



MICHIGAN CENTER *for* YOUTH JUSTICE



MCYJ Has Moved!

Our small team has been doing its work in offices on the peaceful campus of Northside Associated Ministries (NAM) of Ann Arbor. We have enjoyed our time there, and the opportunity to build our financial reserves as well as relationships with the NAM leadership and community.

While we have enjoyed being nestled among trees with a nature trail directly behind the buildings, MCYJ has been in a steady growth phase. In the past three years, we have gone from one full-time staff member to six!

After adjusting to the “new normal” of the pandemic and remote meetings, we have also come to understand what we need in order to function effectively and cooperatively in an office space. It is with great sadness and gratitude that we are leaving the NAM campus this month, but with equal excitement to relocate to our new office suite on Packard Road near Carpenter in Ann Arbor.

This new space will accommodate our current team, allow us to host larger in-person meetings, and enable our continued growth trajectory as needed in the next few years. Please save our new address: 3810 Packard Road, Suite 200A; Ann Arbor, MI 48108 (and phone number: 734-773-3098).

Announcing *Youth Voices* Mini-Grant Recipients

The Michigan Center for Youth Justice recently awarded seven organizations funds from our youth speaker stipends budget, in the form of a mini-grant program entitled *Youth Voices*. The mini-grants were given to organizations engaging justice-involved youth and others at risk of justice-involvement, in ways that highlight their voices and stories. The funds will go directly to young people as reimbursement for sharing their stories or to provide opportunities for sharing stories in a creative way, such as through writing, poetry, or visual arts.

MCYJ is proud to award the following organizations *Youth Voices* mini-grants:

- [Empowering Fostering Youth Through TEChnology \(EFyTECH\)](#), [Park West Foundation](#)
- [Lenawee Community Mental Health Authority](#)
- [Staying Power-Staying Home](#)
- [The Ottawa County Collaborative to Strengthen Youth and Families](#), [Ottawa County Community Mental Health](#)
- [The Right Door for Hope, Recovery and Wellness](#)
- [Washtenaw Alliance for Virtual Education](#)
- [WOWMIN, Inc.](#)

Stay tuned in the coming weeks to learn about how youth benefited from these funds!

Youth Interrogations and the #Right2RemainSilent

Most people are familiar with the term Miranda rights and what it refers to. The famous line “you have the right to remain silent” has been said in nearly every U.S. television show or movie when the police catch a criminal suspect. In these perfectly scripted events, the person under arrest seems to understand their rights. In the real world, however, this is not always the case.

Miranda rights have standard requirements for what must be included in the reading — the right to remain silent, right to an attorney, etc. However, there is no standard for how they are scripted. This means that each police department could write its own version. One [study](#) found that 52% of surveyed Miranda warnings required a minimum eighth-grade reading level to comprehend. This presents a major obstacle to some people's ability to comprehend, particularly young people.

Adolescents were awarded Miranda rights in the U.S. Supreme Court decision [In re Gault](#), in 1967. Following the decision, police were required to read an arrested youth their Miranda rights as they would an adult. In theory, this was a win for youth justice. In practice, many young people do not understand what their Miranda rights are, or how to exercise them. Youth waive their Miranda rights at a rate of [90%](#). During already-stressful circumstances, youth may say whatever they believe the adult wants to hear, or what they believe will allow them to go home. Often, these decisions are made by the youth without a trusted adult in the room.

There have been numerous documented cases of youth waiving their rights out of coercion or misunderstanding. In [Brooklyn](#), a 17-year-old was tricked into waiving his rights when the officer told him the paper was “just the questions [he] asked.” In reality, it was his Miranda rights he was signing away. In [Maryland](#), a 15-year-old was told he wasn’t “going to need a lawyer or anything like that,” because he was a minor. He provided a statement and then was incarcerated for nearly 50 days.

It has even been happening in Michigan. In [Oakland County](#), an adolescent boy accused of murder was not advised of his rights while being interviewed by police. After repeated suggestions on what happened, the boy started to cry, saying “Tell me what you want me to say and I’ll say it.” The now-young adult has been incarcerated for years.

[New Mexico and Illinois](#) do not admit confessions from children under 13 years old; Wisconsin forbids admitting any unrecorded confession; Illinois, Maryland, and New York have all introduced legislation to further address juvenile interrogations. [Illinois'](#) bill would expand their current legislation. [New York's](#) legislation states that youth should not be interrogated without counsel. [Maryland's](#) bill would prohibit interrogation of a minor (under 18 years of age) until the youth has spoken with an attorney. These bills are collectively what is being termed the #Right2RemainSilent campaign.

A proposal similar to New York's law has been introduced in the Michigan Legislature. It's time for Michigan to join other states by passing HB 4873.

