



Robert F. Kennedy
Children's Action Corps
 RFK National Resource Center
 for Juvenile Justice

RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice E-Newsletter

Message from Our Executive Director

The most recent extension of federal guidelines on social distancing and the increasing number of states promulgating "stay at home" mandates continue to impact our daily lives. During these incredibly challenging times for all of us, we wish to extend our heartfelt hopes and prayers to all of our colleagues and friends across the country. So much has been written, instructed, and stated to each of you and your families over the past two months; I simply wanted to offer a message on behalf of our staff, consultant partners, and Practice Network members of concern, hope, and optimism as we continue to confront this horrific COVID-19 pandemic.

While we have maintained interaction with our current jurisdictional partners via video conferencing, we have learned of the remarkable adaptability and continued pursuit of selfless commitment to our core missions to serve and assist vulnerable children, youth, and families across the country. For us, it has been inspiring to "virtually" witness this unceasing dedication. To that end, I wish to highlight the state and local jurisdictions with which we are currently partnering to provide ongoing, comprehensive technical assistance within projects or initiatives that warrant a special thank you:

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|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| * Clark County, Ohio | * King County, Washington |
| * Clark County, Nevada | * Knox County, Ohio |
| * Cobb County, Georgia | * Lancaster County, Nebraska |
| * Delaware - <i>Statewide</i> (CSEC) | * Lancaster County, |
| * Dutchess County, New York | Pennsylvania |
| * Fairfax County, Virginia | * Milwaukee County, Wisconsin |
| * Greene County, Missouri | * Santa Clara County, California |
| * Hennepin County, Minnesota | * Territory of Guam |

We have the privilege of working with outstanding professionals within each of these jurisdictions, some of whom are experiencing the most prolific challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic. Your positive efforts are inspiring to us all!

We extend our most sincere wishes that you, your families and the children, youth and families you serve all stay healthy. Our thoughts and prayers are with you!

Special Announcement

Christine Berbelis Joins Our Team of Expert Consultants

In the Media

North Dakota's Dual Status Youth Initiative, facilitated by the RFK National Resource Center, was recently featured in The Bismark Tribune. The following is an excerpt from the [article](#), authored by Jack Dura:

1 year in, North Dakota juvenile court/child welfare program looks to improve efforts

March 15, 2020

One year into a new North Dakota court program, collaborators say its areas of focus have become clearer for better serving youth and families involved in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems and for reducing referrals to juvenile court.

North Dakota's Dual Status Youth Initiative launched in January 2019. It was born from a yearlong study and recommendations in 2018 from the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile

We are delighted to welcome Christine Berbelis to our family of consultant partners! Ms. Berbelis is currently a senior attorney at Law Foundation of Silicon Valley's Legal Advocates for Children and Youth (LACY) program, in Santa Clara County, California. LACY serves as court appointed counsel for the minors in the dependency (child welfare) system. Ms. Berbelis is the lead attorney for her team and represents young adults including teenagers and non-minor dependents who are 18-21 years old. She also serves as the Dually Involved Youth (DIY) liaison for the LACY clients involved in both the juvenile justice and dependency systems.



Ms. Berbelis has over 13 years of experience spanning different states and including a diversity of roles within the juvenile justice and dependency systems. She began her commitment to serving young people, specifically youth involved with the juvenile justice system, while interning at the Stark County, Ohio Prosecutor's Office (Juvenile Division) as an undergraduate at The Ohio State University. While pursuing her law degree at the University of Akron, School of Law, Ms. Berbelis began volunteering as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) in Summit County. The relationships she built as a CASA subsequently resulted in her appointment to a position with the Summit County Juvenile Court; it was during this time that Ms. Berbelis was first introduced to the Dual Status Youth Initiative work at the RFK National Resource Center. Ms. Berbelis gained invaluable leadership and facilitation skills, as well as practical knowledge, while working with local stakeholders to coordinate the development and implementation of a process that addressed the unique needs of youth known to both the dependency and juvenile justice systems through cooperative agency and family involvement.

Ms. Berbelis relocated to California and launched her professional career in the state with the CASA organization in Santa Clara County. She maintained that position for three years. Ms. Berbelis transitioned to her current position at the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley where she has remained for the past four years. Ms. Berbelis primarily works one-on-one with youth and stakeholders on the front lines. This invaluable perspective, combined with her leadership, cross-system experience, and facilitation skills, informs her work as an Independent Consultant with the RFK National Resource Center.

To learn more about the RFK National Resource Center's staff and consulting team, please [visit our website!](#)

Justice to a group of state court, corrections and human services officials.

Last month, the initiative's Executive Committee met to review a third-party evaluator's critique of the program's first six months.

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[Click here](#) to read the rest of the article.

Support the RFK National Resource Center!

Your valued contribution directly supports the sustainability and expansion of the RFK National Resource Center's positive impact on children and families nationally. To make a donation, please [click here](#) and type in "RFK National Resource Center" in the "My donation is for a specific program" box. Thank you!

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About Us

Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, led by Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, uses proven models, frameworks, tools, resources and the best available research to serve local, state, and national leaders, practitioners and youth-serving agencies to improve system performance and outcomes for youth involved

with the juvenile justice system. RFK National Resource Center focuses primarily on youth with prior or current involvement in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (dual status youth), the review and improvement of juvenile 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.

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.