

Justice Journal

Transitions

To everything, there is a season
And a time for every purpose, under heaven
A time to start, a time to relinquish
A time to move, a time to move on

With this slightly revised excerpt from the Book of Ecclesiastes (and Pete Seeger), I begin my last letter to you as Founding President/CEO of CCYJ. I cannot believe that it has been nearly 13 years since we launched this effort to create better lives through better systems - taking an audacious leap into the complex worlds of child welfare and juvenile justice.

We began with a promise - you've heard it before - a promise that more children and youth will be diverted from Washington's juvenile justice and child welfare systems; and, that the children, youth, and young adults who become involved with the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems will maximize their potential to become more successful and productive members of their communities, with the support of integrated systems, staffed by highly skilled practitioners, utilizing research-based practices, in an environment of fair and unbiased decision-making, and with an unwavering commitment to social justice, racial equity and inclusion. In short, the same kinds of advantages and opportunities that we want and get for our own families. Why? Because these children, youth and young adults are OUR children.

Change is hard. But change we have made, beginning with a change in the discourse about child welfare and juvenile justice: kids are different, not "little adults." We can now see light for every child - "those" kids have become "our" kids. Through advances in the science of infant and adolescent brain development, through our on-the-ground work under Models for Change, we've forged



Photo by Nancy Dunbar

a community of learning - service professionals, lawmakers, and average community members willing to work together and to provide new and more effective resources to vulnerable children, youth, and their families. With the leadership of our incomparable staff, the

voices of you propelling us, we are finding what works, changing these systems, and improving outcomes.

Change is not done. The kind of change we seek - meaningful, lasting change: reducing the number of kids who are abused, neglected, troubled, bullied, exploited, and yes, reducing the number of those who behave "badly" (make mistakes); increasing the number of children, youth, and young adults who realize their full potential, achieve parity with their non-system involved peers in the social metrics that define success in America - education, safety, housing stability, economic security, and health (social, emotional, and physical); obliterating racial and ethnic disparities, and the over-representation of kids by gender, sexual orientation, identity or expression, and disability in these systems. Promises that the child welfare system makes when it enters homes and removes children; promises the juvenile justice system makes when it offers rehabilitation to youth who violate the law. Promises to keep.

With much gratitude for your support over all these years, rest assured that CCYJ will continue to encourage, support, manage, and facilitate positive, impactful change. As Marian Wright Edelman notes: "If the children are safe, we're all safe."

Bobbe J. Bridge

Justice Bobbe J. Bridge, (ret.)
Founding President/CEO

Becca Conference 2018: Supporting the Whole Child

When she was 13, Rebecca Hedman - known to her family as Becca - ran away from home. She ended up on the streets of Spokane where she was picked up by 35-year-old John Medlock who offered her \$50 for sex. Medlock would later beat Hedman to death with a baseball bat and dump her body on the embankment of the Spokane River.

And truancy is frequently that first step on the path that can lead to involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Twenty five years after her brutal murder in 1993, the tragic story of Becca's young life still reverberates as educators, counselors, court staff, service providers and lawmakers continue to tackle the complicated issues of children and families in crisis. CCYJ leads this effort with the Becca Task Force - named in the spirit of Becca Hedman. Staffed by CCYJ, the task force provides a forum for the courts, schools, and service providers to share best practices on early intervention, community response, and coordinated reengagement. It supports research and training on proven models to meet the needs of youth and families in distress.

Where it comes together is at the annual Becca Conference, held this year on Oct. 18th and 19th at Central Washington University. About 300 professionals who work with truant and at-risk youth networked and learned about the latest Becca-related research, law, policy, programs, and practices in Washington State and nationally.

This year's theme, "Supporting the Whole Child," focused on strategies, practices, and programs of intervention for children who are chronically absent from school or engaging in at-risk behavior. The Conference brought together a statewide network of professionals for an opportunity to build a community of learning

to explore the following issues: "Who is at risk and what do they need?"; "How are risks and needs connected to truant and at-risk behaviors?" and "How do we respond?" through research, local programs, and promising practices.

Chronic absenteeism is the bellwether to a host of potential problems a young person may be dealing with, as schools persist as a space where many children, adolescents, and young adults are accountable. And truancy is frequently that first step on the path that can lead to involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. More recently, schools have had to respond to increased levels of student needs, including mental and behavioral health, poverty and unstable housing or homelessness, and chemical and substance abuse.



Since 2005, there has been a 7% overall increase (from 36% to 43%) in the number of students enrolled in Washington state public schools that qualify for subsidized meals, which acts as a barometer for poverty. In addition, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction reported 40,934 homeless students enrolled in Washington State public schools in the 2016-2017 school year, the result of a steady increase from 30,609 homeless students enrolled in 2012-2013. Though the overall percentage of students qualifying for subsidized meals has gradually declined since 2014, school districts are still working hard to respond to the higher needs presented by students and their families in the classroom.

Washington State is making considerable strides to change its child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and improve service provision to young people. But as more and more families find themselves in crisis, the question we ask of ourselves at the Becca Conference every year is: What can educators, counselors, court staff, service providers, and law makers do to better support the youth who need us most? And specifically, how can we prevent another tragedy like Becca Hedman's from happening again.

