Leveraging Youth Voice and Advocacy to Support Pathways to Success

Wednesday, December 7, 2016
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#YouthVoice
Today’s Presenters

* **Matt Rosen**, Executive Director, Foster Youth in Action (FYA)
* **Michelle Palmer**, Youth Advocate, Oregon Foster Youth Connection and FYA Leaders United Member

* **Annie Blackledge**, Executive Director, The Mockingbird Society
* **Tyler Donhardt**, Network Representative, The Mockingbird Society

* **Geoff Foster**, Director of Organizing and Policy, UTEC
* **Jamel Bonilla**, Youth Organizer, UTEC

#YouthVoice
Foster Youth in Acton

Michelle Palmer

Matt Rosen

#YouthVoice
We believe in the power of foster youth voice
OUR NATIONAL NETWORK

Foster Youth in ACTION

Idaho: IFYAB - Idaho Foster Youth Advisory Board

Iowa: AMP - Achieving Maximum Potential

Minnesota: YLC - Youth Leadership Council

New York: F.A.C.E - Foster Advocacy Change & Empowerment

Oregon: OFYC - Oregon Foster Youth Connection

California: CYC - California Youth Connection

San Diego: LEAP Ambassadors - Leadership Empowers All Possibilities

Hawaii: HFYC - Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition

Texas: VFC - Voices For Change

Florida: FYS - Florida Youth Shine

Georgia: Georgia EmpowerMEnt

Vermont: YAB - Youth Leadership Program

Maine: YLAT - Youth Leadership Advisory Team

Massachusetts: HEROES - Helping Everyone Receive Our Everyday Stories

Pennsylvania: YFC - Youth Fostering Change

New Jersey: YAB - Statewide Youth Advisory Boards

North Carolina: SAYSO - Strong Able Youth Speaking Out

South Carolina: GOALL - Go Out And Live Life

Our national network includes various youth programs across the United States, each with a unique name and focus.
OUR VALUES

HUMAN RIGHTS

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE EXPERTS

YOUTH ORGANIZING IS TRANSFORMATIVE
WHAT WE DO

LEARNING HUB

AMPLIFYING YOUTH VOICE

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

GROWING OUR FIELD
OUR MPACT

• ADULT SUPPORTERS ARE MORE PREPARED
• YOUTH FEEL MORE MOTIVATED, HOPEFUL, & ABLE TO TAKE ACTION
• NEW GROUPS FORMING
• NEW ISSUES RAISED UP
• GREATER COLLABORATION
Oregon Foster Youth Connection

A program of

OREGON FOSTER YOUTH CONNECTION

a state wide, youth-led, advocacy group of current & former foster youth working to improve Oregon’s foster care system

Improving the Oregon foster care system through advocacy, activism, and leadership.
Improving the Oregon foster care system through advocacy, activism, and leadership.

2015 Policy Success

**HB2890: Extracurricular Activities Bill** – Grants youth the opportunity to participate in at least one *ongoing* extracurricular activity.

**HB2889: Savings Account Bill** – Gives youth the support to open a savings account without adult having access to their accounts.
Improving the Oregon foster care system through advocacy, activism, and leadership.

2017 Legislative Concept

Sibling Bill of Rights: Give siblings within the foster care system the right to maintain connections.
To submit live questions, please use the “Questions” box on the control panel.
Youth Voice in Policy Reform
Mission and Approach

- We work with young people and families to improve foster care and end homelessness.

- We train youth who have been homeless or in foster care to be their own best advocates.

- By doing this we change policies and perceptions that stand in the way of every child having a safe and stable home, and a loving family.

- **Youth Programs:** Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness and Mockingbird Youth Network
Four Core Programs
Youth Programs

487 YOUTH ENGAGED STATEWIDE
1. Identifying problems
2. Defining solutions
3. Refining proposals
4. Advocating for change
2016 Policy Results

Successfully advanced over 25 legislative priorities since 2001, more than half of which were directly youth-inspired

**HOPE Beds**
- $1M to Dept. of Commerce for 23 additional HOPE Beds (Budget Request)

**Street Youth Services**
- $800,000 increase to Expand Street Youth Services (Budget Request)

**MFM Evaluation**
- $150,000 funding to allow WSIPP to evaluate the MFM (Budget Request)

- Worked with King County to include 2 youth ideas into our community’s CoC Plan
Looking Forward: 2017 Priorities

### Legislative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Requires a change in law</th>
<th>Requires a budget request</th>
<th>May require administrative advocacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve Normalcy and Access to Independence</td>
<td>Implement a pilot program to help foster youth with paperwork and fees necessary to obtain a driver’s permit, license, and insurance</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit and Retain Foster Parents</td>
<td>Renew the budget proviso for MFM constellations and ensure that they can be implemented outside of Region 2</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End Youth Detention for Status Offenses</td>
<td>Build relationships and strengthen coalitions to eliminate use of the Valid Court Order Exception in Washington state, likely to be a multi-year effort</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>☐</td>
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### Non-Legislative Priorities

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<tr>
<td>Prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections and Unwanted Pregnancies</td>
<td>Work with CA to ensure foster youth receive comprehensive, medically accurate information about sexual health and relationships</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Strategic Sharing: Why?

- Stories are memorable and compelling, put a human face on issues and needs
- They can motive and inspire action
- Can help to change stereotypes and assumptions
- Engage the imagination and can help to show new possibilities and opportunities
- Can help the teller make sense and meaning of their experience and those of others
Audience Q&A

- To submit live questions, please use the “Questions” box on the control panel
Youth-Led Policymaking
**OUTCOMES & IMPACT SNAPSHOT**

**FY2016**

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**UTECH's OUTCOMES**

- **89%** of youth served were not arrested during the year and **96%** were not convicted.
- **82%** of youth who left UTECH programming were employed 2 years later.
- **24%** of youth who engaged in our HiSET classes obtained a high school credential within the last year.

Learn more at www.utec-lowell.org

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**MA and U.S. OUTCOMES**

- **50%** of 18-24 year-olds who are incarcerated to county facilities in Massachusetts are re-arraigned within 1 year, and 20% of all of those who are released from Massachusetts county facilities are reconvicted within a year. *
- **40%** of incarcerated males ages 18-24 nationally have attained at least a high school diploma or GED. ****
- **<20%** former inmates earn an average of 40% less than they would if they had not been incarcerated. In Massachusetts this amount totals $160 million in lost wages annually. **
- **86%** had no high school credential.
- **77%** were gang involved.
- **80%** were pregnant or parenting.
- **44%** had more than one risk criteria, including 14% who had all four.

168 youth ages 16-24 participated in our intensive programming in FY16.

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STATEWIDE POLICYMAKING
5 Youth (Paid)

YOUTH COUNCIL
12 Youth (Paid)

SOJUST
All Program Youth

www.utec-lowell.org
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Thank You to Our Presenters!

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* **Jamel Bonilla**, UTEC

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Thank You for Attending!

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