New Resource - Now Available!

New Brief Describes a "Student First" Educational Approach for Justice Involved Youth

Education is a vital component of every young person's development toward adulthood and often is the key protective factor against a variety of disadvantages. Why, then, does it become a secondary consideration when a youth becomes justice-involved, a time when it might be most crucial? In "Student-First" Approach: A Paradigm Shift for Professionals Working with Children and Young People Involved with the Juvenile Justice System, Leigh Mahoney and John "Mick" Moore offer a critical view of the many ways that decision-making on educational issues, from placement and transitions to disability and discipline, can positively impact outcomes for youth who are justice-involved. This brief offers professionals a general overview and a reflective framework through which to view their own opportunities to consider these children and young people as "students first."

To access this brief, please visit our website!

Recent Events

Dual Status Youth Training Session Held During CWLA's National Conference
Co-presenters, Melissa Blom and Jessica Heldman, with RFK Children’s Action Corps CEO, Edward Kelley.

Director Jessica Heldman and RFK Dual Status Youth Practice Network member Melissa Blom presented a special session on Dual Status Youth. This session, one of the Child Welfare League’s Training Institute Sessions, provided participants with a full day of information and activities aimed at supporting them in initiating dual status youth reform in their jurisdictions. The child welfare system leaders and practitioners in attendance heard about the RFK National Resource Center’s pioneering Dual Status Youth Framework, and how Child Welfare Division Director Melissa Blom implemented this framework in her Wisconsin county.

The RFK National Resource Center is grateful for the partnership with CWLA that led to this fantastic opportunity to train child welfare professionals on how to help their young clients avoid the negative consequences of entry into the juvenile justice system.

Screening of I Am Jane Doe a Success

Approximately 50 people attended a community screening of the award-winning documentary, I Am Jane Doe, on April 10th in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Called “a gripping legal thriller” (Esquire); “a powerful call to action” (The Los Angeles Times); and "viscerally emotional" (The Washington Post), I AM JANE DOE chronicles the epic battle that several American mothers are waging on behalf of their middle-school daughters, victims of sex trafficking on Backpage.com, the classified advertising website that for years was part of the iconic Village Voice.

Several days prior to the screening, Backpage.com was seized and shut down by the FBI, a victory for these girls and others across the country.

The screening was preceded by comments from several members of the Hampden County Coalition to Identify & Prevent Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, who co-sponsored the event with RFK Children’s Action Corps and help explain the scope of CSEC locally. RFK Children’s Action Corps is grateful for the support of the American Legion Child
**On The Ground**

**Dual Status Youth Reform Efforts Advance in North Dakota**

On April 18-19, RFK National Resource Center staff and consultants conducted the fifth of six site visits to Bismarck, North Dakota as part of the statewide Dual Status Youth Initiative. This penultimate site visit provided the opportunity to explore the findings and recommendations produced by several hard-working subcommittees. The members of these subcommittees have dedicated extensive time and effort over the past year to better understanding North Dakota's dual status youth and to designing effective approaches to improving outcomes for them. The state is poised to realize significant success in addressing the myriad of needs of these vulnerable youth.

This most recent visit also provided the opportunity to share the developments related to the Initiative with the Lt. Governor of North Dakota, Brent Sanford and the Governor's General Counsel, Leslie Oliver. The work of the Dual Status Youth Initiative is well aligned with a number of the Governor's Strategic Initiatives. The North Dakota Dual Status Youth Initiative participants and the RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice are grateful that the Governor's Office is interested and supportive of this endeavor and we look forward to working together to achieve the best outcomes for this important population of North Dakota youth.

**Spreading Probation System Reform Efforts throughout the Country**

The RFK National Resource Center has recently concluded its Probation System Review projects in Clark County, Nevada and Lancaster County, Nebraska. The final reports of findings and recommendations in both jurisdictions were well received and supported new opportunities to enhance and install policies and practices that will accelerate these jurisdictions' paths to improved youth outcomes and system performance. We applaud the efforts of the multi-disciplinary leadership, probation staff and stakeholders in each jurisdiction as they partnered with our consultant team to make the review process meaningful and impactful. The RFK National Resource Center will be concluding its Probation System Review in Fairfax County, Virginia next month. We are optimistic that each of these efforts will lead to sustainable and improved probation and juvenile justice system performance and improved youth outcomes.

To learn more about our site-based work, please visit our [website](https://www.rfknrcjj.org)!
probation systems, and the use of a model framework to address the state and national laws and policies governing the exchange and sharing of data, information, and records for youth and families. To learn more about us and how we can serve your jurisdiction, please visit [www.rfknrcjj.org](http://www.rfknrcjj.org).

**Every Child Deserves a Childhood**

Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps is a private, non-profit licensed child welfare agency providing community-based services, education, foster care and adoption, residential treatment, and juvenile justice programming to individuals and families in crisis. Our programs are focused on helping children and adolescents deal with past hurts, develop self-esteem, and have a chance for a brighter future as contributing members of society. All that we do at RFK Children's Action Corps is based on the belief that every child deserves the chance to lead a happy, healthy, and productive life. For more information and to get involved, visit [www.rfkchildren.org](http://www.rfkchildren.org).