



---

## Summer Actions For Youth Justice

---

The legislature might not be in session, but that doesn't mean your advocacy and support towards youth justice reform is on summer break. Here are a few simple actions that you can take during the summer to uplift legislation, events, and education centered around youth justice in Michigan that have the potential to make a significant impact:

- [Write letters to your local legislators](#) in the Michigan House and Senate in solidarity with the transformative Justice for Kids and Communities Bill Package.

- [Save your spot](#) for the (free!) community screening of the youth justice documentary *Building Momentum* next month in Grand Rapids, MI.
- Read insightful and illuminating reports on national juvenile justice trends from [The Sentencing Project](#) and [the National Juvenile Justice Network](#).
- Learn more about the juvenile justice system from experts by catching up on seasons 1 & 2 of our podcast, "[The Table: Conversations on Youth Justice](#)," where we feature guests including local judges, policymakers, and Michigan Supreme Court Justice Clement.
- Follow us on social media [@miyouthjustice](#) and share our posts with your friends, family, and colleagues to help spread the word about crucial juvenile justice work in Michigan.

---

## Youth Justice Advocate Profile: *Deshawn Leeth*

---



We are excited to add our first *Youth Justice Advocate Profile* to our monthly communications to highlight the incredible individuals, alongside MCYJ, trying to make a lasting impact for youth in Michigan. This month we're featuring an interview with Deshawn Leeth, the founder and executive director of [Under Dawg Nation \(UDN\)](#), a nonprofit dedicated to helping at-risk youth who lack

resources to help prevent violence and disengagement from school. His passion and dedication have led to the creation of innovative programs that provide resources, mentorship, and hope to countless young individuals at risk of coming into contact with the justice system.

***Tell us a little about yourself. What is your connection to the justice system?***

I was born the youngest of five in Detroit, MI. I started UDN in late August 2021 with the goal of keeping kids from going through what I went through in the juvenile system. Growing up was a roller coaster ride for me. By age 18, I was sentenced to 9 years in prison after years of living a criminal lifestyle on the streets. Following my release from the Michigan Department of Corrections on January 5, 2021, at 27, I have made significant strides with UDN and have made UDN a primary resource for kids in my community.

***What inspired you to become a [Debt Free Justice](#) fellow?***

When I heard about the opportunity to learn and help make the juvenile justice system better, I had to get a part of it. Knowing my life experience in the system could help youth not make the same mistakes I made. I wanted to be able to learn policy and be a part of helping make the system equal for all youth, no matter their race or financial background, so that I could stand in the gap for young people who don't have a voice and I feel like this fellowship is a step in the right direction for that.

***What type of work do you do as a fellow for Debt Free Justice?***

The work with Debt Free Justice is surrounded around Participatory Action Research. We are given an opportunity to present to the Department of Juvenile Justice on what we think would help improve the juvenile justice system. We are also learning how to gather research data from our communities and utilizing it to create data to present to our local officials to help improve our youth justice system.

***What was the inspiration behind your organization, Under Dawg Nation?***

My inspiration is to have programs that help at-risk teens impacted by the juvenile justice system or who live in below-poverty communities and provide them with resources to prevent going into the streets and disengaging from school.

***How can interested folks support your organization?***

There are plenty of ways that interested folks can support our work. We always seek positive mentors to connect with youth in our mentoring program. Additionally, we are searching for tutors to connect with our youth to help bring them into better education opportunities with our tutoring program. Monetary donations can help support our annual events that create safe spaces for kids to be kids. It takes a village to help our youth in our society.

*Deshawn's work reflects our shared vision of a youth justice system that uplifts and empowers young people, helping them overcome challenges and realize their full potential. By sharing his story and experiences, we hope to celebrate his accomplishments and inspire others to join the movement for positive change in youth justice. You can learn more and support Under Dawg Nation [here](#).*

---

## Youth Justice Film Screening Next Month!

---



We are only one month away from our September youth justice film screening event!

Join MCYJ in Grand Rapids, MI, as we view this impactful film documenting the journey of justice-impacted youth through the powerful Café Momentum internship program. After the film, we'll be joined virtually by Café Momentum's founder chef Chad Houser, who was [recently featured on Good Morning America](#), and a Momentum youth ambassador.

