

Credible Messengers: Lived Experience Is Expertise

Episode 2: Credible Messengers in Child Welfare

Summary:

Host Daftne Sanchez was in the foster system when she was 16. She revisits memories of her time in a group home when she sits down with Serita Cox, the co-founder and CEO of iFoster, and Tyree Crawford, an iFoster TAY AmeriCorps Ambassador who serves as a peer mentor to foster youth. Serita and Tyree share about iFoster's innovative peer mentoring program, the TAY (Transitional Age Youth) AmeriCorps program, which employs adults who have a history in foster care to mentor youth transitioning out of the foster system.

Host:

Daftne Sanchez advocates on behalf of the well-being of children and is determined to leave the world a better place.

Through her own lived expertise from the child welfare system, she uses gifts and talents of empathy and resourcefulness to help other young people. It is through this work that she has explored her identity and discovered her passion.

Additionally, Daftne is a full-time student at The University of Central Florida working towards her Bachelor's in Social Work, in addition to working a full-time job. She was born and raised in New York, and currently resides in Florida. In the future, Daftne hopes to establish and run a group home for youth in the foster care system.



Guests:

Serita Cox is the co-founder and CEO of iFoster. As the driving force behind iFoster, Serita brings to bear her personal experience with foster care, devoted commitment to a number of youth development initiatives, and over a decade of experience in executive-level management in Silicon Valley, corporate strategy consulting, and non-profit strategy consulting. For her work with iFoster, Serita has been recognized as a White House Office of Social Innovation Citizen Innovator, an Echoing Green Fellow, and an American Leader of Change.



Tyree Crawford is an iFoster Transition-Age Youth AmeriCorps Ambassador who serves as a peer mentor and connects foster youth to vital resources. He entered foster care at age 15 after he had entered the juvenile justice system and aged out at 21. He credits going into the juvenile justice system and placement in foster care as the only reason why he graduated high school. Despite the help he received, Tyree believes these systems are still broken and need to be fixed. He is currently re-enrolling into Mt. San Antonio College.



Transcript:

(Music for opening credits)

(0:03)

This is the Credible Messengers Podcast. Lived experience is expertise.

Serita Cox: (0:14)

There's all these discussions out there about how there needs to be peer navigators in mental health, in health care, in this, in that. We should have peer navigators in foster care. Foster youth should be peer navigators. I think they're great peer navigators. Our young people can do incredible things.

Tyree Crawford: (0:33)

I think that people should trust foster youth more because they've been through the system and they know how the system works.

Daftne Sanchez: (0:40)

I think I'm a credible messenger myself, just basically because I have those lived, shared experiences that I can share with other people that have been in the system as well.

(Transition music)

Daftne Sanchez: (0:51)

Welcome to the Credible Messengers Podcast. The Credible Messengers Podcast is a six-part series that demonstrates that lived experience is expertise by telling stories from the front lines of credible messenger work, as well as examining the research on the efficacy of credible messenger mentoring programs.

This podcast is produced by a group of Youth Policy Consultants from AYPF, the American Youth Policy Forum. We believe that dedicated, credible messenger programs in the legal system, child welfare, K-12 schools, and college settings are a powerful way to build community and connection for youth success. We want to see credible messengers move from the margins to become an integral pillar of every system that serves young people marginalized by systemic inequities. Research supports our claim that credible messengers are effective. We want to see more research, more funding for that research, more funding for credible messenger programs, and an elevation of that role so that it receives the respect, training, and adequate pay as other professions.

Through this six-part series, we will show you lived examples of this in practice, as well as point you to the research. If you are a young person who has been in foster care, someone

who cares about youth in foster care, or someone who works in the child welfare system, this podcast is for you.

Thank you for joining us. We hope your experience with us will help drive you to action.

This is Episode 2: Credible Messengers and Child Welfare. And I'm your host, Daftne Sanchez.

(Transition music)

Daftne Sanchez: (2:37)

This topic is very important to me because I was a former foster youth child when I was the age of 16. It was very difficult to be in a group home with new people, new kids, new rules. And also, I really didn't know who to trust. It was really uncertain for me. A credible messenger would have been really useful to help me navigate. Managing the foster care system was really difficult for me, but there are ways to make it better. That's why I'm so excited to introduce to you our two guests who are making a huge difference for foster care youth with credible messengers.

