

KEEPING KIDS HOME



Imagine spending two years away from your home, from the familiarity, comfort, and stability of your loved ones. Imagine the months ticking by in uncertainty and fear, not knowing what comes next or where you will be next week or next year. For children awaiting the outcome of a child welfare case, this is not an imagined circumstance but a reality. On average, children involved in child welfare cases will spend six months to two years separated from their home before being returned—certainly a long enough period of time to suffer emotional trauma that may continue to impact the child into adulthood.

Now imagine a system where this traumatic scenario just doesn't happen. Imagine a system that minimizes trauma, maximizes resources, and stabilizes families not just for six months or two years, but for generations. This is the system that is being modeled by CCYJ's Family Advocacy Center (FAC).

FAMILY IMPACT

A criminal history report threatens to force a baby out of her grandparent's home and into foster care. FAC's attorney corrects the erroneous report, allowing for an adoption home study to move forward. The baby will now remain permanently in the safety and stability of her grandparent's loving home.

In 2016, FAC's multidisciplinary team of a lawyer, a social worker, and a parent family ally, helped 35 clients—surpassing our service goals by 75%. Throughout the year it became apparent that the most pressing issues faced by FAC clients were in

establishing parenting plans and non-parental custody plans. Clearly there is a great need and great opportunity for offering families paths forward to stability, and a great risk in continuing to funnel children unnecessarily into the foster care system.

The statistics speak for themselves. One in four youth leaving foster care experience PTSD—a higher rate than our returning war veterans. A quarter become homeless; only three percent graduate from college; and half are unemployed at 24. We've shared these numbers before, but we must never lose sight of them. These are the devastating outcomes that, while we work on improving system response, the FAC model can prevent.

FAMILY IMPACT

A mother's chronic homelessness creates a risk of foster care placement for her two young children. FAC's attorney helps her to secure a disability related Section 8 voucher extension, stabilizing the family's housing situation and closing the CPS investigation. Both children are able to remain with their mom.

Now imagine a future where the FAC approach to minimizing trauma, maximizing resources, and stabilizing families is the norm. Imagine that this model for preventing the negative outcomes associated with foster care stays is integrated into business as usual for system professionals. CCYJ's goal is to ensure that this future happens for the benefit of all children and families in Washington—and with your support, we will achieve that goal!



Barbie Hull Photography

“How we love our own children is how we should love all children.”

These powerful words were spoken by a young person at a community dialogue event that CCYJ co-hosted last year following several incidents of youth violence in South King County. And it is these words that I reflect on this February, as symbols of love crop up in windows and grocery store aisles. Since founding CCYJ ten years ago, an act of love wrapped up as a retirement project, I've been privileged to witness the many ways that our community turns love into action for the children and youth in our juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

On the surface, our Family Advocacy Center (FAC) may not appear to be about love for children. It is, as you read in our cover article, an intervention model aimed at preventing unnecessary foster care placements. What's love got to do with that? Well, every parenting plan secured, every adoption study moved forward, every child welfare case closed by our FAC team represents an opportunity for a child to grow up in a loving home. At CCYJ, love for system kids is enacted through effort, action, and partnership.

In the last few months, I've also seen love for system youth enacted through transformative generosity. At the end of 2016, CCYJ received a bequest gift that will build long-term financial security for our organization. The philanthropist who made this gift, William T. Beeks, was unknown to CCYJ but he knew us and liked what he knew. I wish we had the opportunity to tell Mr. Beeks how greatly we value his commitment to fostering critical work for generations of children and youth.

And of course, we see love in action every year at our Norm Maleng Advocate for Youth Award Breakfast! On March 15th, our community of champions for youth will come together once again to honor the work being done, celebrate the impacts achieved, and invest in continuing reform for system kids. Read on to hear from our 2017 Advocate for Youth honorees, a father and son duo turning youth justice advocacy into a family affair.

I hope you can join us at this special gathering. Until then, you have our heartfelt thanks and deepest gratitude for your support.

Very truly yours,

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

CCYJ's Norm Maleng Advocate for Youth Award Breakfast

March 15, 2017 7:30 – 8:45am • Seattle Sheraton Downtown
Register Here: ccyj.org/breakfast!

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Justice in the Family for Maleng Honorees

Casey Trupin believes deeply in justice for children, the promise of better futures for all youth regardless of race, income, or zip code. “How we treat families,” he says, “is not only a reflection of who we are, but it directly impacts what type of state and nation we are going to have now and for generations to come. If we can get child welfare and juvenile justice right, we likely will have found a way to treat children right everywhere, all the time. And that is not only just, not only smart, it’s the only path forward for our society.”

This fierce sense of justice is a family trait for the Trupins, modeled for Casey by his father, Eric. As Casey shares, Eric helped

him “to understand why it’s important to help young people, and why it’s important to focus on systems reform”.

For Eric, “receiving this recognition with my son whose work on issues of social justice has improved the lives of so many children and families” is a point of pride. He’s also incredibly proud to be honored with an award recognizing Norm Maleng’s legacy. Eric knew and worked with Norm, saying, “he tenaciously stood for doing the right thing for children ... I had the utmost respect for his commitment to social justice.”

Eric has this same commitment. He’s been fighting for justice for children his entire professional life. When serving as a monitor for the US Department of Civil Rights reviewing confinement conditions in Louisiana state juvenile detention facilities, Eric witnessed the harsh reality of a failing justice system. Conditions in the detention centers were so severe, they echoed for Eric “photos of the concentration camps in Soweto, South Africa during apartheid”.

His best day enacting youth justice? “The day we used the full force of constitutional and children’s rights to close the facility, and implement over 80 remedies to improve how children and youth in the juvenile justice system were treated.” This focus on improving outcomes is central to Eric’s life’s work and part of his strong belief in CCYJ’s impact. “CCYJ is unique in its focus on improving outcomes for children, youth and families impacted by the child welfare and juvenile justice systems,” Eric says.

As a founding member of CCYJ’s Advisory Council, Casey shares his father’s conviction for the CCYJ approach to systems reform. “CCYJ’s work in changing systems takes what we know about how to support children and figures out how to apply those policies and practices across the board. I think about all the children and families I’ve worked with, and how, had the systems been better functioning, their lives would have been greatly improved. This is the promise of CCYJ.”

Eric and Casey Trupin will be presented with the Norm Maleng Advocate for Youth Award at CCYJ’s annual breakfast on March 15th.

Meet the Honorees

ERIC TRUPIN, PH.D

Director/Vice Chair, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, University of Washington

Eric Trupin has devoted his career to implementing and advocating for evidence-based practices that improve outcomes for children and youth. He is an ardent advocate for at-risk youth and has been active in authoring and fighting for the passage of legislation to improve outcomes.

CASEY TRUPIN

Program Officer, Youth Homelessness, Raikes Foundation

Casey Trupin is well-known for representing thousands of foster youth and homeless adults in litigation and has worked on state and federal legislation designed to improve services to low-income people in need. Prior to joining the Raikes Foundation, he served as the coordinating attorney for the Children and Youth Project at Columbia Legal Services in Seattle, advocating for at-risk, homeless and foster children and youth.



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You are making a difference for children and youth! Together, we are changing the future for generations of Washington's kids.

From the whole CCYJ team—Bobbe, MeLisa, Gina, Hickory, Robbin, Krystal, Maria, Anna, Nicholas, Kimberly, Bethany, Anica, Margaret, and Mahogany

THANK YOU!

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.

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