action on Transfer and JJDP

Last month the Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ) hit the road to encourage juvenile justice leaders to take on the "transfer" issue and to elevate their voices on juvenile justice in Washington, DC, especially to bolster support for reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). CFYJ President and CEO Liz Ryan presented at the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) National Inter-site Conference in Kansas City, MO; the 16th National Symposium on Juvenile Services in San Antonio, TX; and at the 3rd Annual Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA) Leadership Conference. These are three very important meetings of juvenile justice administrators and practitioners.

The focus of the Campaign's presentations to these decision-maker groups was twofold. First, juvenile justice leaders were encouraged to lead efforts to reduce the prosecution of youth in adult court. To take the next step forward, and build momentum participants were encouraged to:

- Talk to families that have been affected by the issue;
- Put the issue on the agenda of a current workgroup;
- Convene a new task force or workgroup on the issue if one does not exist; and
- Analyze the impact of state law on their communities.

Second, juvenile justice leaders were urged to raise their voices in Washington and in their states with elected officials, especially to create a sense of urgency on the reauthorization of the JJDP. The 36 year old law has not been updated with significant changes in nearly 20 years. It was created to provide greater protections for youth in the juvenile justice system. The overall reception to the Campaign's presentations was very positive.

For a copy of the Campaign presentation, contact Courtney George at: [jjnational@cfyj.org](mailto:jjnational@cfyj.org)

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## MEDIA WRAP

## Missouri Model

This month on *Juvenile Justice Matters* we spoke with Missouri Department of Youth Services Director Tim Decker on how Missouri has become a national model for treating and rehabilitating kids, regardless of the crime. We were also joined by Carlos, who is currently in the DYS system. The Department of Youth Services uses a more therapeutic/treatment based approach, instead of the common correctional model. Decker discussed how his agency keeps his program small, keeps the kids close to home and in a humane environment, and encourages kids to work in groups. He also shared some statistics, including the fact that his kids are 40% successful in returning to their local school district, compared to 20% nationally.



To hear Carlos' story and more on the Missouri system, please visit <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/jjmatters/2010/10/28/how-the-missouri-department-of-youth-services-hand>

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## GET ORGANIZED

### The Importance of Demand

Grace Bauer

*Grace Bauer, a field organizer, joined the Campaign for Youth Justice in 2008. She has worked to unite the parents and allies of children to change laws and practices that result in children being prosecuted and confined as adults.*

In 1857, Frederick Douglass said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

I have always loved this quote and often use it to inspire myself to stand up when most people would rather I remain sitting and quiet. Imagine you are a concerned citizen or family member sitting in a room of professionals and experts on youth justice and the bureaucracy of the system compels people along the same roads that have led this country to incarcerate more people than the top 35 European countries combined. You hear someone say that the problem they have is that kids behave terribly and parental involvement is non-existent. You have two choices, 1) you sit quietly and the status quo remains, 2) you speak up and say that isn't what you believe. If you choose the latter, at the very least you have brought forth a different opinion and possibly provoked a different thought process.

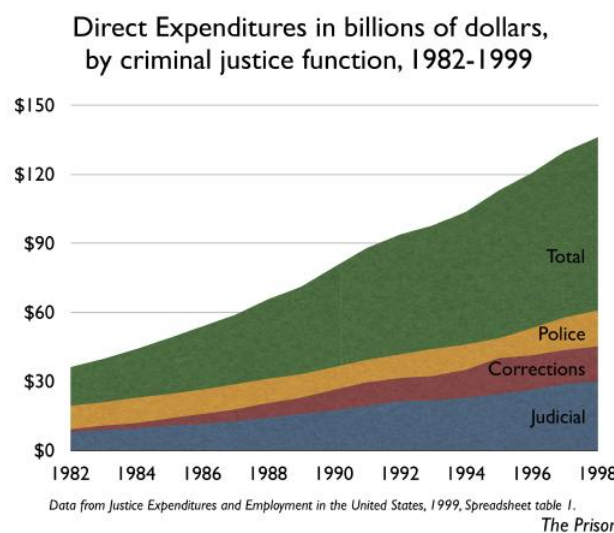
There is something else of great importance in this quote that I think few of us think about and that is the DEMAND. Without the demand we would still have folks of color sitting at the back of the bus or, worse yet, still in slavery on plantations, all of us would have 16 hour workdays or more with no days off and no worker's rights. People with disabilities would have not have rights to the accommodations they need to live and the list could fill books. People make a demand and when the demand is shared by enough people, and enough people become engaged in the struggle, change will come.