Serita Cox is the co-founder and CEO of iFoster. As the driving force behind iFoster, Serita brings her personal experience with foster care, devoted commitment to a number of youth, development initiatives, and over a decade of experience in executive-level management in Silicon Valley, corporate strategy consulting, and nonprofit strategy consulting. For her work with iFoster, Serita has been recognized as a White House Office of Social Innovation Citizen Innovator, an Echoing Green Fellow, and an American Leader of Change.

And our next guest is Tyree Crawford. Tyree Crawford entered foster care at age 15 after he had entered the juvenile justice system and aged out at 21. He credits going into the juvenile justice system and placement in foster care as the only reason why he graduated high school. Despite the help he received, Tyree believes these systems are still broken and need to be fixed. Since 2019, Tyree has been an iFoster TAY (Transition Age Youth) member who serves as a peer mentor, connecting foster youth to what they need.

Welcome the both of you, Tyree and Serita, to this podcast episode with me.

Serita Cox: (4:27)

So I'm Serita. I am the CEO and Co-Founder of iFoster, and iFoster is a national nonprofit that serves children and youth, both in foster care and those who've aged out. iFoster is really about connecting children and youth, their caregivers, or their supportive adults to the resources that those children and youth need to become successful, independent adults. So that's everything from concrete resources, like having a laptop and a cell phone, having access to tutors, mental health services, you name it. That's what iFoster does. And

as youth get older and they're getting ready to transition out, then we also have additional supportive programs that really help connect youth to housing as they leave, provide job trainings, and employment placement. We even have a big internship program that gets youth ready to become financially independent, continue with school, and start building their careers.

Daftne Sanchez: (5:26)

That's amazing! It sounds like iFoster has so many opportunities to offer to the foster youth. And since you mentioned a few things, what are some things that you would like to share with families about these opportunities?

Serita Cox: (5:40)

Sure. So first of all, you can join iFoster. It's free. You just go to www.iFoster.org. You can sign up. Once you sign up, you have access to our portal, which has hundreds and hundreds of resources. You'll only see what you're eligible for, so if you're Kentucky, you're going to see resources from Kentucky or national resources that you're eligible for. And through that, you'll actually sign up to get our newsletters, so you'll know when we're recruiting for our internship programs. Which, our biggest internship program starts recruiting in just a couple of months in November and December, with a new start date in March to serve ten months as peer mentors and peer resource navigators. And it's paid internships that at the same time develop your professional skills. So we've got that. We have community health call centers for youth who are interested in the medical field and want to know what that's like. They can try it out by actually being on a call center and taking calls from patients and helping them schedule their appointments. And then we just have our generic jobs programming where we can connect youth to job training and employment placement. And then, of course, all the services and supports that youth need, they can just call, text, email iFoster, and we can help them out.

Daftne Sanchez: (7:05)

Amazing. A question that came into my mind was if you could share with us any information about research into the impact of your work with iFoster or the TAY (Transition Age Youth) AmeriCorps program that you just mentioned.

Serita Cox: (7:17)

A few years ago, the Children's Bureau had a third party review a couple of our programs. One, just that whole notion of having an online portal where you can get connected to resources. So through our portal, we provide about \$125 million worth of resources every year to about 125,000 children and youth in care and those who've exited care. And that has been proven through research to actually improve child well-being, caregiver well-being, placement, stability, all of which makes a ton of sense because it reduces need. In fact, 8 out of the 13 on the family needs scale, you see reductions in just by people going online and using our online portal and then connecting with what we call our peer navigators and our member support specialists when they need additional help.

Our jobs program, of which TAY (Transition Age Youth) AmeriCorps is one of them, was also evaluated by Children's Bureau and found to be a promising practice in foster youth employment. Because what we do is we meet the youth where they are, and we help scaffold them to the point where they're able to earn a job and keep a job and get promoted in jobs.

So, those are our two major evaluations that have been done of our programming.

Daftne Sanchez: (8:46)

How would you say credible messengers are utilized in iFoster programming?

Serita Cox: (8:51)

Credible messengers for foster care, for foster youth, are so vitally important. In fact, the majority of people who work at iFoster are current or former foster youth. That doesn't include our interns, who are all, 100% of them, current and former foster youth.

That's how much we believe in credible messengers, because you are dealing with young people who are growing up in a system. And the lack of trust, the lack of knowing who you actually can trust and get good, solid advice from is hard, when you've been moved around all the time, you are actually institutionalized.

