



center for
CHILDREN & YOUTH
JUSTICE | *Better systems. Better lives.®*

June 2011

Better Systems. Better Lives. The CCYJ E-Newsletter



Dear Friends,

I've said many times that lasting, meaningful reforms in child welfare and juvenile justice don't come easily or quickly. But the often slow process of creating and implementing systemic change doesn't translate to S-L-O-W at the Center for Children & Youth Justice. We hit the ground running when CCYJ was founded in 2006 and (thankfully) we've been moving at a relentless pace ever since.

Today, we are busier than ever. This coming summer and fall will find us gearing up for several major new initiatives. I'm particularly excited about two of them: Lawyers Furthering Education and Project Respect. The former will connect volunteer attorneys with truant youth at high risk of dropping out of school and/or entering the juvenile justice system. The latter will create a compassionate, systemic, statewide policy and protocol for treating young women and men forced into prostitution as the victims they are, not as criminals. Learn more about both these new initiatives in this e-newsletter.

More exciting news: [Trish Millines Dzik](#), co-founder and executive director of the [Technology Access Foundation](#), has joined CCYJ's [Advisory Council](#). We are honored to have this champion of children and education on our team.

Very truly yours,

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

CCYJ will help lawyers further the education of at-risk youth

A new partnership with the Seattle School District will connect volunteer attorneys with youth who are at high risk of dropping out, aiming to keep them in school and out of the juvenile justice system.

Tentatively titled Lawyers Furthering Education, the program will recruit and train attorneys to provide pro bono legal representation to at-risk youth before they have serious truancy issues and once they have been sent to court for truancy. Early on, attorneys can work with the students and their families to resolve legal issues that contribute to the student's school attendance problems. The volunteer lawyers will become advocates and mentors, not just legal representatives.



"Students who are often truant from school are much more likely to drop out," says Leila Curtis, Truancy Project Coordinator. "By intervening early with advocates who are trained to spot issues that can cause a child to miss school -- such as family financial troubles, evictions or a lack of access to health care or social services -- we can resolve those issues so kids can become fully engaged in school, academically successful and on track for graduation."

With a contract from the Seattle School District, in turn funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant to reduce the district's dropout rate, the program will focus initially on homeless and immigrant youth, who have higher dropout rates than other groups of students in the district. CCYJ has brought together a planning committee -- comprised of representatives from schools, juvenile justice and community groups that work with at-risk youth -- to determine the details of the program. We expect to begin recruiting attorneys over the summer and to start the program this fall.

***Are you a lawyer looking to further the education of a student in need?
[Email](#) Leila Curtis for more information on volunteering.***

Compassion and consistency for victimized youth

Young women and men who are forced into prostitution have long been treated as criminals instead of the victims they are. A new CCYJ project, in partnership with YouthCare, will ensure a compassionate and consistent response to the exploitation of prostituted youth.



"We believe these victimized girls and boys need help and compassion, not the further victimization of arrest, incarceration and a return to the streets where they once again will be forced into commercial sex acts for the monetary gain of abusive pimps," says Justice Bridge.

"Unfortunately, there is currently no standard cross-system best practice or coordinated response for youth trying to escape prostitution," she explains. "Without such a standardized response and the training to implement it appropriately, law enforcement, the courts and other 'first responders' unintentionally perpetuate the problem and offer little hope to young victims."

Project Respect will develop a statewide model victim-centered response protocol policy along with training for first responders. This shift in the relationship between the justice system and youth will decrease arrests among victimized youth, reduce the number of youth who are forced to return to prostitution, and increase the prosecution of traffickers. The protocol will not only improve the lives of victimized youth throughout Washington State, but it will become a national model for easing the further traumatization of these vulnerable young girls and boys.

A \$100,000 two-year grant from the Children's Justice Interdisciplinary Task Force provides initial funding for Project Respect. CCYJ is currently seeking other funding partners to contribute to the project's success. [Email us for more information.](#)

Mark your calendars and GiveBIG on June 23

On Thursday, June 23, The Seattle Foundation will host its first **GiveBIG** event - one of the biggest giving days in King County history and your opportunity to make a **BIG** impact on CCYJ.



GiveBIG will grow your generosity in several ways. First, The Seattle Foundation and local businesses will match a share of every donation to the Center for Children & Youth Justice.

All you have to do is make your donation through [CCYJ's page](#) on the Seattle Foundation's online Giving Center **between 7:00 a.m. and Midnight on June 23**. In addition, during the day, you could be chosen at random to win a Golden Ticket to have CCYJ receive an additional \$1,000 from GiveBIG's sponsors.

Mark your calendar today so you won't forget to donate to CCYJ on June 23. (We'll send you another friendly reminder that morning.) And share the good news about GiveBIG with your friends!

