

# 10 YEARS OF IMPACT

## As CCYJ celebrates its 10th anniversary, we've identified 10 contributions to systems reform we're especially proud of.

1. Children who are commercially sexually trafficked are identified and given protection, not punishment.
2. The experiences of LGBTQ youth in Washington state's foster care and juvenile justice systems are part of the training of all Washington state corrections officers.
3. Laws have been enacted to ensure youth facing mental health challenges can receive the treatment they need.
4. For the first time in the nation, elected and appointed officials come together regionally to find common solutions to gang violence.
5. Former foster youth can receive legal assistance to help them reach for their future without being blocked by their past.
6. Key decision makers came together, reviewed and took action on outstanding recommendations from 10 years of research on child welfare systems reform.
7. Courts trying to reduce disproportionalities in the foster care and juvenile justice systems can base practice changes on robust data.
8. Truancy interventions keep kids in school and out of the courts.
9. Infants and toddlers in foster care can receive treatment with their birth parents, strengthening the parent-child bond and increasing family reunification.
10. Law enforcement agencies and young people from communities of color can access a curriculum that engages them in dialogue and improves their communication with each other.

**While great progress has been made, these outcomes need to be more deeply embedded and dispersed statewide. That's why we're so excited about CCYJ's next 10 years.**



# Reflections on 10 YEARS OF IMPACT



Barbie Hull Photography

“Systems reform.” That’s a big idea, and not always easy to explain. But it’s what your loyal support of the Center for Children & Youth Justice has brought about for a decade now. We hope the stories in this special 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of our newsletter will bring that phrase to life for you.

I’ll start things off with a favorite fable. Once upon a time, two teenage girls were enjoying a picnic by the side of a river. Suddenly, one leaped up and shouted, “There’s a baby in the water!” She waded in quickly to grab the baby and pull her safely to the shore. But as soon as she sat down, her friend yelled, “There’s another one!” And she ran to pull that baby out of the water, too.

When the two girls looked up the river, they were shocked to see many more babies bobbing toward them. The first girl said, “Look—you stay here and save these babies. I’m heading upstream to find out what’s tossing babies into the river.”

In Washington state, thousands of kids are being tossed into the turbulent waters of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems every year. Many navigate the current just fine, and emerge on shore in far better shape than when they went in. But far too many are set adrift to make it on their own.

Yes, some drown: foster kids and those in the juvenile justice system have much higher rates of mental illness, homelessness, incarceration, drug abuse, poverty, and suicide. Youth of color and LGBTQ youth must fight against the current all that much harder, because the inadequacies of the system are exacerbated when it comes to their care.

When we say that the Center for Children & Youth Justice reforms systems, we’re saying we work upstream. We find out who and what causes babies to flounder, and we prevent kids from getting tossed into the river in the first place. **Instead of saving one child at a time, CCYJ’s work benefits all children in our state...for generations to come.**

CCYJ’s upstream work requires research, not speculation, and dedicated collaboration, not finger-pointing. It means bringing together many people from many professions to address root causes. When everyone works better together and responds more effectively, they create large-scale and lasting changes in policies and practices. This saves taxpayer dollars while improving the lives and futures of all children in the state of Washington for generations to come. **And that’s what we call “systems reform.”**

CCYJ has had a significant impact on the foster care and juvenile justice systems in its first 10 years. The “Top 10 List” on the first page features 10 outcomes that we’re especially proud of.

We know we didn’t achieve these outcomes on our own: each one came about because CCYJ worked alongside skilled and dedicated partners, including providers of legal, social service, and health care services; educators; officials from local and state governments, law enforcement, and the courts; and the children, youth, parents and families who are at the heart of the work.

Each of these outcomes was possible because CCYJ had the generous support of donors, volunteers, advocates and community champions like you. Thank you for standing upstream with us.

Very truly yours,

**Justice Bobbe J. Bridge, ret.**  
Founding President/CEO

# System Shout-Outs!

A celebration of great progress anchored by the 2015 work of these champions.

- ★ **The Washington State Legislature**, who:
  - created the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs;
  - gave all kids in foster care the opportunity to remain in care until age 21; and
  - made record sealing more accessible to all young people.
- ★ **The Washington State Supreme Court**, who affirmed the Legislature's right to make those changes in record sealing.
- ★ **The public and private funders of the *One Family One Team* pilot**, which uses the power of compassionate relationships and a network of professionals from many specialties to give parents and kids involved in dependency proceedings the best chance for success.
- ★ **The officials and voters of King County**, who created and approved the *Best Starts for Kids* initiative to improve the health and well-being of the county's children, youth, and families.