So having credible messengers, having another young person who's gone through similar circumstances gives instant credibility to whatever they have to say. So you are more likely to listen to a young person who's had similar experiences to you when they say, "Hey, this is how I did it." "I can help you." "I can help you write the FAFSA, yes, it actually can help you." It's so much more compelling when it comes from somebody that you instinctively trust just because they've had similar experiences to you.

Daftne Sanchez: (10:09)

Absolutely! I absolutely agree with you. Young people are more likely to share their experiences and also bond and connect with other young people that have been through something similar, so you're absolutely right about that. And since we are mentioning the TAY (Transition Age Youth) AmeriCorps program, I want to go ahead and introduce Tyree. Tyree, I know that you are currently employed with the TAY (Transition Age Youth) program. Can you go ahead and maybe talk about what your day-to-day work looks like, realistically? And how are you acting as a credible messenger in your everyday life?

Tyree Crawford: (10:40)

So in the day-to-day work, due to Covid and everything, we're working from home. But in our first year, the day-to-day work was like physical host site work. I would say on a day-to-day basis you would speak with anywhere from 5 to 10 kids. You'd probably speak to about 25 a week, Monday through Friday. And that's different youths on your caseload. Like I was

placed at an AJCC, which is a job center, but there are also people who are placed at local colleges. I know Mount SAC had one. But the day-to-day work and how we're acting as credible messengers would actually be because, like Serita said, it's a lot easier for foster youth to trust us because we've been in their exact situation and we've made it out. So I guess it's a lot easier for them to see that we're not trying to lead them the wrong way.

Daftne Sanchez: (11:33)

Yeah.

Tyree Crawford: (11:34)

And I know going through the system that it can be very difficult to trust other people.

Daftne Sanchez: (11:38)

What do you mean by that? What do you mean that it's a little difficult for young people to trust people?

Tyree Crawford: (11:45)

So it's already difficult as a young person in today's age. You have a lot of older people telling you like you're lazy, or like you don't want to work for the things that, like, you need. For me personally, I feel like it got like ten times worse as soon as I went through the juvenile justice system. Just because, after I turned 18, they kind of threw me to the wind and were just like, figure it out in a way, and not in those exact words. But yeah, they basically kind of just left me on my own, and I had to do a lot of the footwork. And the beauty about me being in the position that I am now, thanks to iFoster, is that the kids behind me don't have to do all the footwork and we can help them focus more on, like, you don't have to stress about figuring out how to find a job. You can be really good at going through the interview process, things like that.

I know specifically with trusting people, me personally, I had a very big problem trusting, like, authority figures after going through the juvenile justice system just because it all becomes like a negative connotation in my head. And I genuinely believe, like getting this job with iFoster saved my life just because it makes me feel very fulfilled on a daily basis. It feels really rewarding. It feels like you're helping. So like you're actually making a difference.

Serita Cox: (12:54)

And the cool thing is we have, you know, we have a hundred plus Tyree's out there, each of them seeing 10 or 20 youth a day. And so it multiplies. We do monthly performance and the numbers are staggering. You know, it always surprises me how much our interns actually accomplish in a tiny bit of time.

Tyree didn't even talk about this, but they've been working on something called The Game of TAY, the Game of Transition Age Youth, which will, when it's finished, will actually go out

to every ILP program across the country to help youth as they're thinking about aging out. And it will bring Tyree and all of his colleagues right to them because they've been videotaping those credible messages that you need to know about everything you need to know as you're exiting care, whether it's housing, self-care, doing FAFSA and, you know, what is the FAFSA, career.

Everything you need to know will come out in the Game of TAY. So even when they're not working directly one-on-one with youth, they've got the ability to be these credible messengers through games like the Game of TAY.

Tyree Crawford: (14:20)

The Game of TAY thing, the super fun thing about that is that we get to create everything for it. Every single little thing that's there has been created by one of the TAY AmeriCorps members, and we have everything from, like, mental health support to, like, just day to day living, like grocery shopping and things like that. And the Game of TAY is going to be useful for anybody who has anything they want to do.

Daftne Sanchez: (14:45)

Yeah. Thank you, Tyree. Yeah, it sounds like it would definitely be helpful for those that are aging out of the system and need some resources, need a direction, or some type of like map or guidance to use.

Tyree Crawford: (14:57)

This is the second round that we're doing of it. The first one was in-person, this virtual one, I guess it shows, like, our adaptability to change due to circumstances.

Daftne Sanchez: (15:08)

Yeah. And you'll just make it just accessible for everybody too. So that's great.

