

The Tow Youth Justice Institute is a university, state and private partnership established to lead the way in juvenile justice reform through collaborative planning, training, research and advocacy.

Upcoming JJPOC Meetings:

JJPOC Meetings are the third Thursday of every month at 2 p.m., at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford.

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The Tow Youth Justice Institute thanks Deborah Stewart, Project Coordinator, Transforming Youth Justice: A Leadership Development Program for her 3 years of service in making the Transforming Youth Justice Leadership Development program such a success!

THE TOW FOUNDATION TURNS 30!

TOW YOUTH JUSTICE INSTITUTE TURNS 4!

When the Tow family formed a foundation in 1988, they were motivated by the desire to help people in need. At first, their philanthropy was directed toward their personal passions, but as time passed, and they engaged their grantees in conversations, their journey led them on an unanticipated path.

Their investments became focused in four primary areas and the exploration of projects within institutions which they have long-standing relationships. "We are motivated by the philosophy that no child is beyond help and the notion that those with firsthand experience with systems are the most equipped to change those systems for the better." One key area is their Justice Programs. They saw this as an area in which there needed much work and and there is little private sector involvement. They began investing in non-profits that focused on providing opportunities for youth and families to succeed. They approached the University of New Haven to develop an Institute that would ensure systemic reforms would take place and they were able to see the impact of the work first-hand.



During their 30th Anniversary celebration, Dr. Danielle Cooper, Director of Research for the Tow Youth Justice Institute was asked to speak. She shared her personal journey to effect change in the juvenile justice system. "Fighting for justice is a priority in my life shaped by my experiences being from St. Louis. There is a lot of good in my city. However, there is also plenty of death and injustice. St. Louis currently holds, just as it has for decades, the title of Murder Capital." As a professor of juvenile justice in the Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Science, she challenges

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her students with tough conversations.

Among her many accomplishments and talents, Dr. Cooper developed, with the Center for Children's Law and Policy, a new online course about the Kalief Browder Story, an innocent young Black male who was wrongly held at Riker's Island Jail and who eventually committed suicide after his release.

That evening, Danielle challenged everyone to consider the value of youth justice in reducing the millions of adults locked up each year.

"Think for a moment... What does youth justice mean to you?"



Rashanda McCollum, Manager of Education & Training Programs excitedly wrapped up her first year facilitating the Transforming Youth Justice Leadership Development Program and is looking forward to the 2019 Cohort, which is currently accepting applications.

TRANSFORMING YOUTH JUSTICE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM COHORT #3 GRADUATES!



The new 2018 Alumni Fellows pictured left to right, back row: Roslyn Campbell, Meghan Korn, Jill Ostapchuk, Deanna Krzykowski, Rachel Cunningham Exavier, Amonda Hannah, Rebekah Behan; Front row: Shirley Conyers, Chanel Wright, Christopher Friar, Shamare Holmes, Patricia Jenkins-Simmons; Cohort leaders not pictured: Yecenia Casiano, Sean Mosley.

Friday, November 9th marked the third year of graduates from the Transforming Youth Justice Leadership Development Program. On Thursday, November 8th, the now fellows, presented their Capstone projects and their Presentations of Learning (POL). The POL has been used each year and is based on the model from CT Public Allies. Cohort members also shared one of the six collaborative leadership skills they used in planning their Capstone projects.

On Friday, Rashanda McCollum, Manager of Education & Training Programs welcomed cohort members and guests, followed by remarks from Bill Carbone and Christy Smith, Ph.D. on behalf of the Dean of the Henry C. Lee College. The Keynote speaker was Alice M. Forrester, Ph.D., CEO of Clifford Beers, who is also an Advisory Council member for the Tow Youth Justice Institute. Three cohort members shared highlights of their Capstone projects with the guests.

2017 Alumni Fellow Reuel Parks, Founder/Director, CHAMP, Inc. and Program Officer, Dept. of Corrections gave a "Call to Action" and then cohort members received their Certificates of Graduation. Fellows received "Collaborative Leadership, How Citizens and Civic Leaders can Make a Difference," by David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson (1994) as a graduation gift.

The Transforming Youth Justice Leadership Development Program continues to evolve each year. An evaluation of the first two Cohorts has been completed by Kevin Earl, a Ph.D. student in the Henry C. Lee College. This year will also mark the first year of an Alumni Network so that the three cohorts will have the opportunity to continue to use each other as resources and connections in their work.



JJPOC UPDATES

On September 20th, 2018, the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) hosted Shay Bilchik, the Founder and Director of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University. Some of his previous work includes serving as the President and CEO of the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) and serving as the Administrator for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the United States Department of Justice. Shay was invited to present his wealth of knowledge in the area of juvenile justice as well as his most recent report, Transforming Juvenile Justice Systems to Improve Public Safety and Youth Outcomes. In the presentation, Shay highlighted six strategies to help transform the juvenile justice system.