This event is FREE to the public and includes dinner from the generous owner of Grand Rapids' own Stan's Tacos. Seats are filling up fast, so click the button below to reserve yours today!



---

## Meet Our Projects & Events Coordinator

---

We would like to extend a warm welcome and formal introduction to our projects & events coordinator, Katie Martin! Katie joined our MCYJ team in June with bachelor's and master's degrees in criminal justice from Eastern Michigan University and years of experience in project and events coordination at the University of Michigan. Additionally, Katie has served as a research/teaching assistant in the criminal justice department at Eastern Michigan University and volunteered for various organizations, including the Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative and First Step-Wayne County. We're grateful to have Katie on our team.



---

## MCYJ Receives General Support Funding Renewals

---

We are pleased to announce MCYJ recently received renewed general operating funds from the Hudson-Webber Foundation (HWF) and the Michigan Justice Fund (MJF).

The [Hudson-Webber Foundation's](#) origins date back to 1939, with significant contributions from Mr. and Mrs. Richard H. Webber, members of the Webber family, and The J.L. Hudson Company. The foundation is governed by a 15-member board of trustees, with assets of approximately \$200 million. HWF has contributed over \$200 million to improve the quality of life in Detroit. Mission areas of the foundation include support of community and economic development, built environment, safe and just communities, and arts and culture.

The Michigan Justice Fund is a collaborative under the [Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan \(CFSEM\)](#), which is committed to promoting and advancing the prosperity and dignity of Michigan residents by stemming the flow of individuals into the youth and criminal justice systems, supporting the investment of public dollars to community-driven alternatives to incarceration and detention, and by ensuring those who are returning home after incarceration or detention receive the support they need to flourish.

CFSEM is a full-service philanthropic organization leading the way to positive change in our region. As a permanent community endowment built by gifts from thousands of individuals and organizations, the Foundation supports various activities benefiting education, arts and culture, health, human services, community development, and civic affairs. Since its inception, the Foundation has distributed over \$1.2 billion through more than 79,000 grants to nonprofit organizations throughout Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Washtenaw, St. Clair, and Livingston counties.

MCYJ is incredibly grateful for these generous grant renewals, allowing us to continue our work toward transforming Michigan's youth justice system.

---

## Registration Now Open for Our October Conference

---



Join us on October 25th for our in-person school justice conference *Creating Transformative Schools!* Hosted in partnership with the Student Advocacy Center of Michigan, this day-long conference promises to be an enlightening and empowering experience.

We have lined up a roster of experts, advocates, and thought leaders who will share their insights on the intersection of education and justice. The conference will be held from 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. with breakfast and lunch provided and feature keynote Jaime T. Koppel. Sessions will fall under the three themes of (1) Best Practices for Preventing School Disruptions, (2) Honoring the Whole Child, and (3) Action Planning to Create Transformative Schools, with specific workshops focused on (but not limited to):

- *Police in Schools*
- *Restraint, Seclusion, and Supporting Students with Disabilities*
- *Trauma-Responsive Classrooms*
- *Preventing Justice Involvement through Diversion*
- *Student Leadership & Youth-Led Organizing*
- *Multiculturalism, Equity & Anti-Racism in Schools*

Take advantage of this unique opportunity to contribute to the dialogue and be part of a movement that strives for fair and just school systems! Standard tickets for the conference are \$75, tickets for those seeking six social work CEUs are \$150, and all students with a valid ID can attend for just \$25.

Click on the button below to save your spot!

---

## Don't Miss These Justice-Related Job Opportunities

---

The Michigan Center for Youth Justice (MCYJ) is seeking to hire a full-time Outreach and Advocacy Manager to join our small, hardworking team. This role will lead youth and family engagement efforts, create a vision for community-organizing within juvenile justice-impacted communities, and co-create, with the help of MCYJ's policy director programming to support youth leadership and advocacy development.

We are looking for a dynamic, highly organized individual with a Bachelor's Degree or commensurate experience and at least three years of experience leading community engagement work, overseeing outreach-related programming, and coordinating events or training events, ideally within a nonprofit setting. An interest in youth justice reform or personal experience with the juvenile or adult justice systems is highly preferred. Learn more about this position and how to apply [here](#).

