

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 held the third Thursday of every month at 2 p.m., via Zoom and can be viewed on ct-n.com.

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Student Contributor to this newsletter:
Jasmine Kaur, MS, Criminal Justice, '23

Looking forward:

We are excited to share with you Issue Briefs in the coming months on:

- Ombudsmen
- Commissary
- New Data on Car Thefts
- Unmet Mental Health and Educational Needs for boys and girls
- REGIONS - Moving Closer to Home
- School Resource Officers

Don't miss our Fall Fact vs. Fiction Webinar Series

- Cross Walk JJ Recommendations and GOP Plan
- Outcomes of Unmet Mental Health and Educational Needs for Boys
- Outcomes of Unmet Mental Health and Educational Needs for Girls

Connecticut Institute for Youth and Police Relations Graduates First Cohort



Top row: Officer Edward Harris(Windsor), Sergeant Kevin Small(Hartford), Officer Kory St. Pierre(Bristol), Officer Erika McNally(Bristol), Officer Carmelo Pena(Windsor)
Bottom row: Captain Jeffrey Rousseau(Hartford), Sgt Liam Bojka(Hartford), Sgt Rachael Levy(UConn), Officer David Flores(E Hartford), Officer Marc Caruso(E Hartford), Officer Peter Kisela(W Hartford), Officer Sue-Ellen Jobes(Glastonbury), Officer Joseph Hopkins(W Hartford)

The University of New Haven's Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI) and The Center for Advanced Policing (CAP) funded by the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving and Travelers Championship to establish the Connecticut Institute for Youth and Police Relations (CIYPR) as a facilitator of advanced multidisciplinary training for the police officers. The goal of CIYPR is to improve youth and police relations and by providing training that builds trust and relationships with youth and the community. The curriculum for the eight month training was developed by **Dr. Danielle T. Cooper, Director of Research at the TYJI** and **Dr. Lorenzo M. Boyd, Stewart Professor of CJ and Community Policing and Director of Outreach for CAP.**

The learning objectives of the training program are primarily defined in terms of gaining mastery over topics focusing on youth trauma development, youth brain development, perception, compassion, mental processes, restoration, positive community engagement, and needs and risk assessment of young offenders. The program is structured in such a way to yield innovative

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strategies and novel approaches for interacting with youth. Intense and rigorous training sessions were conducted for eight months to address various issues surrounding juvenile justice diversion strategies. Recognizing the potential adverse impact that unknown biases and gaps in the understanding of youth can have, the CIYPR police training program was delivered by specialists and experts from various fields.

Officers were trained to recognize underlying triggers-- social, educational, economic, mental health, and brain development, among others, that lead to delinquent behavior, and provide them with tools to effectively address them. To have officers appreciate unfavorable circumstances youth may face, they were exposed to various police-youth interactive experiences. The aim of the exercise was to improve understanding and awareness of the impact of negative police interactions on the minds and perceptions of youth. Those perceptions further affect parents' and families' trust of and attitudes towards law enforcement.

It also addressed the trauma-related issues experienced due to differences in the behavior and attitude of police officers towards people of color. Officers learned about the effect of and methods to tear-down biases. Virtual discussion sessions were also conducted with local young adults of Connecticut Justice Alliance and parents and family members of the African Caribbean American Population. These groups shared their experiences of interaction and perception about police departments. It helped police officers in understanding the needs, problems, and expectations of the public in a better and more transparent way.

On September 10, 2021, this inaugural cohort of Connecticut Institute for Youth and Police Relations commemorated their graduation ceremony after successfully completing the training program delivered at Hartford Public Library. Mayor Luke Bronin of Hartford provided welcoming remarks and Jay Williams, President of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving was the keynote speaker. The fourteen officers were from the communities of West Hartford, Hartford, East Hartford, Bristol, Glastonbury, Windsor, and the University of Connecticut.