Logic and science are in our corner on the issue of treating children as adults in regards to the criminal justice system. There are plenty of people directly and indirectly affected by mass incarceration and foolish, ineffective and wasteful "get tough on crime" rhetoric. With 2.3 million behind bars and over 5 million on probation or parole, we certainly have enough people engaged. Yet, have we made the DEMAND?

Logic, science, and huge numbers will never be enough until people begin to call out what isn't right, what isn't working and offering solutions instead. Of course, we should be trying to make things better for children in facilities, regardless of what kinds of facilities but that alone is not enough. We must call for an end to this madness that destroys the lives of untold millions. How, you might ask?

If you read a newspaper article where politicians are calling for more "tough on crime" bills, get up immediately and call their office, write a letter, make an appointment and let them know this policy has failed us, the last thing we need is more of the wrong thing. Challenge them to learn more about this issue and DEMAND they take a stand on it, educate yourself on good solutions and share your "expertise" with them to make them "smart on crime." These are people that serve at the will of voters and should not have their own agenda but the agenda of those they serve.

If you are an advocate, pull yourself out of the system mindset and think about change from a different perspective. If the tables you gather around are simply talking about building a better facility, expanding bed space to stop overcrowding, offering up mental health services to children in cages, better education in prison settings or any of the hundreds of others things we ask for, just stop. Instead, DEMAND that we as the advocacy community begin to think differently about incarceration and the justice system. We don't need better cages; we need less people in cages and money from the criminal justice system reinvested in the things that DO produce better outcomes, schools, communities, higher education and equal economic growth (see chart).



Anyone can use our relationships with others, our friends, our churches, our social clubs and any variety of other social contexts to spread this message. You may not be able to demand that others take the same stand but you will certainly give voice to the idea that the

justice system as we know it has been a complete and outrageously expensive failure. The DEMAND is on us!

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## DWAYNE'S COLUMN



*An advocate for juvenile justice and prison reform, Dwayne Betts is a national spokesperson for the Campaign for Youth Justice. He was sentenced to nine years in prison for carjacking when he was sixteen years old. Today, Betts is a father, husband, advocate, educator, and accomplished author.*

I hated prison. While there, I woke up in the mornings dreaming of going home and then I went to sleep at night dreaming of being locked up. It was a condition, something that clung to my skin and cleaved to my sense of self.

As a juvenile in some of Virginia's worst prisons, how was I to see myself outside of the violence and insanity around me? Someone is reading this wondering what crime I'd committed to find myself within a prison with men. They will speculate that I must have committed the most violent offense. I didn't. My crime was carjacking, and though I cannot diminish the pain I caused my victim I know that the aim of the justice system has to have a longer vision than short-term torture.

The proposed new adult jail to house youth in Baltimore threatens to sink Maryland into the abyss of juvenile justice failures that plague much of our nation. The recently released report, "Just Kids: Baltimore's Youth in the Adult Criminal Justice System", tells us what many already know. The report states that nearly 70% of the Baltimore City youth charged as adults and sent to await trial in the Baltimore City Detention Center either are sent to the juvenile courts or end up having their cases dismissed.

I remember my Judge. The Honorable Judge Bach, from the Fairfax County Circuit Court, looked at my family and me from the height of the bench and rustled a small sheath of paper moments before he sentenced, "I am under no illusion that sending you to prison will help you, but you can get something out of it if you want," Judge Bach said. This is the truth that families know but society at large does not.

When a new report says that 70% of the young people inside the Baltimore City Detention Center do not end up serving adult time, or even get charged as adults, the report fails to mention what those kids leave the jail with. There is no illusion that prison will help juveniles, and if it doesn't help juveniles, how can it be good for the society they will return to? What the Judge did not tell my family is what I would come home with. He did not mention the nightmares; he did not mention that inescapable memory of violence and pain. This new jail that will be built in Baltimore is another gateway into this kind of horror.

