

Overview

Twenty-nine young adults with current or former juvenile justice experience joined the 2018 NJJA Conference on May 3, 2018, along-side nearly 400 professionals to learn. After taking in workshops, young people rallied to outline their challenge to the field in ensuring all youth have what they need to thrive. They started in small groups before blending their ideas into core themes and reached consensus on core needs for all youth in the juvenile justice system and challenges to juvenile justice professionals. On the final day of the conference, three representatives issued the below challenge to the whole conference. NJJA is committed to supporting this challenge in their efforts over the next year and in shaping the 2019 NJJA Conference.

The Challenge

All youth need...

- Equal representation
- Meaningful support and consistency (deeper connections)
- Connections to resources and job experiences
- Family connections
- Normalcy
- Trust and opportunity with responsibility
- Voice

We challenge all juvenile justice professionals to...

- Respect and treat us as individuals
- Never give up on us
- Know and learn from us by really listening
- Build deep and meaningful connections with us and stay connected

“We challenge NJJA to infuse stronger youth voice and responsibility into the conference.”

The Details

All youth need...

Normalcy

- Wear our own clothes — Play sports whenever*
- Freedom
- Able to have friends

Meaningful Support/Deeper Connections

- Support system that includes second chances*
- More support
- Guidance
- Be accepted
- Hugs, high-fives, and praise
- To be treated like a person who matters*
- Flexibility and understanding
- To ask for help without fear of always hearing “no”

All youth need... (continued)

Meaningful Support/Deeper Connections
(continued)

- To have SAFE people
- Love and relationships
- Friends
- Someone who cares
- Mentoring/a role model
- Respect

Trust & Opportunity With Responsibility

- A fresh start
- More opportunities
- More knowledge about adolescent development*
- To be shown and experience a different way of life
- To learn: "If you're humble, you'll never stumble."
- Be part of a leadership group

Voice

- More say in what happens (especially court)*
- A voice
- Control and decisions
- To be heard
- Communication

Connections To Resources/Jobs

- Access and knowledge of community support before leaving system*
- Competence
- Furthering their education
- Ways to relieve stress and develop coping skills
- Connect us to more financial help and jobs off campus*
- More trade programs
- Parenting class
- Help set goals
- Connect us to financial assistance for activities
- Connect youth with resources, support groups, jobs
- Connect therapist/rehabilitation

Family Connections

- Phone access
- More time to talk to family and have visits*
- Family
- A right to be placed with their child or active in their life

Equal Representation

- A lawyer
- To know their rights and the system lingo/definitions
- A right to counsel

Other

- No Curfew
- Safety
- Good Food*

NJJA 2019 Annual Conference

2018 Youth Day Call to Action

NJJA | Nebraska Juvenile
Justice Association

May 1-3, 2019 | Younes Conference Center Kearney, Nebraska

We Challenge All Juvenile Justice Professionals To...

Respect & Treat Us As Individuals

- Respect
- Be Fair (2)
- Not to be judgmental
- Understand every case is different
- Be open-minded
- Be creative with goals
- Fair treatment
- Don't judge us because of labels
- Keep youth's desires in plans
- Don't treat every youth the same
- Think outside of the box

Never Give Up On Us

- Stay connected and involved after leaving we leave the system (helping with college, home, job, family, etc.), build healthy relationships with youth*
- Caring
- Learn more about youth development
- Have patience
- Give youth time to adjust
- Encourage us!!!
- Responsibility
- Accountability
- Never give up on us!*

Know & Learn From Us By Really Listening

- Understanding*
- Dive deeper and listen (get to know us better)*
- Focus on strengths! Get to know me.
- Give youth a voice
- Listen (2)
- Learn from us (it's mutual kinship)*
- Understand

Other

- Take personal time for their personal life to unwind because it gets hard
- Respect the voice we have whether it be a right to counsel, thinking outside the box in our decision-making process, bring an active person into their journey and not just a meeting by breaking the barrier between youth and professionals.*
- More training (40 developmental assets)

** denotes an item that a small group voted as a top 3 suggestions.*

We challenge NJJA to

"I felt today there's a disconnect between the professionals and youth."

Other Thoughts

"It's clear that there is a lot more sex trafficking than I thought."

"Sex trafficking is more than just that, its force, coercion, and fraud."