FOR MORE
INFORMATION,
please contact
becca@ccyj.org



From the CCYJ Board

This has been an extraordinary year for CCYJ's Board of Directors.

First and foremost, following Justice Bridge's announcement in January that she wishes to retire at the end of 2018, we have been engaged in a nationwide search for a successor President/CEO. The Board selected Campbell & Company, a national consultant in non-profit leadership, to assist with the search. From its detailed conversations with leaders in the field and with prospective candidates, the Campbell & Company team has told us of the broad recognition that CCYJ has achieved, and the excellent reputation it enjoys, not only regionally but also across the country.

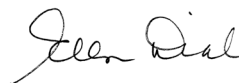
Justice Bridge and the Board are committed to finding a leader who has the vision, passion, and experience to lead CCYJ to continued success in its mission to create a better future for children and youth whose lives are touched by the juvenile justice or child welfare systems. The organization is strong, and well positioned for the future. We believe we are on track to select a new President/CEO and make a successful transition of leadership by the end of 2018. We will, of course, let you know when the Board has made that selection.



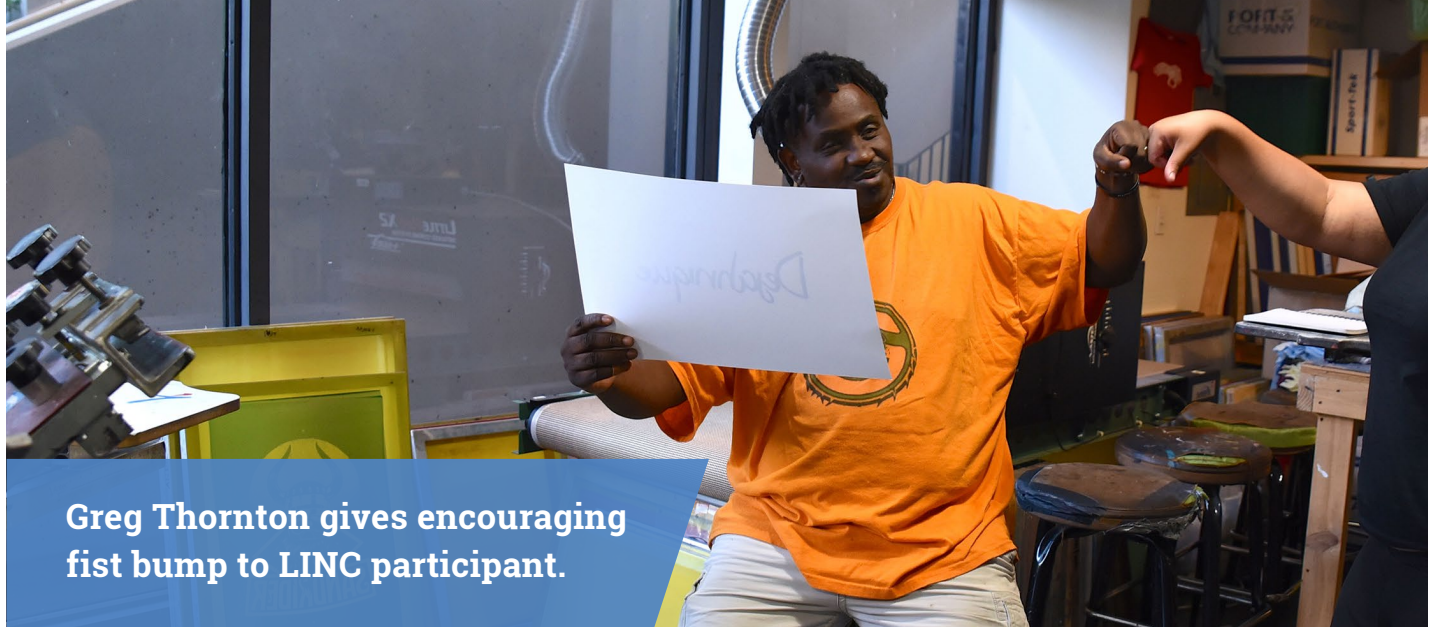
Photo by Nancy Dunbar

With its long record of successful projects, CCYJ has grown to accommodate the new, innovative projects that are underway. As the organization has grown, so, too, has the Board. Nineteen active community leaders bring to the Board table their energy, insight, and depth of experience in a wide variety of endeavors. In the third quarter of the year, we welcomed to the Board Rich Sauer, Corporate VP and Deputy General Counsel of Microsoft. Rich has broad experience in overseeing innovative projects around the world, and his enthusiasm for CCYJ's work is palpable. Rich joins the Board in its commitment to support CCYJ's excellent work with equal excellence in governance.

On behalf of the Board, I extend our thanks to each of you for your interest in CCYJ. With your support, CCYJ's future will be marked by the same extraordinary success that has distinguished its work thus far.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Ellen Dial".

Ellen Dial (ret.)
CCYJ Board Chair



Greg Thornton gives encouraging fist bump to LINC participant.

Screen Printing Program Offers Positive Opportunities for Young People

Greg Thornton grew up with little means. Raised in an unstable home, Thornton says there were definitely times when he faced hunger and homelessness.