Paul Klee, a Ph.D. student of Criminal Justice, sees the CIYPR program as not just a catalyst in improving police-youth relationships, but also as an instrument of experiential learning for our students. He stated, *"I am very grateful for the opportunity to be part of CIYPR project. It increased my knowledge which will help in building me as a professor. It opened my eyes in learning the importance of securing the relationship between youth and police".*

Dr. Cooper expressed her sense of fulfillment with the implementation of the project, *"Despite being in a global pandemic, 14 officers accepted the call from their departmental leadership to join the inaugural cohort of the Connecticut Institute for Youth and Police Relations, known as CIYPR." She offered further details by sharing, "Over the eight months, the officers have been challenged to confront their lived experiences while also examining and learning from the lived experiences of the youth and communities that they serve. Each month provided opportunity for group reflection, interactions with key stakeholders, and a chance to build upon their knowledge through planning a Community Engagement Project. In teams of one, two, and three, the officers collaborated to identify needs and opportunities in their communities. A total of seven projects in seven communities will be completed throughout the Greater Hartford area to help improve police and youth relations at the ground level—through the families in the communities and through schools."*

Dr. Boyd expressed, *"The critical step to building bridges is understanding, these officers were eager to learn, and left this training with a better understanding and appreciation for the communities that they serve. Our hope is that this is the starting point for more effective community engagement. We hope that their communities are as proud of these officers as we are."*

Possible 2022 JJPOC Recommendations

It's the time of year when the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee begin to prepare their recommendations for legislation. Some of the work being proposed includes the following.

Diversion Workgroup

- **Raise the minimum age-** Raise the minimum age to 12 (backup: phased in approach)
- **Alternatives to Arrest-** Implementation plan for mandatory pre-arrest diversion of low-risk children to youth service bureaus or other services for Tier 1 offenses (Due January 1, 2022)
 - ☐ Capacity of YSBs and other local agencies to provide services for this population
 - ☐ Accountability mechanisms
 - ☐ Process for victim input and involvement
 - ☐ Data collection for tracking YSB referrals
 - ☐ Communication and outreach to stakeholders on accessing local services
- Funding the implementation of the community-based diversion system.

Incarceration Workgroup

- **Commissary-** Report and recommendations on commissary needs for all persons eighteen to twenty-one years of age who are incarcerated in Department of Correction facilities (Due to the Department of Administrative Services and the joint standing committee of the General Assembly January 1, 2022)
- **Chemical Agents-** Report from the Department of Corrections that reviews the use of chemical agents in facilities housing youth under eighteen years of age (February 1, 2022) including:
 - ☐ the types and frequency of training that present alternatives to the use of chemical agents provided to department staff;
 - ☐ the age, race and gender of any youth subjected to the use of chemical agents, the reason for such use and the date of such use;
 - ☐ how the use of chemical agents on such youth may disproportionately affect a youth with special education needs;
 - ☐ any attempted interventions prior to subjecting a youth to the use of chemical agents and the types and frequency of medical and behavioral interventions employed after such use;
 - ☐ the number of and details associated with incidents involving the use of chemical agents upon any youth with a respiratory or psychiatric condition;
 - ☐ participation in rehabilitation programming by youths in the custody of the commissioner; and
 - ☐ efforts the department is taking to implement positive behavioral supports for such youths
- CSSD Report and Recommendations on Consolidation of Services for Pre-Trial Youth

Education Committee

- **Suspension and Expulsion-** Report and recommendations on alternatives to suspension and expulsion of students in preschool through second grade (Due January 1, 2022)
 - ☐ Funding recommendations for any proposed alternatives to suspension and expulsion;
 - ☐ Timelines for potential implementation of any such alternatives;
 - ☐ Individual school district needs based on data;
 - ☐ Training recommendations for school personnel
 - ☐ Implementation procedures for alternative in-school disciplinary practice, strategies and intervention to support students and school personnel
 - ☐ Strategies for family engagement
 - ☐ Recommendations for screening for health and mental health concerns
 - ☐ Recommendations for strengthening connections to community-based services and supports including trauma-informed mental health interventions.
- **DCF Operational Plan on the Oversight of Educational Services for Children in Juvenile Justice Facilities-** Minor legislative changes from DCF

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Community Expertise Workgroup

- **JJPOC Membership**- Increase the membership by two community members and two youths (must be under 26 years of age) with first or second-hand justice system involvement

Racial and Ethnic Disparities Workgroup

- **Pedestrian Stop**- the provisions of C.G.S. § 54-1m be extended so that racial profiling data is collected on all police stops, whether traffic or pedestrian, giving a full and complete picture of any racial profiling that takes place in the state

Welcome Patrick Saley and Shauntaye Williams-Monroe

The Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI) has become a leader in the youth justice field, in part, by facilitating significant policy and legislative reform through staffing the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC), a legislative body created in 2014 with an aim to evaluate and assess policies related to the juvenile justice system in Connecticut.



