



MICHIGAN CENTER *for* YOUTH JUSTICE



Communications coordinator, Macayla Jones, and policy intern, Tashfia Jilu, represent MCYJ at 'The Art of Relational Advocacy: Collaborative Conference & Community Networking Fair,' hosted by the Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP).

What's Next for Lansing

This month, we closely followed the Michigan Senate Appropriations Health and Human Services Committee's hearings focused on the juvenile justice system. The first hearing was on [March 5](#), where the macro-changes and needs were discussed following the passage of the [Justice for Kids and Communities](#) legislation. The subsequent hearing on [March 12](#) centered on the voices of those most impacted by out-of-home placement, with testimony provided by both youth and their families. Both current and former employees within the residential and detention system shared their perspectives on what best practices must be implemented and upheld to protect youth and staff. MCYJ underscores the importance of the recent Child Care Fund expansion, which is increasing reimbursement for community-based alternatives to out-of-home placement. We recognize the

strength of those who discussed their deeply personal experiences. We hope that through these hearings, we can better shape the residential system at large.

Some critical takeaways include the emphasis on utilizing risk and need assessments and detention screening tools to inform decision-making. Using such best practices was part of the *Justice for Kids and Communities* legislative package and goes into effect October 1, 2024. By ensuring youth are matched with the appropriate services, we can prevent them from unnecessarily experiencing out-of-home placement and support their rehabilitation based on their unique needs. Additionally, the importance of the Office of the Child Advocate was underscored. The recent reforms expand the powers and responsibilities of the Office to include residential facilities that provide juvenile justice services and are state-operated, county-operated, public, private and contracted, secure, or nonsecure. It also outlines informing youth and families about the role of the Office.

The [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#) (MDHHS) has been awarded an \$825,000 federal grant through the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention. This grant supports efforts to expand treatment options in local communities for youth involved in or at risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system. This grant is part of a broader effort to create or expand the continuum of care, providing various prevention and intervention services for youth. Additionally, the grant supports identifying evidence-based practices and culturally appropriate strategies that advance the long-term well-being and success of youth and their families. MCYJ is thrilled to see additional investments into community-based care to support positive outcomes for youth.

Meet Our Gala Keynote Speaker!



On May 17th, MCYJ will hold its fundraising gala, *Advocacy in Action*. The gala supports our critical work to create a fair and equitable juvenile justice system.

Our event keynote speaker will be [Candice C. Jones](#), President and CEO of the [Public Welfare Foundation](#), whose efforts focus on catalyzing a transformative approach to justice that is

community-led, restorative, and racially just through investments in criminal justice and youth justice reforms.

Candice joined the Public Welfare Foundation in 2017. In her role, she's worked on creating more significant investments for violence intervention programs as an alternative to the criminal justice system. Previously, she served as a White House fellow, managing a portfolio for the Department of Education. She also served as Director of the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, pushing significant reforms that reduced the number of youth in state custody.

[Learn more](#) about this exciting event today, or [buy a sliding-scale ticket](#) at a comfortable price for you and your family or organization!

Buy a ticket!

The Table: Youth-Centered Policymaking with MI Lawmakers

We encourage you to listen to a new episode of *The Table* as Macayla and Katie discuss why it's essential for youth to have a voice in addressing juvenile justice issues, with special guests [State Senator Stephanie Chang](#) and [State Representative Kara Hope](#). Macayla and Katie also catch up with MCYJ Outreach and Advocacy Manager Denita Dorsey as she overviews MCYJ's process of creating a set of core values specific to youth and family engagement. Listen at www.miyouthjustice.org/thetable or wherever you find your podcasts!

Ep 3 - JJ Policymaking for Youth (with Michigan State Senator Stephanie Chang and Michigan State Representative Kara Hope!)



