
Impact. 2011.

The Center for Children & Youth Justice is creating a promising new future for kids in foster care and the juvenile justice system. But we’re not just making their lives better. We’re making our communities better. Yes, we’re all about changing systems. But we’re really all about changing lives – today, tomorrow, forever.
Dear supporters, colleagues and friends,

When children have hopes and dreams but no one they can count on to guide them, when they know deep down that they can achieve more but are forced to stand alone, when each day brings new hurdles but little support to overcome them... children struggle.

So do organizations.

The Center for Children & Youth Justice was founded in 2006 to change the systems that are responsible for our state’s most vulnerable kids, but which often leave them to falter. And just like the children and youth we are committed to serve, the Center needs support and guidance in order to succeed. Fortunately, we have it – in you, our loyal donors and partners in this important work; in a stellar staff of committed professionals; in a wise and dedicated Board of Directors and Advisory Council.

Like the youth who long to be more, to do more and to embrace every new opportunity, the Center also refuses to be content with the status quo. Despite the still-flagging economy that challenges funding for all our programs, the needs and opportunities are too great to ignore. That’s why we began four new initiatives in 2011:

- South King County Coordinating Council on Gangs, to foster prevention, coordination and collaboration across multiple jurisdictions
- Project Respect, to coordinate statewide policies and practices in response to prostituted youth
- Lawyers Furthering Education, to provide advocacy and mentorship to at-risk middle school students
- A partnership project to determine the best ways to provide legal representation to children in dependency and parental rights termination proceedings. CCYJ joins in the initiative with the Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in the Child Welfare System (QIC) at the University of Michigan Law School and the Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care.

These new efforts, along with our existing initiatives, are working to reform the foster care and juvenile justice systems so children and youth can receive every possible opportunity to succeed. And by reforming those core systems, we effect change not just today, but for generations.

We stand on your shoulders to create better systems and better lives, which in turn will create a better community for us all. There is still so much more to do. But with your support, we will not rest until every child who enters these systems emerges better prepared to achieve their dreams.

Sincerely,

Justice Bobbe J. Bridge (ret.)
Founding President and CEO

Vickie Rawlins
Board Chair

OUR MISSION
To advance justice for and enhance the lives of children and youth through juvenile justice, child welfare, and related systems reform.
Supporting Early Connections gets to the core of what’s needed for families being served – helping parents understand and meet the child’s needs. This can only be done in the context of the ongoing relationship between parent and child... More than any other service that I see being made available, Supporting Early Connections can fundamentally alter and strengthen that relationship.

Diana Farrow, Volunteer, Court Appointed Special Advocates

The vulnerable children and youth in our state’s foster care and juvenile justice systems need the Center for Children & Youth Justice.

Paola Maranan, The Children’s Alliance

I want to thank you for leading the charge in this most important area for our youth, families and communities. You have provided the (Becca Truancy Reform Summit) forum for us to head in an informed, balanced direction, while sustaining progress made to date and continuing to move the issues forward, rather than regressing to that from which we came.

Craig Daly, Snohomish County Superior Court, Juvenile Court Operations

Lawyers Fostering Independence is very accommodating to the often shifting circumstances youth face. They can give legal advice via telephone and e-mail, and even if they cannot help with your particular problem, they often are able to connect you with someone who can. With so many legal challenges facing youth in care, it is comforting to know that there are organizations like LFI for those who need support in dealing with legal issues.

Brenda Chérie Ortega, former foster youth

As an advocate for victims of child abuse, I know first-hand how the systems set up to support them so often fail to do so. CCYJ is the only organization in Washington that works to reform those systems to make them truly supportive and responsive to children’s needs. I know that when I donate to CCYJ, my gift not only helps vulnerable children and youth, it exponentially helps all the individuals, organizations and systems that are working to improve those kids’ lives.

Kristen Howell, Madrona Legal Advisors, CCYJ donor and Board member
How do we measure success?  
In lasting reforms that will forever change lives

At the Center for Children & Youth Justice, we measure our success in long-term, lasting results. By that measure, we are making a remarkable impact. The programs and practices that the Center has pioneered over our first six years are now becoming embedded in the fabric of juvenile justice and child welfare so that countless children and youth will benefit for years to come. Here are just a few examples:

- **Supporting Early Connections** was named a “best practice” in a 2011 national policy agenda released by a group of leading child welfare and early childhood development organizations. The report represents a collective vision of what should be done to better address the needs of infants and toddlers who come to the attention of the child welfare system.