To strengthen the TJYI team, the Institute recently hired **Patrick Saley, as the JJPOC Project Coordinator** supporting the Senior Manager of Youth Justice Initiatives. Patrick is an accomplished professional who has devoted much of his career working with youth, including high school students, in helping them achieve their educational, professional, and personal goals. In his role as a JJPOC project coordinator, Patrick will be responsible for overall functioning of JJPOC subgroups and subcommittees by providing logistical and technical support. In addition, Patrick will facilitate research work by supporting TYJI researchers and scholars with an aim to develop and document research papers

and reports. Having earned a Master's Degree from Fairfield University in Public Administration with a dual concentration in Nonprofit Management and State and Local governments, and having worked with multiple educational and community organizations focusing on youth, Patrick brings a wealth of knowledge and multitasking competencies in this domain. Patrick's experience in database management and research, statistical analysis, and presentation will certainly be a very valuable asset to TYJI. He received his Bachelor's of Arts in History with a minor in Sociology from Gettysburg College. Patrick is a firm believer in the potential of all individuals, regardless of their life circumstances. He was legally blind until he was 25 and then transitioned to complete blindness. However, he never let this slow him down and now enjoys a very active life and is tremendously proud to be joining the Tow team.

To keep building upon its successes and pursue its mission of leading the way for juvenile justice reform through effective awareness and communication campaigns, the Institute recently expanded its team by bringing on board **Shauntaye Williams-Monroe as our Communications Project Coordinator**. Ms. Williams-Monroe will be supporting the Director of Development and Communications in her role of raising public awareness of TYJI's programs and projects. Ms. Williams-Monroe will lead projects to align communications strategies with TYJI's institutional development needs. Ms. Williams-Monroe brings a wealth of experience to effectively play the role of Communications Coordinator. Most recently, Ms. Williams-Monroe served as the Events & Communications Coordinator with the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce (GNHCC). In that role, she was responsible for writing and creating e-blasts and developing successful email marketing campaigns, as well as, managing their social media platforms. Prior to joining GNHCC, Ms. Williams-Monroe served at Middlesex Habitat for Humanity as their Marketing and Special Events Manager where, as the primary marketing contact, she led the integrated communications and marketing plans and public relations communications through her creative writing and designing skills. Ms. Williams-Monroe also brings to the position her rich experience in creating positive public opinion and enhancing brand awareness

Meet our Fall '21 Student Interns!

University of New Haven Students Contribute to the work of the Tow Youth Justice Institute

The primary hallmark of the University of New Haven is real-world learning. At the Tow Youth Justice Institute, hands-on experience forms a critical core of the entire Criminal Justice academic program. Along with the course work, students explore internship and experiential learning opportunities that gives them exposure to the real world and prepare them for their professional careers. It allows students to impact the community and discover solutions to demanding challenges. Interested students who become interns at the Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI) have various academic backgrounds, ranging from-criminal justice, criminology, sociology, forensic science, psychology, marketing, and communications - representing the multidisciplinary nature of the juvenile justice field.

A significant highlight of the Tow Institute's academic model is to engage students and develop valuable skills that expand their understanding of the practical issues of the field through its vigorous and prestigious internship and field experience. Our students get involved in every area of our work. **Jasmine Kaur, MS, Criminal Justice '23, Communications Intern**, had a chance to talk with a few of this year's TYJI students.

Samantha Tosto, 2nd year Ph.D. Criminal Justice candidate expressed, *"My fellowship at the Tow was largely motivated by my interest in police-community relations, racial and ethnic disparities research, and the opportunity to engage in applied, policy-oriented research and advocacy."* Samantha shared her aspirations to impact legislative and policy initiative influencing the juvenile justice system, *"I have wanted to intern at the TYJI because of the variety of opportunities that focus on prevention, training, and working with youth justice professionals who hope to make legislative change for the current issues youth may face."*

Students feel very positive and inspired by the opportunities to engage in experiential learning activities, aptly articulated by **Richard Concepcion**, MS Community Psychology, concentrating on Forensic Psychology, *"I wanted to intern at the TYJI because of the variety of opportunities that focus on prevention, training, and working with youth justice professionals who hope to make legislative change for the current issues youth may face. I have a passion for youth justice programming and coordinating projects at the organizational level. This internship will improve my collaboration skills to interact with others that work with youth and families, find ways to advocate for youth in the system appropriately, and educate myself on best practices."*

Students' contribution in the assessment and evaluation of the impact of criminal justice policies and programs sets the platform for innovative inventions by up-and-coming scholars in the field. **Paula Nwanna**, MS, Business Analytics, a member of the research team, expressed her interest. *"I have handled cases relating to young persons in the past and have seen the challenges young adults face. I have researched, offered, and implemented solutions for young persons to live the life they deserve. I am glad to be part of the TYJI to learn on a worldwide scale, offer my experience and be part of the change at the TYJI in Connecticut."* Tow creates an opportunity for the students to engage in the identification of the rifts and make subsequent amelioration in juvenile justice.