A few crayons and comics, bolstered by the unwavering encouragement of his mother, Grace Clayton, were enough to boost Thornton's confidence and open a pathway for him to realize his current reality: an accomplished artist as well as a business man. Thornton worked for years in restaurant management, while honing his artistic skills, building an art business, and eventually going back to school to become a teaching artist. He is now a full-time teaching artist in Seattle Public Schools and group homes/treatment facilities, and owner of his own business, Black Iconic T-Shirts. In January 2018, he started sharing the power of art as therapy through a screen printing program with young people enrolled in CCYJ's LINC (Leadership, Intervention and Change) program.

Thornton and LINC partnered with The Vera Project, which hosts the program and provides volunteers each week, to teach the art of screen printing to young people in need of employment and entrepreneurial skills. Using art as therapy, Thornton provides the

young people with an opportunity to learn how to screen print, gain business entrepreneurial skills, while also having a safe place to "tell their truth."

“They can see the light,” said Thornton. “It’s an affirmation that they can achieve something on their own merit. That’s valuable.”

“There’s a reason a kid acts out. The world they live in is often not safe,” explains Thornton. “They have zero opportunity to try new, positive things because they are always being judged or criticized. With art, there is no right or wrong. Here, they can express what’s going on in their heads.”

The first assignment given to the young people in the screen printing program is to choose a lettering technique and design an art piece using a word that describes them. In describing her piece, one young person wrote in her concept sheet - “I chose this word because it represents me, as in I had to grow up fast in a world of HATE.” She adds, “I had to make money in ways nobody [wants to] know. You don’t have to look like a gangsta to be one.”



Samples of screen print art created by program participants.

and their growth tangible throughout the program,” said Stieve. Because the program provides consistency, structure, and encouragement, young people find the freedom and safety to create pieces that are nothing short of inspirational.

Screen printing is an avenue through which the young people, ranging in age between 14-18, also learn business and computer skills. They run jobs by taking client pitches, then develop proposals, schedules, marketing plans, and deliverables. In a prior session of the program this year, the young people were hired to design a t-shirt for a Juneteenth event held as a community block party by King County Juvenile Court. Each participant submitted their own design for consideration and one was chosen for the event. The young people then screen printed over 100 t-shirts with the selected design for staff volunteers to wear during the event. All of the young people were given an opportunity to set up a table at the event to sell their t-shirts, paper prints, and other art work. They ended up earning \$750 in about two hours – pure profit for them off their own artwork. More importantly, the young people learned that their hard work and creativity was appreciated and desired by members of the community, and saw a way to use their skills to help themselves and their families.

“They can see the light,” said Thornton. “It’s an affirmation that they can achieve something on their own merit. That’s valuable.” And to Thornton, this is his way of giving back to those who once believed in him.

Supported by a grant to CCYJ’s LINC Program, the screen printing program was launched in January, 2018, in partnership with the Vera Project. It is similar to other prosocial skills-building employment programs across the country aligned with the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Program’s Comprehensive Gang Model Opportunities Provision Strategy.

Thornton respects all types of expression, but challenges the young people to think outside of the box. Watching participants transform and build trusting relationships over the ten week session, and go from having no confidence in their skills, to creating transparencies of intricate artwork, three color designs, and personal logos for themselves, has been rewarding to Thornton and the other support staff, including CCYJ LINC staff team and Lead Project Manager Anica Stieve.

In 2016, Stieve had a vision to initiate a skills training program for young people associated with the LINC program – teaching art and entrepreneurial skills. Although the time period from idea conception to implementation was long, perseverance and great partnerships prevailed. “It is amazing to see the young people thrive in this supportive environment. Their creations are dynamic



FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Anica Stieve at ASTieve@ccyj.org

4th Annual CSEC Conference

More than 150 change-makers around the state attended the fourth annual Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Task Force Conference on Wednesday, October 3rd at the SeaTac Conference Center.

Keynote speaker was O'Nesha Cochran-Dumas, a powerful motivational speaker who shared her personal story of her years of trauma. Cochran detailed how she channeled her life experiences into something positive as a pioneering Peer Mentor.

Cochran ran away at the age of 13, and spent 22 years actively using drugs. She served 15 years in prison and was homeless a majority of her life. She eventually received intensive counseling and therapy that helped her find a new purpose in her life.

Cochran worked for Oregon Health and Sciences University as their first addiction Peer Mentor. Because of her lived experience, Cochran was uniquely able to help people with addictions who have complicated health issues transition back into the community. Today, she is the program supervisor for a 38 bed Afrocentric Women's Transitional Home in Multnomah County, known as the Diane Wade House.

Elected officials, judicial officers, attorneys, social workers, probation counselors, police officers, advocates, health care professionals, and educators attended the one day event in an effort to strengthen their response to the sex trafficking of children and youth.



**(L-R) Justice Bobbe Bridge, CCYJ
Sr. Project Manager Nicholas
Oakley, Keynote speaker
O'Nesha Cochran, and Social
Policy Fellow Nicole Canete**

Building upon the momentum created since Project Respect was founded in 2011, attendees left with a more in-depth understanding of the issues, greater connections with each other, and even more motivated to provide a coordinated, collaborative, and victim-centered response to CSEC.