(Transition music)

Daftne Sanchez: (15:16)

Serita, perhaps there are some challenges that iFoster may have faced with maybe the credible messenger work. Do you mind just sharing a little bit with me on what are some challenges that you have faced with the TAY program or just iFoster in general?

Serita Cox: (15:30)

I would say it goes back to, "Do you really think they can do it?" The way it all transpired was AmeriCorps was looking to have programs that supported foster youth. And they came and visited us and we said, we think that's a great idea. But those people who you call members, who serve clients, we think those members should be current and former foster youth as well. That would be the best way. Why bring in people from outside? Our youth know best. And I will tell you that at the beginning, I will say AmeriCorps was very cool with

saying, okay, here's a planning grant, go see if this has any legs. And even within child welfare, people are like, "Are you crazy?"

Like it's what Tyree said, right. They don't necessarily think of youth in care as being these incredible valuable assets that can work hard, do want to work hard, and can really add value and provide service. Instead, they're viewed so much more as, well, children that need to be protected or whatever, as opposed to, they are young adults that have incredible capacity to be empathetic, to serve, to be role models. And I would say that was the biggest barrier.

And even as we go into other states, they always question, like, "Really, do you think they can really do that?" Well, let me tell you, we have the highest recruitment rate and one of the highest retention rates of any AmeriCorps program nationwide. And we have the highest service outputs, outcomes, performance outcomes of any AmeriCorps nationwide, regardless of who they have as members.

Tyree Crawford: (17:32)

Yeah. And to add another thing to that. Even within like us as foster youth, we were questioning ourselves only because everybody else was questioning us, and it felt like they got to the point where we were all thought like, can we actually do it? And after the first year, we won an award for, like, the best AmeriCorps program that year and continue to win awards. I guess for me personally, it's the same way of seeing yourself as something bigger. A lot of foster youth see me, and they are like, "Oh, I really want to do what you do, I want to do the TAY AmeriCorps program." And they get really excited when I tell them like, yeah, you can, definitely apply for it.

Daftne Sanchez: (18:12)

Serita, I have a question for you. Do you consider yourself a credible messenger? Why or why not?

Serita Cox: (18:20)

So I don't think I'm a credible messenger to youth because I'm a little old. (laughter) But I do think I am a credible messenger to other agencies and programs in leadership that I can help bridge, right. So from that perspective, but in terms of a credible messenger to our young people or even to caregivers, I would say no. Just because you had experience, you know, I mean, we all came out of the system, some of us came out of multiple systems, doesn't necessarily mean that you're a credible messenger because you have to show up as youth themselves or caregivers themselves, see themselves. And I don't show up that way. Right. Like, I show up as like, oh, that's Serita, as opposed to somebody that you can completely relate to. So I would say that for what we do and for really helping youth who are transitioning out of care, the best possible credible messengers are other youth who are transitioning or who have just transitioned out of care. They're the best.

Daftne Sanchez: (19:31)

Thank you, Serita. That clarifies things, thank you. And how about you, Tyree? Do you consider Serita a credible messenger for you?

Tyree Crawford: (19:39)

For me, I do. Just because, I guess for me, it makes me trust iFoster a lot more than most companies. Serita being Serita gives a lot of other companies a lot more trust in us as foster youth. When you tell them, like, "Oh yeah, I work with iFoster," it puts so much more credibility behind your name and I really appreciate that. So she may not think she is, but she really is a credible messenger for a lot of people.

Daftne Sanchez: (20:04)

Thank you, Tyree. And I do have one question for the both of you. As a call to action, what do you want funders and researchers to know mainly about credible messaging, and what do you want them to do to expand on this kind of programing in the foster systems?

Serita Cox: (20:21)

So let me go first. So I think and by the way, thanks Tyree, that makes me feel good. (laughter) Many days I don't feel very credible.

But, so, two things. One, on the research front, it bothers me that a lot of research that is done about youth in foster care and youth aging out of foster care is done to them or on them, like they're lab rats. Measuring the number that got a high school diploma, how many are pregnant, how many got incarcerated. To me, that doesn't get to the well-being of an individual. I mean, we're talking about individuals, and they have dreams and career aspirations and a sense of life satisfaction and well-being, and that is what researchers should be measuring, which is why we're doing the voice of the community survey, because we shouldn't be measuring young people like they're lab rats. We should be asking them. They're fully cognizant about what they need, what they want, what they desire, what they need to feel safe and well, and what they need to thrive. So just ask. So I think research really needs to be to truly involve those subjects that you want to research. That's the first thing.