Supporting Early Connections gains national recognition

Supporting Early Connections, an innovative CCYJ program that helps young children and their parents form healthier relationships, is receiving national recognition.

SEC was among several programs highlighted this spring in a new policy agenda, ["A Call to Action on Behalf of Maltreated Infants and Toddlers."](#) released by a group of leading child welfare and early childhood development organizations.



The report -- published by the American Humane Association, Center for the Study of Social Policy, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, and Zero to Three -- 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.

Supporting Early Connections currently serves King County families who have been referred to court for child abuse and neglect. Through weekly child-parent psychotherapy sessions, parents and their young children get the help they need to strengthen their relationships and grow as a family.

"As a society, we have a moral imperative to protect children," the report states. "Protection must include ensuring not only a safe environment but also developmental support so young children can fulfill their potential in later life. Although this time of life is one of great vulnerability, it also presents an opportunity to intervene early to prevent or minimize negative effects that will prove more intractable later."

Without the support of our generous donors, this CCYJ initiative would not be generating the national attention it needs to help effect lasting change in child welfare systems across the country. Thank you, CCYJ supporters!

Save the Date: Our annual breakfast event is March 1, 2012



This year's [Norm Maleng Advocate for Youth Award Breakfast](#) brought hundreds of people together to recognize and celebrate all those who care about and advocate for children and youth. We're already looking forward to next year's event!

We've scheduled our fifth annual breakfast for **Thursday, March 1**, at the Sheraton Seattle. So mark your calendars and don't miss it! And just to get the excitement started, we're offering a gift certificate to a Seattle fine dining restaurant for the first of our 2011 table captains to bring in two new table captains for 2012. Just [email](#) your new table captains' contact info to Development Director Rachelle Nesta.

Council will improve collaboration on anti-gang efforts

Gang and youth violence respects no boundaries. It occurs in rural and suburban areas as well as cities, and it crosses all ethnic, cultural and socio-economic lines.

At the same time, local anti-gang efforts vary widely by city and jurisdiction, and many smaller communities are struggling to respond to a problem that is as complex as it is common.

CCYJ has obtained private funding to convene a Suburban King County Coordinating Council on Gangs, made up key decision makers, including mayors, police chiefs, school superintendents and county juvenile justice leaders.

Over the next six months, the Council will assess the scope of the problem in South and East King County and develop a master plan that brings together efforts in prevention, intervention, enforcement and re-entry.

"The Council will encourage community organizations, schools, law enforcement and local government agencies to work together to develop policies and strategies that reflect the current landscape of youth violence and utilize the best information and practices available to reduce gang influence in schools and neighborhoods," says Project Coordinator Daniel Carew.

Gang involvement often goes hand in hand with other issues, including drug and alcohol abuse, anti-social attitudes, and histories of trauma and violence.

"Helping youth avoid and break free of gangs requires a comprehensive and holistic approach," Daniel says. "Research has shown that you can't arrest your way out of this problem."



Truancy Policy Summit scheduled for August

Legislators, policymakers and advocates will convene this summer to identify and advance reforms that will improve the state's truancy system.

The legislative summit, coordinated and hosted by the Statewide Becca Task Force and under the leadership of the CCYJ, will bring together members of the Washington State House and Senate who are active and committed to juvenile justice system reform.

Joining them will be juvenile court administrators, community groups, school district officials and others who will work together to make the truancy system more effective

at helping to keep kids out of the court system by helping them realize their potential, stay in school and complete their education.

At the summit, CCYJ will present policy recommendations in six areas:

- Allocating or reallocating truancy dollars to reduce reliance on the court process and support early identification/intervention before truancy becomes chronic
- Preserving mutual accountability in the truancy system among stakeholders
- Reducing the use of secure detention in truancy cases
- Enhancing opportunities for class-credit retrieval and school re-engagement for students who have chronic truancy and are behind in their credits and on a path to dropping out
- Implementing an effective and research-backed system of pre-court interventions
- Unifying school-based and local policies to facilitate effective implementation of state truancy laws



Grant funds study of best practices in child representation

What can attorneys representing children and youth in child welfare cases do to encourage better results for their young clients? CCYJ and the Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care are partnering with the University of Michigan Law School to try to answer that question.

The Law School's Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in the Child Welfare System (QIC) is researching the best ways to provide legal representation to children in dependency and parental rights termination proceedings. Such cases typically involve instances of abuse and neglect and a decision by the court on child placement, whether back in the home or in protective custody (foster care).



The QIC spent two years developing a best-practices model that will be tested here in Washington and elsewhere. Funding comes from the U.S. Children's Bureau.

"[The QIC-ChildRep](#) is a five-year, \$5 million dollar project to gather, develop and communicate knowledge on child representation, promote consensus on the role of the child's legal representative, and provide one of the first empirically-based analyses of how legal representation for the child might best be delivered," says the QIC's

website.