For conference participants, hearing Cochran's testimony gave them inspiration to know that it is possible for people who have walked a similar path to live a life of self-sufficiency. Cochran is a testimony of what success, recovery and returning to society can look like if dependence and reentry needs are accessible and attainable.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Nicholas Oakley at noakley@ccyj.org



Volunteer Lawyers Make Huge Impact on Young Lives

A single car accident could have catapulted 23-year-old Eric into unemployment and homelessness. Hit by another vehicle while driving, Eric's car was totaled and subsequently impounded. While he was unharmed physically, Eric did not have insurance or the money to get his vehicle released from impound, and was told that his car was going to be sold or destroyed by the towing company if he wasn't able to pay the fee.

Eric was at his wits end and out of options. He needed support to help navigate his way through a very stressful situation: he found it through **CCYJ's Lawyers Fostering Independence (LFI)** program. Through a volunteer attorney assigned to his case, Eric was able to negotiate a good settlement, compensating his financial loss. As a result, Eric was able to focus on his job training program and internship.

Situations like these could have devastating consequences for many young people who have neither the resources nor assistance to untangle legal disputes. LFI provides that vital safety net, positively impacting the outcomes in a person's life.

LFI partners with nearly 200 volunteer attorneys in the community to provide pro bono representation to youth and young adults between 17-25 years of age who have either lived experience in foster-, group-, or kinship-care, or who have been (or are at risk

of becoming) homeless. Volunteers assist with a wide range of civil legal issues, from family law to juvenile record sealing, from landlord/tenant disputes to identity theft, and more. Staff and volunteers work tirelessly to ensure clients can access housing, education, and employment without being blocked by the legal barriers in their past.

LFI MILESTONES

This year marks LFI's **10th anniversary**. Since 2008, LFI has served nearly 900 youth and young adults seeking civil legal services. Major milestones include:

- 2008** LFI is born, providing civil legal aid to former foster youth in King County.
- 2015** LFI broadens its mission to serve youth who have been, or are at risk of becoming homeless. Serving more than 100 youth in a single year!
- 2017** LFI brings on second attorney, and expands services to Snohomish County. Service expands to serve more than 200 youth in a single year!
- 2018** In the first six months of this year, LFI serves **99** youth and young adults. In June, LFI expands services into Pierce County.

continued on next page



**IF YOU ARE A LAWYER OR
HAVE LEGAL EXPERIENCE
AND ARE INTERESTED IN
MAKING DIFFERENCE,**
please contact Laurel Simonsen
at LSimonsen@ccyj.org, or
Grete Schultz at GShultz@ccyj.org.

GROWING LFI TO NEW HEIGHTS

In early 2017, LFI began planning its expansion effort to serve youth outside of King County. The first two expansion sites, Snohomish and Pierce counties, were initially identified as places of significant need for legal services for young people. In October 2017, LFI launched in Snohomish County with an all-day event at Cocoon House in Everett, and in the first six months of operations, **45** youth received legal services. LFI continues to hold a monthly drop-in clinics, and is connected with a wide range of service providers and community partners.

In June 2018, LFI held the first drop-in legal clinic in Pierce County at the Beacon Center in Tacoma. On just the first day, LFI provided **5** young people with legal services. The enormous need for legal assistance in this community was realized in just the first two months. So beginning in August, LFI added a second legal clinic in Tacoma at the REACH program.

Partnering with service agencies in Snohomish and Pierce counties to better understand the legal needs of young people in these communities has allowed LFI to provide numerous Know-Your-Rights workshops to their clients at drop-in centers, shelters, and employment training programs. More importantly, forging relationships with attorneys and engaging legal service providers in these counties is key to LFI's success. Recognizing this, LFI offered a free Continuing Legal Education training in Everett in June, in collaboration with Cocoon House, the shelter and drop in center in Everett, and Northwest Justice Project.

Ultimately, the addition of Snohomish and Pierce counties has enriched LFI as a whole, allowing the program to better serve young people in need in Western Washington, and helping to remove legal barriers that stand in the way of clients gaining access to education, employment, and stable housing. Now covering three counties, King, Snohomish, and Pierce, LFI holds a total of seven monthly drop-in legal clinics (in partnership with six different community organizations) to connect with youth in need of legal services.

Witnessing the level of need seen in just the first six months of LFI's expansion, it's anticipated that 2018 will be another record-breaking year for LFI. With the help of many amazing volunteers, LFI is committed to rising up to meet the increased need for legal aid, and empowering young lives.

Mockingbird Society Honors Justice Bobbe J. Bridge (ret.) and Rep. Ruth Kagi



**Justice Bobbe J. Bridge (ret.)
and Rep. Ruth Kagi with ACE
Awards at Mockingbird Society's
Leadership Summit**

“They make me feel like change is possible,” said one foster care youth about Justice Bobbe J. Bridge and Rep. Ruth Kagi at The Mockingbird Society’s Youth Leadership Summit, held on August 1st at the University of Washington.

Following months of leadership training and preparation through The Mockingbird Society, young people from around Washington who have experienced foster care and homelessness spoke firsthand as they presented their proposals for statewide reform to members of the Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care and the Office of Homeless Youth Advisory Committee (which included Justice Bridge and Rep. Kagi).