The second is, I think back to the credible messenger. Funders, legislators, regulators shouldn't be scared of the notion of current and former foster youth being peer mentors, being peer navigators, being credible messengers, because I think they get a lot more done if they really, truly thought through, in your independent living programs, there should be peer mentors, as you're exiting, there should be peer mentors. There's not enough social workers to go around. They don't have enough time. You could really leverage peer mentors in a proper way to really help youth as they age out.

Tyree Crawford: (22:31)

I know for me, I think that people should trust foster youth more because they've been through the system and they know how the system works. It would help to have peer mentors to get to foster youth, to keep them on the right track. Because I know a social worker can't reach out to all 150 youth that they have on their caseload every day. But I know from experience that one or two peer mentors can reach out to 20 or so a day or 100 or so a week, and make a quick 5 to 10 minute phone call. Because a lot of the time, foster youth don't need much.

Daftne Sanchez: (23:02)

Thank you, Serita and Tyree, for sharing that. Serita, I definitely agree with you that when it comes to research in children in foster care, it's kind of, it's just like lab rats, right. Like the research that we do come across is certainly more like the number of them, just a little bit of background information. But there's not enough testimony, there's not enough foster youth sharing their experiences, or even researchers encouraging them to experience their stories. Just doing, like, there should be more research focused on some of the main challenges on the things that really do matter and really do impact us as a society and community. So thank you for sharing that with me.

And Tyree, also like you're mentioning, that feedback makes a huge difference in your life, right? It makes an impact on how you're doing. And what are some positive feedback or can you maybe share a situation where you received positive feedback?

Tyree Crawford: (23:57)

There was one whole family who came in, one whole foster family that came in together, and we signed them up. Two of them were 18, aging out of high school, going out of high school their senior year, didn't know what they wanted to do. And we signed them up with vocational schools and got them all the financial aid that they needed. And then, the next year, once Covid hit and everything went to distance learning, the family emailed me again and they all needed laptops to go to school. And so we were immediately able to get them laptops because, because of the work we did when we were at host sites, they had like I guess that networking ability to like to be able to, oh, I still remember, I can trust this person and I can reach out to this person.

And specific feedback we've had is a lot more foster youth actually want to go to school now that they know that it's not as difficult to pay for it, or that they know that they're not in it alone.

So I recently, like last year, was mentoring a youth who went to college, and he was like kind of hesitant to go to college, didn't really want to go, but he didn't know what he wanted to do for work. And that was what he was nervous for, but basically, he didn't have anything. He didn't have a laptop. He didn't really have a place to stay. And when going through the TAY AmeriCorps program, or me going through TAY AmeriCorps program and working with him to get everything with school, and he ended up going to UCLA and is

going there for free. Completely free. And he got a laptop from iFoster. He's got a phone from iFoster. He still to this day, emails me and says how good he's doing. He just says that he's proud he's able to at least say that he went to college or at least gave it a shot. And I think that that is, I guess for me, my biggest hope.

Serita Cox: (25:51)

And I would say for me and you know, everyone at iFoster, I think, what, so yes, we get to have stories like that, too. We hear about them. Just the other day, a young woman checked in just to let us know she'd had her baby. She'd been homeless when she came to us. But she had her baby. She's stable now. She's working. And she had done our job skills training online because that's what we traded for. We're like, "Okay, we'll get you a hotel, but you got to do job skills training." And she did, on the laptop we gave her! And she just checked in to say she was doing well and she's working at a restaurant and loving it. And as Tyree said, that's what makes us so happy, is she's happy. Right, she's happy. She's thriving. It's wonderful.

And then the other thing is, we get to see our TAY AmeriCorps interns like Tyree, blossom in front of your eyes. Tyree has become this young professional, and he didn't start that way. He didn't come in on day one and was super professional like he is now. I remember that you had trouble standing up in front of people and talking. You didn't really want to talk a lot. Now he'll, you know, podcast, presentations. He was even on a panel about diversity in the workplace with the head of HR from Hilton, as in the hotels, and did a phenomenal job. So that's what makes us super proud.

Daftne Sanchez: (27:24)

So, I just want to admit I'm tearing up a little bit. I have to say I'm a little emotional because it really means the world to me that people really care, and that we're not forgotten. Before I got into the system, I literally looked around my high school and I said, "I wonder what being homeless looked like." My mentor at the time, for my afterschool program, before she said, "Oh, sweetheart, they look like you. You're not going to be able to tell. You just don't know their story. You may not know them. They may not share that with you, but they look just like you." And a few days after that, I got right into the system. So that really stuck with me.