This is not about excusing crime, but about understanding how our current approach is counterproductive, and fails us all. To advocate against the building of this new adult jail is to acknowledge the failures of the old jail. In moving forward, particularly in dealing with our youngest and most troubled, there has to be a vision that does not look at the building

of another facility as a solution. We have reports, public testimony, and research that tells us these new jails and prisons never make us safer.

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## VOICES



**Austin Mays was 15 years old when his life was changed forever. Now, at age 22, he shares his story. He writes:**

*"I was born in Seattle, Washington to a single mother. I was the second and last child born into my family. As far back as I can remember, my mom was always in abusive relationships and, though I was never hurt, it always had an effect on me [seeing her being hurt]. Her pain and troubles lead her to substance abuse. Stability was non-existent [in my house]. Materially I had everything I wanted, but love, companionship, and all the things that make up a normal childhood were foreign.*

*Up until about sixth grade, I never remained in school longer than six months [at a time]. I became a social butterfly and could adapt to any and all types of people. I would allow myself to be influenced by others' likes, wants, and habits. [I think] moving took a toll on my childhood because I was never able to establish a footprint in life. I had no place that I could call home.*

*After sixth grade, I started to see a marked change. I started to feel left out. At this point, my mom ran a full time business, took care of my sister who has Cerebral Palsy and Autism, and was in a relationship with an old boyfriend. I felt like I was put on the "back burner" and I started getting into trouble to get the attention I craved from my mom. Even though it was negative attention, I still felt noticed...The instant I got into trouble, I immediately caught attention. Suddenly people were paying attention to me; I was no longer on the "back burner".*

*My first year of high school started like any other year. There was a new school, new clothes, and new people. I was no longer a kid, I was now a young man and with this new mindset I thought I could take on more responsibility. I wanted to show my mother that I could be independent [so] I took on a job as a busboy at a local restaurant. My days were full. I would go to school from 8:00 am until 2:00 pm and then work from 4:00 pm to 10:30 pm. I started to feel really good about the direction in which my life was heading. This lasted a total of four months.*

*In 2004, I was involved in an altercation along with two other people and my life took a drastic turn at 15 years old. I had been doing so well going to school, work, and living in a stable home environment with my grandparents. Now I was looking at mentally dying at the age of 15. At 15 years old, I wanted to give up on this thing we call life.*

*I was declined from juvenile jurisdiction and sent to adult court. Just five days after my 17th birthday, I was given a 42-year sentence. None of my family was in attendance at the trial, despite numerous attempts by my lawyer to provide gas money. I had no support in my old life and no support at the beginning of my new one.*

*Throughout my time in prison I have tried to keep a positive outlook. Just because I am in prison does not mean I cannot expand my mind. While I have been here, I have obtained my G.E.D. as well as my high school diploma. I have taken two vocational courses and fifteen self-help classes."*

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## ON THE CALENDAR

### Youth Justice Action Day:

November 9, 2010 is Youth Justice Action Day! Organized by the Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ) and its allies, the Campaign is attempting to raise awareness and urge Congress to reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Act (JJDPA) this year. The JJDPA's goal is to encourage States to adopt better practices and standards for youth in the justice system.



This bill is an important piece of legislation that needs to come to the attention of Congress immediately because every day that our representatives do not pass this bill more than 10,000 youth are held in adult jails or locked up in adult prisons.

We cannot abandon these children! This Youth Justice Action Day let students, parents, organizations, and concerned citizens unite for the future of our nation's youth.

For a free "Take Action Toolkit", email Dan Lehrman at: [jjfield@cfyj.org](mailto:jjfield@cfyj.org)

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## TAKE ACTION, SPREAD THE WORD

### Consider Hosting a Video Screening

Halloween is a time for tricks and scares. It can all be fun and games for us but the fears of those youth who are incarcerated are intense and not short-lived. Nothing is scarier than life behind bars. Consider hosting a video screening to inform your community about the real consequences of incarcerating juveniles in the adult system.