The youth stood poised and confident as they appealed for: better living conditions in group homes; improved recruitment of LGBTQ and racially diverse foster care parents; the abolition of status offense laws; and access to independent living skills programs.

At the Summit, Justice Bridge and Rep. Kagi were each honored with the inaugural ACE Award for their tireless advocacy work to improve the lives of youth in foster care. The ACE Award celebrates individuals who have made a significant impact on the lives of young people and families. It is a reference to holding an “ace” in your hand, one that makes all the difference in the hand you are dealt.

As one Mockingbird young person said of Justice Bridge and Rep. Kagi, “Seeing both leaders constantly looking to us, the youth, for advice on how to better the systems we are involved in is something that is tremendously motivational.” Said another, “they always make space to include youth voices at the table.”

In her tribute to Justice Bridge, Annie Blackledge, Executive Director of The Mockingbird Society, said, “This incredible leader

has always encouraged me to reach further, has always listened and centered her work in the lived experience of the people she serves.”

It was a bittersweet moment for Justice Bridge, who will retire at the end of this year, after participating in the Youth Leadership Summit for the past 12 years as co-chair of the Washington Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care.

“I cherish these summits and the chance to learn: learn to be inspired, learn to be motivated and learn to be wowed,” said Bridge. “Thank you for your patience with those of us who take too long to do what’s right. Your patience pays off and will benefit youth and young adults for generations to come.”

Directing her remarks to the youth, Justice Bridge said, “Thank you for becoming beautiful, kind people who are able to advocate fiercely, but respectfully in this all too crazy, mean-spirited world. You are role models for us all, and I’m proud to know you.”

In addition to founding the Center for Children & Youth Justice, Justice Bridge helped create the Washington Supreme Court Commission on Children and Foster Care in 2004. It was one of the first such state bodies to have a youth voice represented. Rep. Ruth Kagi of the 32nd District, chairs the House Early Learning and Human Services Committee. She has dedicated much of her time in the legislature to improve early learning and foster care. Both Bridge and Kagi plan to retire at the end of this year.



Department of Children, Youth, and Families Appoints Justice Bobbe J. Bridge (ret.) to Oversight Board

The Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) is pleased to announce that Justice Bobbe J. Bridge (ret.) has been appointed to serve on the Oversight Board for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) for Washington State.

“Bringing together a broad cross-section of expertise to help ensure significant reforms are realized was a key element of the legislation creating DCYF,” said Justice Bridge. “We are at a pivotal moment in time in Washington State history to make lasting changes in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.”

Recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission on the Delivery of Services to Children and Families, and adopted by the Legislature last session, DCYF was officially launched on July 1st to transform the way services are delivered and experienced for the most vulnerable children, youth, and families in our state.

Services will focus on prevention and well-being, to help support and strengthen families before crises occur and children and youth become system-involved. When there is system-involvement, connections will be made to other needed services that could help to minimize further or additional system involvement or harm. And, for the first time, the state will direct services to **adolescents**,

particularly at key transition points. Youth known to both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems often suffer from childhood trauma, have multi-system involvement, and experience homelessness. By creating a cohesive and comprehensive support system, DCYF will identify where kids and families encounter gaps in services or have difficulty accessing services. Closing those gaps will help reduce trauma, and promote resilience and well-being.

“Maximizing the potential of a young person involved in the juvenile justice and/or child welfare system has been the cornerstone of CCYJ’s mission for the past 12 years,” says Bridge. “By using research-based and data-driven approaches to prevention, rather than detention - undergirded by an unwavering commitment to racial equity and inclusion - CCYJ continues to change the game for our youth and their families.”

The Oversight Board was created as part of the DCYF enabling legislation to help ensure that DCYF achieves intended outcomes and performance measures, and is in compliance with administrative acts, statutes, rules, and policies pertaining to early learning, juvenile rehabilitation, juvenile justice, and children and family services.

In her capacity Justice Bridge will provide expertise on Juvenile Rehabilitation and Justice. She will be serving alongside a distinguished group of community leaders, including:

Rep. Ruth Kagi, House of Representatives

Early Learning Subject Matter Expert

Annie Lee, Team Child

Subject Matter Expert in Reducing Disparities in Child Outcomes by Income, Race and Ethnicity

Ben de Haan, Partners for our Children

Child Welfare Subject Matter Expert

Annie Blackledge, Mockingbird Society

Representative of an Organization that Represents the Best Interest of the Child

Charles Loeffler, Children's Administration

Child Welfare Caseworker Representative

Jess Lewis, OSPI

Foster Parent Representative

Judge Frank Cuthbertson, Pierce County Superior Court

Judicial Representative over Child Welfare Proceedings or Other Children's Matters

Kevin Fuhr, Moses Lake Police Chief

Law Enforcement Representative

Lois Martin, Community Day Center for Children

Early Childhood Program Practitioner Representative

Wendy Thomas, Kalispel Tribe

Eastern Washington Tribal Representative

Loni Greninger, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

Western Washington Tribal Representative

Shrounda Selivanoff, Office of Public Defense

Parent Stakeholder Group Representative

Sydney Forrester, Governor's Policy Office

Governor's Office Representative (non-voting)

