2024 Youth, Rights & Justice ANNUAL REPORT

As we reflect on another year of progress, I am inspired by the unwavering dedication of the YRJ staff to serving our clients and the community. This annual report showcases not just our achievements, but the remarkable impact we've made.

This past year we continued to navigate the reality of serving people who are living through generational trauma, who are impacted by racism and inequitable systems, and who disproportionately suffer when the cost of food, housing, and other necessities becomes increasingly out of reach. But 2024 also brought us new partnerships and deepened community relationships. This sense of community is what will carry us through the difficult times. Through collaboration and meaningful partnerships, we will forge a brighter path forward.

As we navigate new challenges from a changing political landscape at the national level, YRJ remains committed to zealously representing our clients. And we will hold true to our values. We are committed to justice, and to realizing our vision of a just and equitable society where all children, parents, and families can imagine and achieve their aspirations.

And more than anything, I am grateful for our supporters who make it possible for us to meet our mission of advocating for the rights of children, parents, and families in the courts, schools, legislature, and community. Thank you for fighting the good fight with us.

In solidarity and gratitude,

Heather Busby, Executive Director

Far left: State Sen. Michael Dembrow speaks to attendees at the Fall Supporter Reception. Middle and Right: SchoolWorks-YES Social Worker Josue Gomez and Attorney Seth Lichenstein-Hill present at a national conference.

PHOTOS: ANDIE PETKUS

YRJ staff, board, and supporters enjoy the 2024 Gala.

YRJ AT THE OREGON SUPREME COURT

In 2024, Oregon Supreme Court decided *Dept of Human Services v. C. H.*, in which YRJ represented the child. In this case, the Court defined the statutory requirement that the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) make "reasonable efforts" to reunify a family after removing a child. Ultimately, we obtained the result that our client needed: affirming the permanency plan change to adoption. And significantly, the Court agreed with arguments calling out systemic racism when DHS allowed the White foster parent to persist in ignoring the Black parents' concerns about the hair care their child was receiving and allowing the foster parent to continually remove braids the child's mother put in during visits. "We agree with parents that DHS's handling of a dispute between parents and a foster parent over A's hair care was culturally and racially inappropriate, and that DHS bears some responsibility for the breakdown in communications with parents in the months leading up to the juvenile court hearing."

PRAISE FOR SCHOOLWORKS STAFF

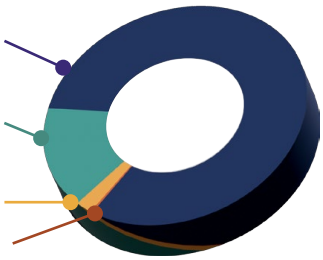
"Chris always tries to communicate with me. We communicate back-and-forth to problem-solve and figure out other pieces together."
– SchoolWorks Client

"Chris listened to us and treated us all respectfully. 10's across the board!!! She was very involved with the case and kept all of us (ODHS, foster parent and youth) updated on what she was working on. She got the help that we needed and requested. Chris was fantastic with everything, especially the school piece and getting the youth into the right school that worked best for him and his needs." *– DHS Worker*

FINANCIALS

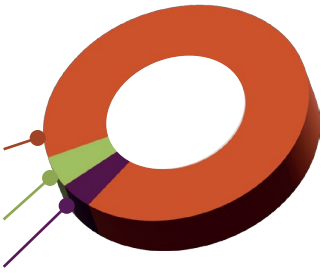
2024 REVENUE

Public Defense	$4,191,423
Contributions and Grants	$815,975
Events (less direct cost)	$109,136
Other	$8,606
TOTAL	**$5,125,140**



2024 EXPENSES

Program Services	$5,081,425
Management & General	$284,064
Fundraising	$235,350
TOTAL	**$5,600,839**



Attorney Jawan Mullen at a community event. Jawan helped launched SchoolWorks-PASS and is now running his own criminal defense firm.

YRJ BY THE NUMBERS

931 individual clients served through YRJ's programs

131 children served through SchoolWorks

50 youth served through SchoolWorks-YES

11 families served through SchoolWorks-PASS representation

16 community events attended

150 people received SchoolWorks-PASS Know Your Rights training

28 parents helped through Family Defense Project

4,085

juvenile records expunged in 2024 due to YRJ's legislative advocacy* supporting automated expunctions.

**SB 575 (2021) and SB 519 (2023) created a system-initiated process for expunging juvenile records.*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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YRJ Staff and 2024 Summer Law Clerks enjoying some after-hours fun

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Thank you to board members who rolled off in 2024: Rohini Ghosh, Lissa Kaufman, Bryan Leinwand, Jilian Saurage-Felton & Janet Steverson.

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MISSION Youth, Rights & Justice advances the rights of children, parents, and families through advocacy in the courts, schools, legislature, and community.

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