A grant from the UM Law School to CCYJ will fund a Washington study, which could start in early 2012. It will compare results for children who receive no legal representation to results for children represented by a treatment group of QIC trained attorneys and a control group of attorneys who did not receive the training.

To gauge results, researchers may be looking at the length of time children spend in foster care; juvenile and adult court contact; school achievement, attendance and discipline; and high school completion.

"Our goal for participation in this project is to improve results for children and youth in dependency and termination proceedings in Washington," says CCYJ Founder and CEO Bobbe Bridge.

Models for Change are becoming practice across the state

After several years of research and discussion, partners in the statewide Models for Change effort -- overseen and coordinated by CCYJ -- are putting their plans for juvenile justice reform into practice. Among the efforts now under way:

- Developing practical "toolkits" that guide jurisdictions in implementing successful truancy prevention/school re-engagement projects
- Providing direction on cultural adaptation of evidence-based treatment programs to improve their appeal to minority youth, resulting in more minority youth engaging in treatment and reducing their risk for further involvement in



delinquent behavior

- Implementing policies and practices to improve efficiency, reduce duplication enhance collaboration and coordination of case management services for children, youth and families involved in multiple systems (child welfare, juvenile justice, etc.)

These are just a few of the initiatives implemented in 14 sites in Washington state as part of the national Models for Change juvenile justice reform initiative supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Among the goals of all the projects are to provide alternatives to court and incarceration for truant youth, to reduce the disproportionate number of minority youth in the system, and to find better ways to address the needs of system-involved youth who have mental health issues.

Under CCYJ's leadership, the projects implemented by its county and state partners are being evaluated to create "models for change" that can be replicated statewide and even beyond.

Through Washington Models for Change, CCYJ envisions a reformed juvenile justice system that not only holds young offenders accountable, but keeps them from harm, provides for their rehabilitation and raises their odds of success.

CCYJ's Models for Change efforts are in the news. Read the [Public News Service](#) and [KPLU](#) articles.

Two new staff members join the Center

The Center for Children & Youth Justice is pleased to welcome these new staff members to our team.



Daniel Carew is Project Coordinator for the Suburban King County Coordinating Council on Gangs, a CCYJ initiative that brings local leaders together to develop a coordinated and collaborative response to youth violence and gangs.

Daniel's job is to guide and support a council of key decision makers, including mayors, police chiefs, school superintendents, county officials and court representatives, as they develop a master plan for South and East King County.

"This is an area that has seen a great deal of growth, and with it, the migration of gang activity from Seattle," he says. "We need to collaborate so that everyone is adequately prepared to not only react to gang violence, but to prevent it."

As a Teach for America teacher in the South Bronx, Daniel worked with court-involved

youth and gained an understanding of why some young people are attracted to gang life. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Northwestern, a Master of Science degree for teachers from Pace University in New York, and is working toward his law degree at the University of Washington. A former CCYJ intern, he's excited to work for an organization that is changing systems as well as lives.

"This is the perfect fit for me," he says.

Carla C. Lee is Project Coordinator for Models for Change Juvenile Justice Reform Initiative, a statewide effort to improve the way the juvenile justice system serves at-risk youth and young offenders.

Carla is providing oversight and support for projects in four counties - Clark, Benton-Franklin, King and Spokane - as part of the national Models for Change Initiative. Now that many plans have been put into practice, one of Carla's primary goals is to ensure that successful projects can be sustained and expanded.

"We want to shift the focus of the juvenile justice system from punishment to early intervention, prevention and rehabilitation," she says.

Carla was a practicing attorney before coming to CCYJ in May. She also served on the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) Board of Governors, WSBA's governing body, supporting a number of social justice initiatives. She's thrilled to work with an organization dedicated to "fundamental fairness" within the juvenile justice system.

"Youth represent our future," she says. "We need to do everything we can to give them the tools needed to succeed as functional adults."



Support CCYJ... and make a difference for children and youth



center for
CHILDREN & YOUTH
JUSTICE | *Better systems. Better lives.®*

The Center for Children & Youth Justice is shaping better lives for youth involved in Washington's foster care and juvenile justice systems. In partnership with parents, advocates and policymakers, the Center develops and advances innovative approaches to systemic changes that will support kids, stabilize families and strengthen communities. [Donate](#) securely online today!

Visit our Web site at www.ccyj.org
[Email](#) us or call at 206-696-7503, ext. 13

**Join our
mailing
list!**

[Forward email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to hburden@ccyj.org by supportccyj@ccyj.org |
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).
Center for Children and Youth Justice | 615 2nd Ave., Suite 275 | Seattle | WA | 98104