Michigan Representative Sarah Anthony's bill, [HB 4873](#), would do several things to resolve concerns regarding youth interrogations:

1. Specify the rights a youth must be advised of prior to interrogation, including:
 - o The right to remain silent;
 - o That any statement made may be used against the youth;
 - o The right to a parent, guardian, or custodian present during the interrogation;
 - o The right to consult with and be represented by an attorney during interrogation;
 - o That an attorney will be appointed if the youth wants representation and does not have representation; and
 - o That an interrogation MUST cease if the youth requests representation, until an attorney is present.
2. Require that notice be given to the youth's parent, guardian, custodian, or attorney prior to interrogation (notice may be given in person or via telephone).

Issue Spotlight: Raise the Age

This month on "The Table: Conversations on Youth Justice," hosts Gabi Dresner and Husain Haidri discuss a big legislative victory for youth in Michigan.

In 2019, [#RaiseTheAge](#) changed the age of juvenile jurisdiction from 17 to 18. Find out why and how wherever you find your podcasts!



The image shows a podcast player interface for the episode "Ep 6 - Raise the Age". On the left is a square album art for "THE TABLE CONVERSATIONS ON YOUTH JUSTICE" featuring a green table and the hosts' names: "with Gabrielle Dresner and Husain Haidri" and the MCYJ logo. To the right of the album art is a blue audio waveform with a large orange play button in the center. In the bottom right corner of the player, there is a white pill-shaped button with the text "19:28".

In Recognition of Pride Month

June is Pride Month, celebrating LGBTQ+ individuals and allies of all ages coming together authentically and without apology. MCYJ is proud to be an ally to LGBTQ+ youth as we advocate for policies that keep their well-being at the forefront.

Nationally, 20% of the overall population of youth in detention or confinement identify as LGBTQ—overrepresenting the total estimated percent of LGBTQ-identified youth by three times. According to The Sentencing Project, approximately 124,200 adults self-identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual in U.S. prisons and jails, and over 6,000 adults self-identify as trans in state and federal prisons. LGBTQ+ youth representation among the incarcerated population—at 7,300 youth—is double their share of the general population. Furthermore, 85% of LGBTQ+ justice-involved youth identify as people of color. Read the full report from The Sentencing Project [here](#).

MCYJ has been working for years in partnership with the [Ruth Ellis Center of Detroit](#) to help create an affirming justice system for our youth, with particular focus on transgender and gender nonconforming youth. [Check out our website](#) to read more about our recent work creating a staff training curriculum for residential and detention facilities in Michigan as well as Wayne County care management organizations.

Meet our Lobbyist, Rusty Merchant

Lobbying, as a profession, tends to get a bad reputation. While it's true that the idea of lobbying can have varied reactions among progressive advocates, it is all based on the values of the individual. MCYJ contracts with a lobbyist to gain valuable insight into the Lansing political circuit. This helps us promote our work and effectively advocate for legislative changes to improve the justice system. Any organization may hire a lobbyist that they believe will aid in the promotion of their values and goals. For MCYJ, Rusty Merchant is that lobbyist. He has helped with numerous advocacy campaigns, including *Raise the Age* and *Clean Slate for Kids*.

Rusty, a partner at McAlvey Merchant & Associates, is recognized as a leading lobbyist in Lansing and has strong relationships across the state stemming from 25 years of political and public policy experience.

Prior to joining the firm in 2003, Rusty served as vice president for public policy and government affairs at the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce. There, he was responsible for advocacy at the local, state and federal levels, as well as elevating the Friends of West Michigan Business into one of the top political action committees in West Michigan.

Rusty began his career as a legislative aide to the late state Senator Douglas Carl (R-Shelby Township). He helped manage the senator's legislative priorities and served as the chief aide to the Senate Finance Subcommittee to Combat Cigarette Smuggling. He was instrumental in creating and passing legislation (recommended by the subcommittee) that has garnered tens of millions of dollars of previously lost revenue to the state school aid fund.

Rusty has served on the board of directors for the YMCA, Ridge Park Charter Academy, the Kent County Community Corrections Advisory Board, and Ele's Place Governing Board, and was elected four times to the Grand Rapids Township Board of Trustees. Rusty was also identified in Grand Rapids Magazine as one of the top 20 community leaders under 40 to watch in West Michigan.



Youth Justice in the News

- [Youth designed mosaic in downtown Ypsi](#)
- [Locals wrote book about history of sentencing](#)
- [MCYJ Feature: Keep Justice-Involved Youth Safe During COVID-19](#)
- [Biden Taps Youth Justice Advocate Liz Ryan to Lead OJJDP](#)
- [Youth Role in Violence, Carjackings Overstated, the Sentencing Project Says](#)

Upcoming Events

Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ)

Tools for Student-Centered Collaboration with Education Systems

June 24th, 3-4 p.m. Register [here!](#)

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

Protect Our Youth Online: A Virtual Event to Start the Conversation

June 28th, 11 a.m.-4:15 p.m. Register [here!](#)

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

Annual Conference

July 17th-20th. Learn more [here!](#)

Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ)
CJJ 2022 Youth Summit; Tacoma, WA
August 1st-2nd. Learn more [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.

Please consider supporting our work by donating today.

Donate

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