Our friends at the [Michigan Collaborative to End Mass Incarceration](#) (MI-CEMI) are also hiring. Are you someone who has seen the harms of mass incarceration first-hand? Are you committed to bringing people together to make a change? [Read the MI-CEMI Project Coordinator position description and learn how to apply](#).

---

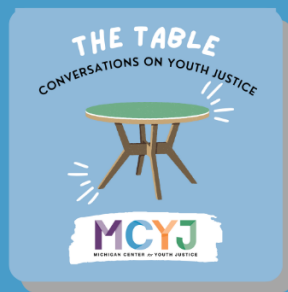
## S2 Finale: Legislative Recap and Full Season Summary!

---

To close out the second season of "The Table: Conversations on Youth Justice," Jennifer Peacock, MCYJ Policy Director Jennifer Peacock provides an update on the most recent legislative session. Host Husain Haidri also provides a wrap-up and overview of the season, including some interview outtakes. [Listen here](#) or wherever you find your podcasts.



Ep 8 - Recap, Legislative Updates, and More Conversations!



---

## Foundation's Campaign Highlights Youth Voices

---

We would like to highlight a powerful campaign created by one of our primary funders, the Public Welfare Foundation (PWF). PWF has created a campaign titled “See You, See Youth” to offer young people a chance to speak for themselves and share their experiences with the juvenile justice system. We encourage you to take a moment of your day and stand in support of justice-impacted youth by viewing the stories of young people and staying informed on youth justice issues and what is happening near you. Learn more about the campaign in the video below, or read the full blog post [here](#).



---

## Release of Kids Count in Michigan: 2023 Data Book

---

The Michigan League for Public Policy (MLPP) annually publishes the *Kids Count* in Michigan report, which is part of a national effort to measure the well-being of children at the state and local levels and use that information to inform and shape best practices to better kids' lives. Each year, MLPP incorporates a juvenile justice topic into the report. This year, they highlighted the negative impact of juvenile court debt on youth and families and recommended eliminating this harmful practice. MCYJ is proud to share this insightful report with our audience and encourage those interested in supporting youth justice reform in Michigan to read more below. The complete 2023 data book is available [here](#).

---

## Youth Justice in the News

---

- [Justice for Juveniles Act: Protecting Vulnerable Youth from Abuse in Correctional Facilities](#)
- [New Budget Will Help Courts Improve Access, Efficiency Statewide](#)
- [Care over Confinement: Kids Need Second Chances and Services to Succeed](#)

- [Juvenile Court Fees and Costs Are Invisible Shackles That Tether Children to a Broken System](#)

---

## Upcoming Events

---

Michigan Center for Youth Justice

***Building Momentum Film Screening***

September 28th, 2023, Grand Rapids, MI. Learn more and register [here!](#)

Safe & Just Michigan

***JLWOP Legislative Advocacy Day***

October 3rd, 2023, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. ET. Learn more and register [here!](#)

League of Women Voters

***Jason Smith, MCYJ's Executive Director, presents an update on the juvenile justice task force recommendations***

October 4th, 2023, 9:00 a.m. ET. Learn more and register [here!](#)

Coalition for Juvenile Justice

***Planning YJAM 2023: Bringing Youth Visions of Justice to State & Local policymakers***

October 8th, 2023, 2:00-3:00 p.m. ET. Learn more and register [here!](#)

Michigan Center for Youth Justice

***Creating Transformative Schools Conference***

October 25th, 2023, 8:30 a.m-3:30 p.m. Novi, Michigan. Learn more and register [here!](#)

Coalition for Juvenile Justice

***CJJ Racial and Ethnic Disparities Conference***

October 30th-31st, 2023, Omni Louisville Hotel, Louisville, KY. Learn more and register [here!](#)

---

**Our Vision:** a fair and effective justice system for Michigan's children, youth and young adults.

**Our Mission:** we work to advance equitable youth justice policies and practices that protect young people and help them achieve their full potential.

Donate

---

**Follow MCYJ on Social Media**



3810 Packard Rd., Suite 200A  
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

If you believe you received this message in error or wish to no longer receive email from us, please (Unsubscribing is not supported in previews)