  An evaluation completed in 2011 of Supporting Early Connections, which works to strengthen parent-child relationships in families referred to court for abuse or neglect, showed significant positive results over the first three and a half years of the program. Children’s mental health and families’ relationships showed marked improvements. Less than one-quarter of children resided with their biological parent(s) when they entered the program; 55 percent of the families had reuniﬁed after participating. *(To read a full evaluation of SEC, please visit our website at www.ccyj.org.)*

- **Avanza**, a program aimed reducing dropout rates for at-risk Hispanic youth, succeeded in keeping 92 percent of participating students in school (compared to a statewide retention rate of just 70 percent). Students also increased their academic achievement by 67 percent — not just while enrolled in Avanza but the year after as well.

- Potential dropouts who participated in **Youth REACH**, one of CCYJ’s Models for Change projects, were 30 to 50 percent less likely than non-participants to face court involvement for truancy.

- We convened the final decision-maker summit to advance a decade’s worth of unfulfilled commitments to child welfare reform. The culmination of efforts initiated by the creation of the **Child Welfare Resource Bank**, the summit finalized responsibility and accountability for moving positive change forward.
Model program leads to legislation to help more potential dropouts

Students who drop out of school often find out too late that they’ve severely short-changed their futures. Without a diploma or GED, they can’t find work to support themselves and too often end up on public assistance or in prison.

Yet prevention and intervention services for these young people have been piecemeal to nonexistent, leaving many at-risk 16- to 21-year-olds without the support they need to stay engaged in school.

To that end, CCYJ initiated PathNet, a dropout reengagement system and part of CCYJ’s MacArthur Foundation-funded Models for Change initiative. The success of the PathNet model led to recent legislation to create a statewide system to help out-of-school youth get on the path to living-wage jobs and careers.

PathNet creates a coordinated “path of networked organizations” to better serve a wider population of youth. School districts, community colleges, employment programs, community-based organizations and other partners work to educate, engage, support and train at-risk youth. CCYJ partners in PathNet with King County Uniting for Youth and Puget Sound ESD.

Another Models for Change program that created community truancy boards in Spokane County also is helping more potential dropouts by expanding to other communities in the county and beyond.

Successful infant mental health model ready to expand

After more than three years of helping South King County babies and their families develop healthier relationships, our groundbreaking Supporting Early Connections (SEC) program is ready to serve as a model for efforts elsewhere. The Center is seeking funding to expand the King County program, as well as apply the SEC model in Eastern Washington.

Funded initially by a three-year grant from the Stuart Foundation, Supporting Early Connections provides training to court professionals and others who work with the families of young children. It also offers voluntary treatment for children and families that have been referred to court for child abuse or neglect. Parents and caregivers work with infant mental health therapists from Navos, a community-based mental health agency, to better recognize and support their children’s developmental needs.
King County embraces and funds proven CCYJ anti-gang program

Avanza – a successful school-completion program for Latino youth initiated and supported by CCYJ – is now part of a coordinated response to curb gang violence in South King County. The county decided to fund Avanza to help Latino youth who are at risk of dropping out of school and/or getting involved in gangs. Avanza (Spanish for “advance”) gives youth ages 14 to 16 the opportunity to earn a wage and school credit while working summer jobs and learning employment and life skills.

King County officials were impressed with the strong results of Avanza after learning that all of Avanza’s students remained crime free even though nearly a third of them had been involved in the juvenile justice system before they entered the program.

Rod Wilson* left foster care with a Class A felony on his juvenile record, his identity stolen by people he trusted and a feeling that no one could help him get his life on track.

Then he found Lawyers Fostering Independence (LFI), the Center’s program that pairs pro bono attorneys with former foster youth who need civil legal support.

After working with an LFI volunteer attorney to prove the courts that Rod was a victim of identity theft and was not the criminal who had been using his name, LFI then set about sealing his juvenile record. Thanks to the hard work of pardoned juvenile offender-turned-activist Starcia Ague, other advocacy groups and CCYJ, the Washington Legislature in 2010 approved a bill to allow juvenile offenders to apply to have their Class A felony records sealed. Rod was one of the first young adults in Washington to take advantage of this system change.

LFI also succeeded in convincing King County to seal juvenile records even while the former offender is still working to pay off any non-restitution court fees or fines. This allows young adults to pass background checks for employment or housing so they can begin to rebuild their lives.

Rod is now entering a corporate internship that pave the way for a successful future – an example of the kind of systems reform that can change lives.

*Rod’s name has been changed and a model image substituted to protect his privacy.
## 2011 FINANCIALS

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<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
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<td>Management and general expenses</td>
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*Does not include pledge payments made on grants awarded in previous years.*

## OUR VISION

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.

## ABOUT THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH JUSTICE

Washington State Supreme Court Justice Bobbe J. Bridge’s lifetime commitment to children and youth led her to found the Center in 2006. Grants from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation spurred initial projects. Within its first six years, the Center quadrupled its staff and programs. Generous gifts from individuals, corporations and foundations sustain the Center’s ongoing work.

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