

Serving Children & Families Nationwide



To say 2020 has been a “unique year” would be an understatement. Unfortunately, this year has brought hardship and tragedy to far too many communities throughout the country. However, while we remain physically distanced, we also continue to find ways to support and care for one another.

The RFK National Resource Center is honored to have the opportunity to view the country through the lens of numerous state and local jurisdictions. As we serve more and more communities, both virtually and – when possible – on the ground, we are humbled by the unwavering dedication of the leadership and workforce who serve children and families. A global pandemic certainly has not diminished the importance of serving and improving outcomes for at-risk youth. If anything, it has opened doors for more collaborative partnerships and innovative practices to decrease recidivism and increase positive youth outcomes.

In 2020, the RFK National Resource Center team has spanned the country, from Poughkeepsie, New York to Las Vegas, Nevada and Atlanta, Georgia to Seattle, Washington – and many stops in between! To date, through the delivery of trainings, technical assistance, and consultation to promote sustainable system enhancement and practice, the RFK National Resource Center has impacted more than 140,000 youth who have come into contact with the juvenile justice systems in more than 60 state and local communities nationwide.

We encourage you to visit our website and [contact us](#) to learn more about the work of the RFK National Resource Center. Also, by supporting the RFK National Resource Center, you help expand our reach and make a positive impact on more children and families throughout the country.

[Donate Now!](#)

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!

On the Ground

U.S. State Department Supports International Program Officers in Juvenile Justice Education

On December 3, Executive Director John Tuell and Associate Executive Director Kari Harp will participate in a virtual training to provide Program Officers with the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Affairs stationed around the world with information about the importance of adolescent development and youth justice best practices. The webinar will educate INL Program Officers in embassies worldwide on the differences between adolescents and adults, with encouragement that their representative countries review their youth justice system, policies, and approaches for opportunities to align with research findings about positive youth development, reductions in recidivism, and community safety.

Milwaukee Embarks on Alternative Response Initiative

Coming Soon!

The RFK National Resource Center will soon be announcing a unique, new partnership that will enhance our opportunity to positively impact the youth justice system and the youth and families we serve throughout the country and around the globe. **Stay Tuned!**

Update from Our DSY Practice Network



Judge Geoffrey Gaither Appointed to the Marion County Superior Court

On November 10, the Governor of Indiana, Eric Holcomb, announced his three appointments to the Marion County Superior Courts, including an esteemed member of our DSY Practice Network, the Honorable Geoffrey Gaither. Judge Gaither is a senior magistrate with the Marion Superior Courts, Juvenile Division, where he has served since 1995. Prior to becoming a magistrate, Judge Gaither was a Marion County deputy prosecutor, deputy public defender and was in private practice. Gaither is also a former adjunct professor at IUPUI and Martin University. Gaither has devoted the past 25 years to being a youth mentor and motivational speaker, often developing and spearheading conferences for minority youth.

It is great pleasure to share with you the beginning of our work with Milwaukee supporting the development of a robust system of alternative responses for the youth in their County. Under the leadership of Judge Ellen Brostrom, with the Milwaukee County Circuit Court, along with a multi-disciplinary team of committed leaders representing the Division of Youth and Family Services (including juvenile probation), the Milwaukee Police Department, Children's Court, the District Attorney's Office and the Public Defender's Office, schools and community providers, will be undertaking an analysis of the youth offender population in Milwaukee County and the current referral, filing, and alternative measures available to their low- and moderate-risk youth. RFK National Resource Center consultants will guide this team in the creation of a robust safety net of community-based and early system approaches that will enhance and develop equitable, sustainable, and measurable methods for improving recidivism – and other positive youth outcomes – for the young people of Milwaukee, who would be better served outside of formal court-ordered supervision. We applaud Judge Brostrom and Milwaukee's youth-serving leadership for embarking on this journey of system improvement.

Statewide Probation and Juvenile Justice System Review Announced in Nebraska

We are proud to announce a new partnership with the Nebraska Office of Probation Administration (NE OPA) made possible by the October 2020 grant award from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. We offer congratulations to the NE OPA for their competitive selection and their leadership to achieve system enhancements and improved probation practice across the state that will result from this three-year grant. The RFK National Resource Center will use the technical assistance framework detailed in the [Probation System Review Guidebook, 3rd Edition](#) (Tuell and Harp, 2019) to guide the conduct of the review and analysis during the first year of the grant, and then apply the principles and tenets of implementation science to support effective application of adopted recommendations that result from the Probation System Review Final Report. We are confident that our technical assistance and consultation, which has produced positive change and impact on youth outcomes in more than 40 state and local jurisdictions nationwide, will support the experienced and committed leadership of the NE OPA in producing positive results across Nebraska.

Dual Status Youth Technical Assistance Initiative Launched in the state of South Dakota

We are pleased to announce a new partnership with the South Dakota Unified Judicial System to provide intensive Dual Status Youth technical assistance that will launch in December 2020. This training and technical assistance initiative will follow the framework outlined in the [Dual Status Youth Technical Assistance Workbook](#) and engage key leadership and practitioners from court administration, the judiciary, children and youth services, and juvenile probation to shape a best-practice approach to serving multi-system involved youth and their families. The Unified Judicial System in the State, along with an impressive array of agency and community leaders, will partner with the expertise of the RFK National Resource Center consultant team to develop procedures, protocols, and policies to coordinate multi-system responses to positively impact their selected target population of dual status youth across the state. With the committed leadership, experience, and expertise of social workers, probation officers, attorneys for youth, families, and the youth themselves, we believe there will be an exciting outcome from this Dual Status Youth statewide initiative.

Please contact John A. Tuell, Executive Director (jtuell@rfkchildren.org) or Kari L. Harp, Associate Executive Director (kharp@rfkchildren.org) to learn how the RFK National Resource Center can serve your community!

From the Field

JusticeEd – Year One Progress Report

The National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) launched the JusticeEd Initiative in Santa Clara County, California, in collaboration with a coalition of committed partners. The JusticeEd Initiative is designed to support deep partnerships with students who are involved in the juvenile probation system, and their families. This initiative, modeled after NCYL's Compassionate Systems framework, strives to provide these students with:

- Effective education champions – preferably caregivers – who are informed, knowledgeable, empowered, and active in support of their student's education;
- A well-coordinated team of professionals across multiple systems working in concert with each student's family and support network; and,
- An education plan that is centered around their strengths, needs, and goals for the future.

NCYL's newly released JusticeEd Year One Progress Report highlights

Please join us in congratulating Judge Gaither!

Visit Our Online Resource Library!

All of our publications and tools are made available on our website to support jurisdictions undertaking reform, with or without technical assistance. Our Online Resource Library is designed to provide a user-friendly experience for accessing our practical and informative resources, as well as presentations and materials from our events.

To access all of our resources, please visit: rfknrcjj.org/resources

significant progress towards achieving these goals. In the first year, the JusticeEd Initiative provided support to 58 students and families across 11 school districts by helping them achieve goals across a variety of areas, including raising grades, passing courses, and improving communication with educators. In addition, critical partnerships with Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation and school districts provide much-needed assessments, referrals, resources, and improved lines of communication to serve students and their families.

To access the full report, please visit:

<https://youthlaw.org/publication/justiceed-year-one-progress-report/>.

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.

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