Ashley Price, Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice- Investigative Services 2022 candidate is a returning intern who expressed what her past internship experience has taught her. *"The internship allowed me to learn about policy reform and expanded my knowledge in the Juvenile Justice system. I had a feeling of community involvement while attending meetings, which helped me get a better understanding of TYJI."*

Research projects are a huge component of the work that students have the opportunity to perform. During this process, it allows them to delve into various policies and procedures outside of the scope of their studies. Returning intern **Kevis Canales** is in the process of completing his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, majoring in Forensic Psychology with a minor in Criminal Justice and has had first hand experience. *"The TYJI gives me the opportunity to research previous juvenile justice policies and observe how current offices are looking to reform said policies. While also enhancing my research skills."*

Exposing students to the work that TYJI staff members perform on a day-to-day basis allows them to hear different ideas, individual and organizational perspectives, processes and keeps interns up to date with the ever changing policies and procedures in the Juvenile Justice System. **Bionca Chambers** is in the process of completing her Bachelor of Science Degree, in National Security with a focus in Intelligence Analysis and she is a new intern at TYJI.

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Bionca says, *"I hope to gain a better understanding of the Juvenile Justice System in Connecticut and aide in ultimately eliminating the school prison pipeline. I am also interested in learning about the process of passing legislation to save at risk population. Attending meetings with members from every aspect of both the education and justice system has shown me how important collaboration is in this process."*

New Intern, **Jessica Ellis**, is also in the process of completing her Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice with a minor in Victim Services and is reaping the benefits of interacting with individuals working in this field. *"What I like about interning for the TYJI is the variety of workgroup meetings I attended where I was able to learn a lot of new things. I hope to gain more understanding of the JJPOC's work next semester and assist in more projects associated with juvenile justice reform."*

Acquiring knowledge of the Juvenile Justice System takes dedication, willingness, and openness. One of TYJI's new interns **Guylynne Joseph**, is working towards her Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in General Psychology and is eager and hopeful that her experience with TYJI will give her the knowledge she is looking for. Jessica Morgan, a PhD candidate in Criminal Justice has similar expectations. *"I hope to gain more experience with research, while also diving deeper into the actual issues children face in relation to the school-to-prison pipeline."*

Nikki Crimmins obtained her Master's Degree in Community Psychology and has completed her undergraduate degree at Fairfield University where she studied Sociology with a minor in Peace and Justice Studies. Nikki has hopes of gaining knowledge and experience that will help aide in the advancement of her career in Youth Justice. *"I look forward to meeting individuals who are currently integrated in the field of Juvenile Justice, as I have really been enjoying learning alongside the individuals in cohort 6."*

Interns are assigned to TYJI staff members from all departments. Staff meet with interns on a regular basis, where they are tasked with specific assignments based on their educational goals. They are provided with constructive feedback which allows them feel as much a part of the team as possible. **Madison Berhaupt**, who is currently an undergraduate student, studying Forensic Psychology, is a new intern this year and already feels that she is making progress. *"The job I was assigned to matched perfectly with my expectations. My goal was to form connections and network with individuals within my cohort and to lean about what the deficiency is in the Juvenile Justice System."*

Isabelle J. Hajek is a returning intern for TYJI and will be graduating next spring with a B.A in Psychology and minoring in Criminal Justice, Political Science and Sociology, and couldn't be more pleased with her experience. *"This position is a near perfect intersection of all of my areas of student, including a focus on juveniles in my research. In continuing with TYJI I hope to continue to build on the research and communication skills within the field while I am lucky enough to be actively working in an organization that is making a difference for juveniles via legislation and information dissemination."*

We are excited to welcome all of the 2021 – 2022 students that are working with us this year including:

Tarun Reddy Bantaram • Marianna Vasquez • Alayssa A. Mercing • Tiffany Brum • Nina Santoro • Jessica Morgan • Preetam Soni

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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