Our March *Board Spotlight*

Our *Board Member Spotlight* series continues with Dave Bartek! Dave's core focus throughout his decades-long career in both the nonprofit and private sectors has always been and continues to be on one thing: PEOPLE; he always focuses on implementing solutions where individuals and families can be positively impacted. We invite you to read more about Dave and his passion for utilizing his experiences in nonprofit work to engage with racial justice and social equity at MCYJ.

What would you like fellow juvenile justice reform advocates to know about you?

- I have always advocated for social justice and equity, whether in the various nonprofit leadership roles I have held over the last 15 years or even during my private sector days. I have always advocated for just treatment and care for individuals, regardless of age, gender, race, and cultural influences. I feel that, in my board role with MCYJ, I can use my experiences and insights to help further move the needle in a positive trajectory, not unlike

the quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that states "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

To read more about Dave and his dedication to engaging with this work to impact justice-involved individuals, visit our blog at www.miyouthjustice.org/blog!



Final Call for March Merch!

This month only, MCYJ logo gear items that are available for a limited time. We have exclusive youth-justice focused t-shirts, mugs, tote bags, sweatshirts, and more to help you show off your advocacy spirit and support for MCYJ.

Visit [our Bonfire store](#) or click the button below and start building your wishlist today before the sale ends today!

Buy Your Gear Today



Investing in the Voices of Communities of Color!

[The National Youth Justice Network](#) (NYJN) has published a new lookbook, *Youth Justice Leadership Institute (YJLI): Investing in Leaders of Color*. The lookbook celebrates over a decade of leadership development through YJLI - which our Executive Director, Jason Smith, is a proud alumni of. We invite you to view the incredible accomplishments of justice advocates and supporters [here](#).

Listen to the Probation Experience Project Webinar

This past month, [The Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) explored insights from young people and families who have experienced youth probation during a live webinar to share about their Probation Experience Project. Unable to attend the webinar but interested in the topic? We've got you covered! You can watch the webinar [here](#).

Two Recently Released Reports Highlight JJ in MI

A [new report](#) released by the [Center for Behavioral Health and Justice at the Wayne State University School of Social Work](#) (CBHJ) reviews the implementation of reform and assessment efforts in Michigan's adult and youth justice systems, the focus on the latter with a case study evaluation of the implementation of the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument™ (YASI) in one county. The report, which builds upon the CBHJ's inaugural landscape report released in 2021, lays the groundwork for future and ongoing transformative work across the state.

Our friends at [The Sentencing Project](#) recently released a report highlighting crucial diversion programs throughout the country. We are proud that Michigan is one of the states featured in the report, including impactful juvenile justice reforms in Kansas, Michigan. If you would like to read about the progress happening in Michigan and around the country surrounding diversion, you can read the full report [here](#).

Youth Justice in the News

- [Senators discuss efforts to reform Michigan's juvenile justice care system](#)
 - [DHHS to expand juvenile justice reform efforts with \\$825,000 federal grant](#)
 - [Here's how I use my story to teach incarcerated kids that writing matters](#)
 - [Governor Whitmer Makes Appointments to the Bench](#)
 - [Lewis Walker Institute aims to increase support for empowering future juvenile justice leaders](#)
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Upcoming Events

Safe & Just Michigan

On the Way to One Million Fresh Starts

April 11th, 12:00 p.m. ET. Learn more and register [here!](#)

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

Quarterly Community Collaboration Call – Affirming Gender in the Juvenile Justice System

April 17th, 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. ET. Learn more and register [here!](#)

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

Conversations with Youth

April 18th, 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. ET. Learn more and register [here!](#)

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

Talking Truancy and Other Status Offenses: Strategies for Prevention and Intervention

April 23rd, 3:00 p.m.-4:15 p.m. ET. Learn more and register [here!](#)

Association for Children's Mental Health

2024 Youth Mental Health Action Day

May 18th, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. ET. Learn more [here!](#)

Coalition for Juvenile Justice

2024 Annual Conference

May 29th-June 1st; Grand Hyatt Washington, 1000 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20001. 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.

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