- **Strategy 1** – Decriminalize status offenses and automatically divert all youth who commit certain offenses and are screened as low risk from court involvement.
- **Strategy 2** – Develop professional standards and supports to cultivate a dedicated cadre of juvenile court judges and attorneys.
- **Strategy 3** – Tie conditions of supervision directly to youth's delinquent offenses and eliminate the practice of filing technical violations of probation and parole.
- **Strategy 4** – Redefine the primary function of community supervision as promoting positive youth behavior change.
- **Strategy 5** – Focus case planning and service delivery on strengthening youth's connections to positive adults, peers, and community supports.
- **Strategy 6** – Use data and predictive analytics to guide system decisions and hold supervision agencies, courts and service providers accountable for improved youth outcomes.

After the presentation, the JJPOC engaged in a lengthy and informative discussion with Shay. Questions were raised including how implicit biases could be recorded and measured during juvenile court proceedings as well as what are some ways for juveniles to navigate around negative family influences. The JJPOC and the Tow Youth Justice Institute thanks Shay Bilchik for taking time to come speak on this important topic.

At the October 18th, 2018 JJPOC meeting, members of the Judicial Branch's Court Support and Service Division (CSSD) gave a presentation that updated the ongoing transfer of juvenile justice functions from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to the Judicial Branch. The transfer was officially passed into the state budget on October 31st, 2017. After months of preparation, on July 1st, 2018, 172 children were placed into the care of Judicial. One of the major tasks of the transfer was to implement a new program to replace the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS), Connecticut's only juvenile prison, which was effectively closed April 1st, 2018.

After receiving feedback and consulting with many different sources, a new treatment model was finally selected. REGIONS, which stands for Re-Entry, Goal Oriented, Opportunity to Nurture Success, focuses on building skills, changing thinking, education and vocational opportunities and positive community connections and relationships. The model is

implemented through private contracts, in collaboration with Yale Behavioral Health, who is providing the treatment services. The program emphasizes a healthy transition back into the community where kids are evaluated in order to step down their levels of care and reenter their communities. Another key component offers the youth a voice in their treatment, while simultaneously cultivating pro-social thinking. Currently boys in the REGIONS program are housed at the Hartford and Bridgeport Detention Centers and girls are served at Journey House, formerly operated by the Department of Children and Families. There is also per diem contract options available for youth who require specialized care such as those with complex psychiatric conditions, substance use disorders, and developmental disabilities. More private contracts are expected to be awarded in the coming months.



STUDENT EVENTS

Tow Youth Justice Institute Student Open House

On October 25th, the Tow Youth Justice Institute invited students from the Henry C. Lee College to an Open House. They had the opportunity to meet everyone on staff and learn about the work TYJI does statewide to reform the juvenile justice system and the opportunity for internships with organizations and agencies within the community.



Pictured left to right, student Richard Concepcion, TYJI staff Erika Nowakowski, Dr. Danielle Cooper, and student Tashaye O'Neale.

WELCOME



Colleen Conroy, LCSW , Project Coordinator, Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee

Colleen Conroy is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, who received her Master's degree from the University Of Connecticut School Of Social Work. She is an alumni of the University of New Haven where she

received a bachelors in Criminal Justice concentrating on Juvenile and Family Justices and Victim Services Administration. Colleen is currently the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) Project Coordinator with the TOW Youth Justice Institute (TYJI) at the University of New Haven. Prior to arriving at TYJI she worked for the Center for Court Innovation in New York City as the Behavioral Health Director of their operating project Brooklyn Justice Initiatives. As the Behavioral Health Director, Colleen created and implemented mental health diversion

programs for adults and youth (16 and 17 year olds) who were charged with misdemeanor and nonviolent felonies in Brooklyn Criminal Court. She worked closely with Judges, the Defense Bar, Brooklyn District Attorney's office and community treatment providers to have defendants released from incarceration to her team of clinicians to receive treatment services in the community. She also worked for 3 1/2 years with the North American Family Institute providing Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) and Multi-Systemic Therapy- Transitional Age Youth (MST-TAY) services as a therapist for justice involved youth ages 12-20. Currently Colleen sits on the Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) for clinical trials of Multiple Systemic Therapy Emerging Adult being conducted in Connecticut and Tennessee.



Pictured left to right, Camille Garden, UNH Student Athlete, Officer Martin Parker, Yale University Police Department, Sgt. Andino, UNH ROTC and Lt. Joseph Murgo, East Haven Police Department.

Campus Clubs and TYJI hold Take a Stand Event

Students from the American Criminal Justice Association, and the Student NAACP, the Myatt Center for Diversity and Inclusion and the Tow Youth Justice Institute held an event Tuesday, November 13th to discuss platforms to protest or raise awareness of social justice issues.

During the event students were asked to think critically and participate in a meaningful discussion aimed at fostering better relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

The panelists and Moderator, Dr. Kendell Coker, Assistant Professor of Psychology, were great!

Please visit newhaven.edu/towyouth for more information about the Tow Youth Justice Institute. Please scan the image to read our other Issue Briefs and Quarterly Newsletters.



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