Rep. Tana Senn, House Democratic Caucus, Legislator

Rep. Tom Dent, House Republican Caucus, Legislator

Sen. Jeannie Darneille, Senate Democratic Caucus, Legislator

Sen. Steve O'Ban, Senate Republican Caucus, Legislator



FOR MORE INFORMATION

about the Department of Children, Youth and Families, see www.medium.com/wagovernor/inslee-kicks-off-new-department-of-children-youth-and-families-8b3480a66b4

[wagovernor/inslee-kicks-off-new-department-of-children-youth-and-families-8b3480a66b4](http://www.medium.com/wagovernor/inslee-kicks-off-new-department-of-children-youth-and-families-8b3480a66b4)



Volunteers distribute donated backpacks

Youth LINC Back-to-School Giveaway a Huge Success

More than 400 South King County students received free backpacks and school supplies at the first annual CCYJ Youth LINC back-to-school giveaway. The community event, held Aug. 17th at Trinity Community Church in Kent offered free lunch and entertainment for students and families. Youth volunteers were awarded 100 community service hours, and over 20 community partners mobilized with donations of food and school supplies.

Youth LINC is committed to positively impacting our communities by creating opportunities for young people to be successful through community engagement and youth empowerment. [For more information](http://www.ccyj.org) contact YouthLINC@ccyj.org.



CCYJ's LINC leads (L-R) Vince Vaielua and Lisa McCaul spearhead the uplifting event.

eQuality Pilots Program for LGBTQ Youth

Every year up to 1.6 million young people experience homelessness in the United States. Of that number, 40 percent identify as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer/questioning). It's estimated that LGBTQ+ youth represent about 7 percent of the general population - which puts the disproportionate experiences of these young people into heartbreaking context.

The reality is that many youth who come out to their families are often times rejected, emotionally or physically abused, or thrown out of their homes. Those actions put LGBTQ+ youth at higher risk for a cascade of mental health problems, including depression, substance abuse, suicide, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorders. And many end up in, come out of, or cycle through foster care and/or juvenile courts.

CCYJ's eQuality Project is the first statewide effort in Washington State to help LGBTQ+ youth in foster care and the juvenile justice system find safety and support for the unique issues they face.

"The Protocol for Safe & Affirming Care lays the groundwork for building safer and more affirming systems, like foster care and juvenile courts, for not only LGBTQ+ youth, but all youth," says project manager Nicholas Oakley. "What's more, safer and more affirming systems—we believe—will prevent and interrupt youth homelessness."

The project piloted the Protocol for Safe & Affirming Care in three implementation sites - King County Juvenile Court, Spokane County Juvenile Court, and Spokane's Children's Administration (now Department of Children, Youth, and Families) office. The pilot involved training professionals on the Protocol for Safe and

Affirming Care and training to administer a questionnaire asking every youth age 12 and over about their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. The questionnaire's intent is to match appropriate services to youth.



CCYJ hired MEMconsultants, LLC, to conduct an evaluation on the pilot implementation. The evaluation focused on the knowledge gained from trainings, changes in beliefs, attitudes and skills, and the impact

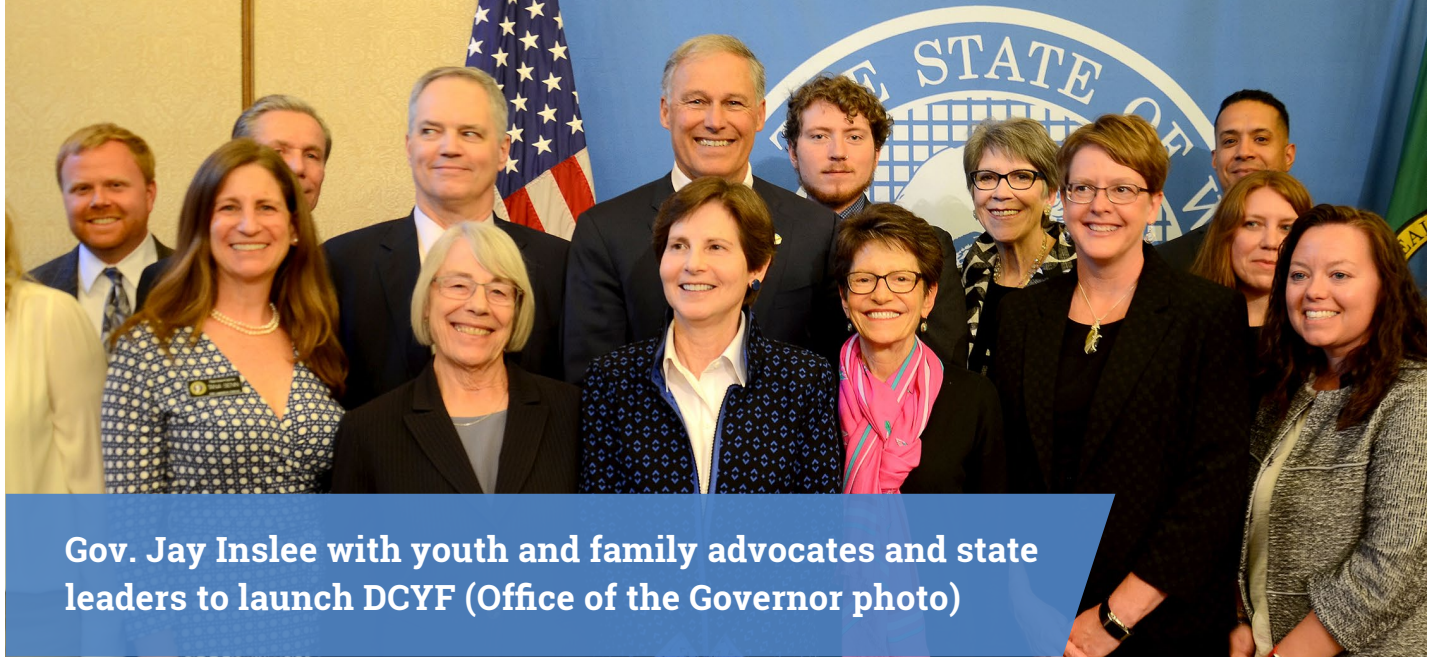
of the project's implementation. Participants rated the trainings highly, citing increased knowledge of the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ youth and understanding of laws and policies protecting LGBTQ+ youth. Participants also reported improving their communication skills needed to talk with youth about their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