## A special thank you

to the visionaries who created CCYJ and the many loyal supporters who made our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary possible:

- Donors
- The Sunday Morning Group
- Boards of directors
- Advisory council
- eQuality advisory committee
- Breakfast committees
- Sponsors, table captains, and guests
- Maleng Advocate for Youth honorees
- President's Award honorees
- Community partners

### Board of Directors

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Evan Shapiro

**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** 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.

**Winter 2016 Editorial Credits** Additional contributors: Rosemary Coleman, Shari Kooistra (Editor), Bethany Peddie. Design: Causality.

# Lawyers Fostering Independence

**By Hickory Gateless**

Managing Attorney, *Lawyers Fostering Independence*

Aging out of the foster care system is too often accompanied by identity theft, credit and debt problems, wrongful landlord practices, open juvenile records and/or domestic violence. These create formidable legal obstacles for former foster youth, who are often challenged by a lack of family support, educational deficits, and/or unaddressed physical or mental health issues.

In response, CCYJ created the *Lawyers Fostering Independence* (LFI) program in 2008. LFI provides former foster youth with life-changing civil legal help. It halts the trajectory to homelessness and poverty that threatens so many, clearing the way for stable housing, a good job, an independent adult life, and lasting generational change.

LFI relies on pro bono attorneys from the community to advise and counsel clients. But the help they offer is more than legal; because many of our clients have only known a world where adults do not adequately care for them, LFI attorneys learn how to build trusting relationships with LFI's young clients whose lives often have been defined by trauma.

In each year of its operation, LFI has increased both the number of young adults served and the number of pro bono attorneys recruited and trained.

**We are tremendously grateful for the more than 250 volunteer attorneys who have served over 550 young people since 2008.**

LFI has also inspired the team at Digital WarRoom (DWR), a Seattle-based provider of legal document management products and services. The company understands how critical it is to have solid legal representation, and the mission of CCYJ is a natural fit. By donating a percentage of their monthly profits to our Lawyers Fostering Independence program, they've found a unique and easy way to share their success and to offer their clients great service and community impact.

## Without LFI,

**Rachel**—through no fault of her own—would likely have been another dropout statistic. A 17 year old former foster youth, she was kicked out of the house for being gay. Homeless and without support, she immediately became sick and fell off-track for high school graduation. When **Joanne Hepburn of K&L Gates** obtained a court order granting Rachel a distribution of money from a small trust account, Rachel could pay for food and housing. Now, Rachel's a high school graduate who's employed and living in safe and stable housing...and she says LFI is why.



**“The whole team at Digital WarRoom really believes in the work CCYJ is doing. Through their LFI program, former foster kids receive the excellent legal assistance they need to build independent and successful lives. We’re proud to support organizations where we live and work, and we consider CCYJ to be a terrific investment in our Washington state community.”**

**Justin Farmer**, President & General Counsel, Digital WarRoom

# Meet Dr. Ben Danielson, CCYJ's 2016 Honoree

CCYJ's 2016 Norm Maleng Advocate for Youth honoree is a "dual system alumnus" who spent time in both the foster care and juvenile justice systems. He's also a Harvard and UW alumnus, one of Seattle's "Top Doctors", and the medical director of Seattle Children's Odessa Brown Children's Clinic.

Dr. Benjamin Danielson of Seattle Children's says that when Justice Bobbe Bridge invited him to join the CCYJ board, "It was an easy 'yes.' Like many people in Seattle, I'd met her and was familiar with her indefatigable belief that we can and we must make lives better. I was overjoyed to be asked to serve and eager to get to work."

He notes, "The work CCYJ does is so valuable because it's not about them. Their magic is behind the scenes, where things fall apart. CCYJ gathers the professional expertise, the research data, and the community members it takes to rebuild the systems and implement the long-term changes our kids need to thrive, not just survive."

Born into foster care, Ben spent the first few years of his life moving from one placement to another. At the age of three, he was adopted by a loving single mother with two daughters. They struggled financially, but the woman Ben refers to affectionately as "my hippie mom" was committed to her kids' success and well-being.

But, Ben says, "I became a problem child who skipped school and hung around the wrong people. I made bad choices, was exposed to violence, and had brushes with Juvie. I was following the same path so many of my peers spiraled into."

"The greatest motivators, the ones that pulled me out of my spiral, were the positive messages and experiences I got from my mom, grandmother, one good friend, and a few teachers. My grandmother was one of the first people to tell me that she saw value in me and had expectations. I wanted to live up to those expectations."