Host a video screening of the DVD "Childhood Interrupted" at your home, community center, or faith gathering. Visual media are a great tool in educating others. This 15 minute DVD is a free resource designed to get people thinking and spark discussion about the practice of trying youth in the adult criminal justice system. The DVD also contains a discussion guide with tips for showing the DVD, hosting a 'take action table' and other ways to raise awareness. It is available by contacting the Campaign for Youth Justice at 202.558.3580 or emailing [sgray@cfyj.org](mailto:sgray@cfyj.org)

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## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### How You Can Help

We Need Your Help to Launch Grassroots Campaigns!



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 to reduce the prosecution of youth in adult criminal court and to end the placement of youth in adult jails and prisons.

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

To donate, click here:

<http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/donate.html>

Let's work together to stop the inhumane, unjust, and ineffective policies affecting youth across the country!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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## CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES AT A GLANCE

### A Campaign Approach to Ending the Practice of Prosecuting Youth as Adults

Liz Ryan

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

Let's first start by defining the term "campaign." According to Webster's dictionary, a "campaign" is "A connected series of operations designed to bring about a particular result." In addition to being a noun, "campaign" can also be used as a verb such as, "To go on, engage in, or conduct a campaign." The Campaign for Youth Justice uses the term "campaign" as both a noun and a verb. That is, the term "campaign" is in the name of the organization to signify that we are in fact a "campaign" and it is also in the name of the organization as a verb to encourage people to join with us in the effort to end the prosecution of youth in adult court.

What are some of the key features of successful campaigns? In our experience working with state and local campaigns around the country over the past five years, there are a number of key "features" in successful campaigns to change state policies on the prosecution of youth in adult court. Here are our "top ten":

1) Goal: There is a specific "goal" of the campaign such as reducing the prosecution of youth in adult court. Campaigns often use the "SMART" goal test: Is your goal specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted? It is crucial to know what you consider a "win" to be up front in attempting to reach your goal and to establish an overall goal, short term and long term goals.

2) Timeframe: The campaign has a set "timeframe" in which it is trying to achieve its goal within a reasonable amount of time such as 1-2 years for a short term goal and 3-5 years for a long term goal.

- 3) Youth, parents and families most directly affected by transfer policies as well as allied individuals, organizations and networks are at the heart of the campaign.
- 4) The "campaign" is an independent vehicle, solely focused on the goals of the campaign with a physical presence such as an office, website, dedicated staff and volunteers and an "identity" of its own such as a name and logo so that it has "ownership" by all the participants in the campaign.
- 5) Governance Structure: There is a clear, fair, timely, and transparent way that decisions are made by the campaign. Decisions are shared by participants and are made by consensus in order to ensure accountability and transparency.
- 6) Dedicated Resources: The campaign has its own dedicated resources to manage the effort. Resources cover the office, web, staff, day to day operations, and activities including food (a key ingredient to any successful campaign!)
- 7) Core Functions: The campaign's core functions include a Campaign Manager to manage, coordinate, and assess progress; an organizing & base building function with on-the-ground organizers; A coalition building function to engage allies and partners; A direct action function to conduct events & activities; An external communications & outreach function to develop & manage contact lists, a database, social media, media contacts, action alerts, and outreach calls; A policy & research function; and a legislative and/or executive branch advocacy function. Each of these "components" can be covered by various individuals or organizations and some functions can be combined. It is critical though that there is at least one person whose job it is to manage the campaign's operations.
- 8) Strategy: The campaign has an articulated "strategy" (that is, on paper that campaign participants have developed) on how it is going to accomplish its goal. The strategy includes goals and objectives, timeline, identification of key policymaker targets, assessing allies & opponents, and a process for developing strategy.
- 9) Evaluation & Documentation: The campaign constantly evaluates its progress towards achieving its goal and evaluates its strategies and tactics. Also, the campaign ensures that from start to finish that the campaigns activities are documented. This can be done on the web or at the campaign's office. It is a way to remember what actions were taken and why.
- 10) Celebration: For a campaign to be successful, celebrating the small victories as well as the big "win" is really important. Recognition of key leaders and individuals as well as organizations is important. Food is always a great way to celebrate!

*Next month we'll discuss key reasons to start a "campaign" to change your state's policies. 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](mailto:lryan@cfyj.org).*

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