The project's implementation centered on the use of the questionnaire administered to all youth asking about their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. This tangible practice reinforced trainings on working with LGBTQ+ youth and was seen as the key change in practice resulting from the project. The participating agencies also reported that their organizations engaged in activities to create a more welcoming and affirming environment for LGBTQ+ youth, such as posting Safe Space posters and more consistently using pronouns and names.

The evaluation included several recommendations as the eQuality project moves forward. First, participants recommended that trainings incorporate youth voice and local referral resources. Second, implementation sites require more help developing internal policies and practices for collecting data and to establishing a core group of professionals that can sustain the work. Third, the Protocol for Safe and Affirming Care should be accessible and easily digestible. Finally, as expansion opportunities arise, the project should consider the potential implementation site's organizational readiness to changing practices and incorporate other key constituencies early in the implementation process.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Nicholas Oakley at noakley@ccyj.org or Michelle Williams at mwilliams@ccyj.org



Gov. Jay Inslee with youth and family advocates and state leaders to launch DCYF (Office of the Governor photo)

Inslee Kicks-off New Department of Children, Youth, and Families

July 1st marked the culmination of a two-year effort to transform the way Washington serves at-risk children and families, with the launch of the state's new Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).

Joined by youth, family advocates and state leaders, Gov. Jay Inslee celebrated the event by saying, "We shouldn't be waiting until a child is harmed to step in. There's so much we can do starting as early as a mother's pregnancy to reduce the chances of harm to children and increase the chances they can succeed in school and in life." Inslee added, "By bringing together the staff who work most with children and families, we're going to be much better able to identify children and parents or caretakers who are struggling and need support."

CCYJ Board member, retired judge Anne Levinson was co-chair of the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC), which was charged with developing the framework for a state agency focused solely on children and families. The BRC's insights and recommendations resulted in the 2017 Governor's request legislation, HB 1661, which passed both houses, creating the DCYF.

"We launched this work knowing that most child welfare systems were created decades ago," said Levinson. We owed it to (our children) to change from a crisis-driven approach to a supportive, outcome-based, prevention and early-intervention approach focusing on risk factors most likely to hinder development and successful transition to adulthood."

Levinson's co-chair of the BRC was state Rep. Ruth Kagi. Speaking at the celebration, Kagi said, "It's been a Herculean effort, and there's such a feeling of success that we really have accomplished the impossible." Kagi, who sponsored HB 1661 and chairs the Early Learning and Human Services Committee in the House, added, "We're off to a great start... It bodes for a much better future for children and families in Washington."



FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/inslee-kicks-new-department-children-youth-and-families

Legislative Successes



Bringing the recent biennium to a close, the 2018 legislative session included prominent debate on youth policy in Washington State. In the recent past, legislators have overlooked the session's 60 day time limit, but this year they maintained a strict timetable and ended on schedule. Consequently, lawmakers had only two months to usher their bills through both chambers of the legislature and onto the governor's desk. Despite the session's brevity, legislators introduced multiple bills related to CCYJ projects and initiatives.

For instance, State Senator Marko Liias led passage of Senate Bill 5722, which bans the use of conversion therapy on LGBTQ+ minors. As manager of CCYJ's eQuality project, Nicolas Oakley followed the bill's progress through the legislature and advocated for its passage in a public hearing before the Senate Committee on Health & Long Term Care. Passing both the House and the Senate with bipartisan support, the adoption of SB 5722 signifies an important victory for LGBTQ+ youth across the state.

SB 6453—which would allow the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to procure legal representation to kinship caregivers of youth at risk of dependency—also caught the attention of CCYJ. By testifying before the Senate Human Services & Corrections Committee, and by working closely with stakeholders and various public officials, Gina Cumbo, CCYJ's Project Director and Project Manager for the Family Advocacy Center (FAC), ensured the inclusion of several changes to the

bill. Notably, Cumbo convinced lawmakers to expand the definition of “kinship” to encompass extended family members as defined in the Indian Child Welfare Act. The amendment made the legislation more culturally inclusive, and SB 6453 became law after winning unanimous support in both legislative chambers.