"Now, on a daily basis, I see young people whose experiences are so much more difficult or tumultuous than mine. **CCYJ is the only organization I know of that deals with this as a system, so that all youth will have the same chances I had...or better.**"



Seattle Children's

**Dr. Ben Danielson**

## CCYJ's 2016 Norm Maleng Advocate for Youth Award Breakfast is Just Around the Corner!

**March 10, 2016**  
**7:30am – 8:45am**  
Sheraton Seattle

Norm Maleng Advocate for Youth Award Honoree:  
Dr. Ben Danielson

President's Award Honoree:  
Kenny Alhadeff

### Seats are going fast!

REGISTER NOW at [ccyj.org/breakfast](http://ccyj.org/breakfast) or by contacting Bethany Peddie at 206.696.7503 x19 or [bpeddie@ccyj.org](mailto:bpeddie@ccyj.org)

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For 10 years, CCYJ has had one mission: to reform the foster care and juvenile justice systems to improve the lives of generations of kids. You can help raise funds for this worthy cause by signing up for our special CCYJ subscription offer.

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# You're Invited to the Best Birthday Party of the Year!

CCYJ's Norm Maleng Advocate for Youth Award Breakfast

Presented by



## Thursday, March 10, 2016

7:30 am - 8:45 am • Seattle Sheraton, 1400 Sixth Avenue

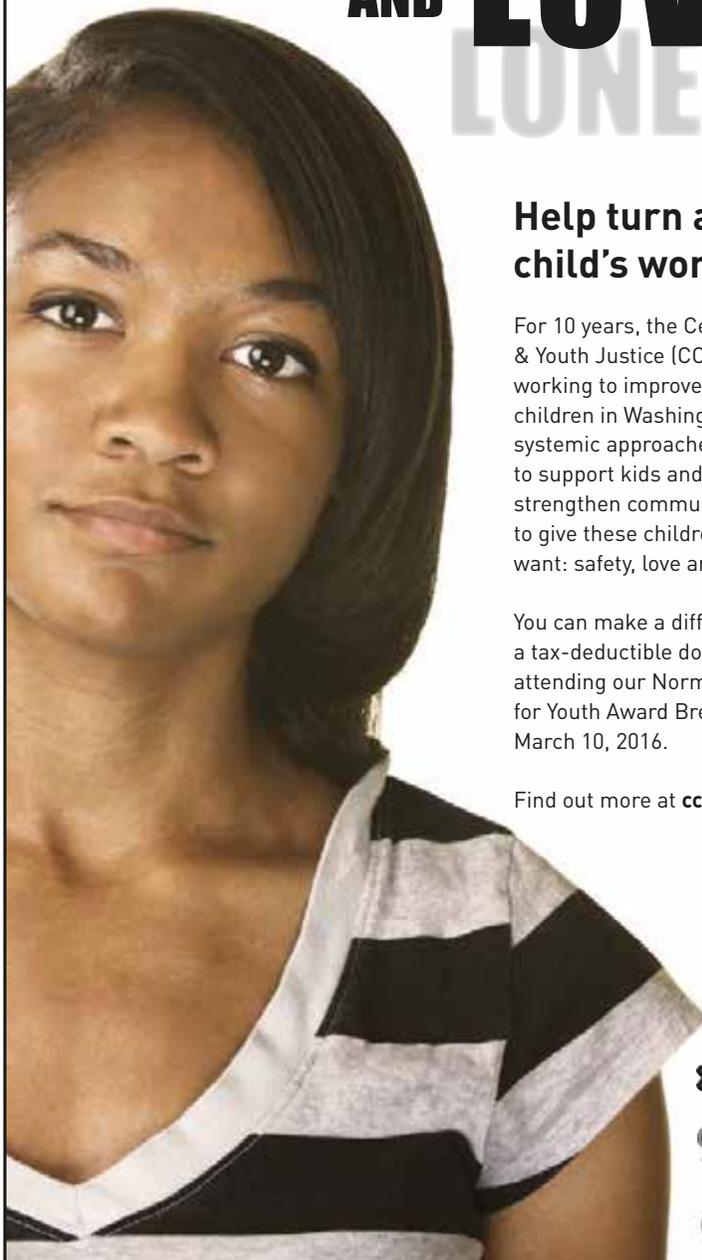
A minimum \$150 donation will be requested  
**Register Here: [ccyj.org/breakfast](http://ccyj.org/breakfast)**

**Seats are going fast!**

REGISTER NOW at [ccyj.org/breakfast](http://ccyj.org/breakfast) or by contacting Bethany Peddie at 206.696.7503 x19 or [bpeddie@ccyj.org](mailto:bpeddie@ccyj.org)

# SAFE AND LOVED

SCARED  
LONELY



## Help turn a foster child's world around

For 10 years, the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) has been working to improve the lives of foster children in Washington state. Through systemic approaches designed to support kids and families and strengthen communities, CCYJ aims to give these children what they really want: safety, love and permanence.

You can make a difference through a tax-deductible donation, or by attending our Norm Maleng Advocate for Youth Award Breakfast on March 10, 2016.

Find out more at [ccyj.org](http://ccyj.org).



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