So I just wanted to, you know, just share that with you just to let the both of you know that I really do thank you for doing the work that you do and making a commitment of leaving young people, even people in our community, moved and inspired.

(Transition music)

Tyree Crawford: (28:25)

And I really appreciate everything iFoster has done for me and given me an opportunity to do the same thing, if not more, for youth. That it just being simple enough right now for

them to be able to breathe and not have to worry about at least a phone, or a laptop, or have somebody to talk to, cause that's a lot of the time what peer mentoring is, too. Sometimes they're just having a rough week and just need to let everything out, and that's fine. And I really appreciate being able to be in that position for somebody else because I didn't have that person for me.

Daftne Sanchez: (29:00)

Thank you so much, Tyree, for that.

Serita Cox: (29:03)

Doing good makes you feel happy.

Daftne Sanchez: (29:05)

Yes.

Serita Cox: (29:06)

When other people are happy, you're happy. And it makes, it's the most fulfilling thing. Before iFoster, I was a very senior executive at 3Com in Silicon Valley. I was making, like, tons of money. There's nothing wrong with making tons of money. But I would say what I do at iFoster is far more fulfilling and makes me far happier than any of the crazy stuff I got to do because I was making a ton of money during the dot-com boom and everybody was doing crazy stuff.

Daftne Sanchez: (29:40)

I absolutely agree with you, Serita. It does feel amazing to just do the things that fulfill you and make you happy and it's not always about the materialistic things. But now I'm going to go ahead and take the time to just truly close the podcast.

I just want to go ahead and just show a lot of appreciation for the both of you taking your time to share with us a lot about what credible messengers really look like in child welfare. And especially in iFoster and the TAY program, thank you, the both of you, for introducing that to us.

I just wanted to say how moving and inspired your work really has moved me as someone who has been in foster care myself. I would be, I will be, making sure to share iFoster with my communities, my group of my community as well.

I'm super excited to hear about the Game of TAY play. I'm really excited to hear about that launch. If you guys don't mind sharing with us, when is that launch? Do you have the date on that?

Serita Cox: (30:45)

We're not sure. We're still cutting video for it.

Daftne Sanchez: (30:48)

Oh, okay. Okay. Well, no, I'll definitely be updated then. So again, I just want to thank you, the both of you, for again taking your time to really share with us what it really means to be a credible messenger in this amazing, amazing space.

I'm a little emotional myself, but I just want to say thank you, the both of you again for being here. It means the world to me. I'm sure it means a lot to our audience as well.

Serita Cox: (31:15)

Wonderful. Thank you.

Tyree Crawford: (31:16)

Thank you for having us.

Daftne Sanchez: (31:18)

Thank you. Thank you, guys. Yes!

My call to action to listeners is to care about the kids in the foster youth system and help them amplify their voices. Let them know that someone out there does care about them, and that their voices are being heard. Foster care youth are also the best-equipped people to get other kids out of the foster care system. The best way to do that is to build relationships and connections with them. And trust is super important. Trust is something that you can't have with them without building that connection with them, getting to really know them. Credible messengers build trust with the foster youth, so let's make sure that they are leading.

(Transition to close music)

Daftne Sanchez: (32:07)

Thank you for listening to the Credible Messengers Podcast. We hope that we have inspired you to take action. As Clinton Lacey said in our first episode, let's move credible messengers out of the margins. Let's ensure more credible messenger programs exist and that credible messengers are well paid, supported, resourced, and trained. We need more research, more funding for research, and more formalized paid roles for credible messengers so that all young people marginalized by systemic inequities can have opportunities to fulfill their dreams.

This podcast is hosted and directed by a group of Youth Policy Consultants from AYPF, the American Youth Policy Forum, including:

Abdul Ali: (32:49)

Abdul Ali,

Armonte Butler: (32:50)

Armonté Butler,

Brittany LaMarr: (32:51)

Brittany LaMarr,

Iliana Pujols: (32:52)

Iliana Pujols,

Daftne Sanchez: (32:54)

And me, Daftne Sanchez.

Our executive producer is the American Youth Policy Forum.

This show is produced, edited, and mixed by Sarah Daggett of Daggett Consulting, LLC.

This episode on Credible Messengers in Child Welfare was directed and hosted by me, Daftne Sanchez.

Thank you for listening.