Legislators adopted several other policies in line with CCYJ's goal of improving Washington's juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Sponsored by Senators Jeannie Darneille, Patty Kuderer, and Guy Palumbo, SB 6160 proposed transferring certain offenses committed by 16 and 17 year olds to the exclusive jurisdiction of juvenile courts.

By testifying in committee hearings, participating in workgroups with legislators and stakeholders, and presenting pertinent data and research, CCYJ can fulfill its mission by supporting legislation in 2019.

Along with procedural and sentencing changes to account for this transfer, the bill also included a measure increasing the age limit for confinement in juvenile detention from 21 to 25. Another bill, SB 6222, increased access to foster care by eliminating certain eligibility requirements and by extending the age limit one can request extended foster care from 19 to 21. Inslee signed both SB 6160 and SB 6222 into law in March. Despite the successes of the 2018 legislative session, many bills related to CCYJ's work died in the legislature. Luckily, several of these issues will likely reappear next session.

By testifying in committee hearings, participating in workgroups with legislators and stakeholders, and presenting pertinent data and research, CCYJ can fulfill its mission by supporting legislation in 2019. Debate surrounding the protection of sexually exploited youth, the reform of the ARY/CHINS system, and the repeal of the valid court order exception will likely resurface in the next legislative session, and CCYJ can be an influential voice in Olympia on these issues.

CCYJ Bids Fond Farewell to Bonnie Bush



CCYJ wishes to recognize long-time Spokane County Juvenile Court Administrator Bonnie Bush for her tireless work as a leader in juvenile justice improvements in Eastern Washington. Bush retired at the end of August, after dedicating 39 years of service as a Juvenile Intake and Corrections Officer, then as Juvenile Court Administrator in Spokane County.

Bush was an early adopter and partner in CCYJ's Models for Change initiative, Becca Task Force, eQuality Project, and Project Respect, showing great sensitivity to issues impacting court-involved youth (specifically pertaining to racial disproportionality, CSEC, LGBTQ+, and school-court partnerships for families in crisis).

Her court has been at the forefront of many innovative efforts and ideas committed to working across systems to improve juvenile justice reform. Due in part to Bush's dedication, Spokane County was a pioneer of Community Truancy Boards, a collaboration of

school, courts and community organizations designed to tackle the root causes of truancy.

In a proclamation honoring Bush for her service, the Spokane County Board of Commissioners declared that, "Bonnie has been a catalyst for positive change in the lives of many young people through her work directing programs, supervising detention and treatment services, and ensuring the security of numerous facilities." Adding that Bush, "has impacted the lives of 100's of youths in a positive way...Spokane County is undoubtedly a better place to live, work, and play, with tremendous citizens like Bonnie as part of our community."

Bush leaves a strong legacy of highly capable and dedicated staff at Spokane County Juvenile Court. CCYJ will miss her boundless energy, leadership, and willingness to partner with us on our many of our most projects.

CCYJ Welcomes New Staff Members

Lisa McCaul is CCYJ's new LINC Project Coordinator. Lisa brings 15 years of experience in the private and public sector, leveraging her extensive background in data management, event coordination and administrative assistance with a heavy emphasis on reporting, communications and organization. She holds a BFA from Southern Methodist University and has a passion for understanding social justice issues and being an example of change within broken systems.

Michele Williams is the new eQuality Project Assistant and will be working on eQuality, Becca, and legislative tracking. Michelle is a graduate of the University of Washington, where she majored in International Studies. There she engaged in research on migration studies in Rome and also received a scholarship for focusing studies on Southeast Asian culture. Michelle previously worked as a Market Research Associate for Arrive Residential.

SAVE THE DATE

The Norm Maleng Advocate for Youth Award Breakfast

Honoring Gordon McHenry Jr., Chair of the Washington State
Partnership Council on Juvenile Justice

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6TH, 2019

Sheraton Hotel in Downtown Seattle • 7:30-8:45 a.m.



**PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO THE NEW
Justice Bobbe J. Bridge Legacy Fund for Internship
Opportunities. To donate online, please go to
www.ccyj.org/get-involved/donate and indicate
"JBB Fund" in comments.**



615 2nd Avenue, Suite 275, Seattle, Washington 98104
(206) 696-7503 www.ccyj.org

OUR MISSION is to advance justice for and enhance the lives of children and youth through juvenile justice, child welfare, and related systems reform.

OUR VISION is that through the work of the Center for Children & Youth Justice, more children and youth will be diverted from entering Washington's juvenile justice system. Those children and youth who are involved in the juvenile justice, child welfare and related systems will maximize their potential to become more successful and productive members of their communities. They will have the support of integrated systems staffed by highly-skilled practitioners, utilizing evidence-based practices, in an environment of fair and unbiased decision making.

The Center for Children & Youth Justice is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Your tax-deductible contribution is appreciated.

Newsletter Editor: Brenda Miyake

Graphic Design by: Hazel Wong-Godfrey