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Youth
Rights &
Justice

ANNUAL
REPORT

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The work of Youth, Rights & Justice would not be possible without the support of our donors. While our public defense funding comes from the State of Oregon, individual and corporate support are critical to many of YRJ's programs and fill the gaps left by foundation grants and government contracts. We would not be able to offer the full range of services, including our educational advocacy and records expungement work, without support from our community.



Top: CCCU crew at the 2023 gala
Right: YRJ Board Members David Rabbino & Dana Walton-Macauley
Far right: YRJ Board Members Chris Weathers & Nakia Bradley-Lawson
Below: YRJ volunteers & staff at Blazers game





OUR WORK AT A GLANCE

Juvenile public defense is at the core of YRJ's holistic representation model. We zealously fight to ensure our clients' rights are protected and their voices are heard.

The **SchoolWorks** program helps young people succeed in school through legal advocacy.

Youth Education Supports (YES) provides educational advocacy and support for youth transitioning out of OYA custody and programs.

Parent Advocacy for Student Success (PASS) provides early childhood educational advocacy and community-based educational rights trainings.

The **Family Defense Project** provides pre-petition representation and social supports to prevent foster care placement and safely keep children at home.

YRJ takes our advocacy to the Legislature and the federal courts to fight systemic injustice and to enact statewide reform.

The **Record Relief Juvenile Expunction Clinic** helps those with juvenile records get a fresh start.



Top: Supervising Attorney Lisa Kay Williams & Paralegal April Brix at an expunction clinic

Above: Family Defense Project team members Family Engagement Specialist Olivia Vo & Staff Attorney Jennifer Stoller

Below : Executive Director Heather Busby & SchoolWorks PASS Staff Attorney Jawan Mullen at a Community Pulse event





OUR IMPACT

YRJ launched **SchoolWorks PASS**, an early intervention program filling a critical need in our community for educational advocacy in early childhood. PASS attorney Jawan Mullen joined the SchoolWorks team in June 2023 to provide legal representation and Know Your Rights trainings to BIPOC parents and guardians.

YRJ championed a key piece of legislation, Senate Bill 519, which expands access to juvenile records expunction. The law makes misdemeanors and violations eligible for automated expunction, reduces waiting periods to apply for expunction and eliminates barriers to counsel so impacted individuals have the help they need to seek necessary records relief.

In July 2023, YRJ and the Oregon Law Center scored a big win in a lawsuit to end Oregon Department of Human Services' practice of housing foster children in hotels. The judge appointed an outside expert to make recommendations after finding the Department was not in substantial compliance with a 2018 settlement agreement to wind down the practice and "never has been throughout the agreement's timeframe."

“YRJ has been instrumental in passing legislation to get juveniles on the right path. Through public policy efforts and innovative programs, YRJ addresses structural inequities in the juvenile justice, dependency, and education systems.”

—Oregon State Senator Michael Dembrow

YRJ BY THE NUMBERS 2022

- 1,384** children and families served through public defense
- 112** referrals to the Family Defense Project and 42 families served
- 109** foster children and justice-involved youth served through SchoolWorks
- 30** youth served through SchoolWorks YES
- 63** people helped through the Record Relief Expunction Clinic
- 100%** success rate in contested expunction cases
- 39** staff members

Top left: SchoolWorks team
Staff Attorney Kris Paustenbach,
Supervising Attorney Jennifer
McGowan, Social Worker Josue
Gomez, Staff Attorney Chris
Shank & Data Integrity Manager
Chad Lucero



2022 REVENUE

Public Defense	\$3,725,166
Contributions and Grants	\$761,906
Events (less direct cost)	\$107,610
Other	\$6,420
TOTAL	\$4,601,102

2022 EXPENSES

Program Services	\$3,612,008
Management & General	\$471,501
Fundraising	\$179,258
TOTAL	\$4,262,767



WHO WE ARE

OUR VISION We envision a just and equitable society that creates opportunities for children, parents, and families to imagine and achieve their aspirations.

OUR MISSION is to advance the rights of children, parents, and families through advocacy in the courts, schools, legislature, and community.

OUR VALUES Our work is grounded in the belief that our clients are at the center of all that we do. Our values guide our interactions, decisions, goals, and strategy. They serve as the touchstone for open communication in the office, with clients, and in the community. They include Collaboration, Equity, Openness, Compassion, Integrity, and Agility.



Clockwise from top: Staff Attorney Michael Ceber & Legal Assistant Supervisor Fernanda Manzo; Supervising Attorney Christa Obold Eshleman with Staff Attorneys Chris Shank, Maggie Carlson & Natalie Johnstone; Staff Attorneys Jawan Mullen & Stephanie Englesman with Supervising Attorney Jennifer McGowan; Legal Assistants Vicky Morales & DeWayne Charley with Policy Coordinator Kendall White

RETREAT PHOTOS: ANDIE PETKUS



“What makes YRJ so special is that they leverage over 40 years of experience representing children and families, combining deep expertise with passionate advocacy. YRJ works to keep children in school and keep families together while also passing legislation to create lasting change for our clients.”

— Joel Willard, Board Vice President

YRJ staff at September 2023 retreat





MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TODAY



at youthrightsjustice.org or through Willamette Week's Give!Guide by December 31, 2023.

giveguide.org/nonprofits/yrj Contributions to Youth, Rights & Justice are tax deductible. Tax ID #: 93-0900864

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