

CAMPAIGN FOR
YOUTH JUSTICE

BECAUSE THE CONSEQUENCES AREN'T MINOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COMMUNITY LEADERS AND YOUTH PRESENT JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM
RECOMMENDATIONS TO D.C. POLICY LEADERS AT ROUNDTABLE**

Washington, D.C. – Today, more than 50 community leaders and youth participated in a juvenile justice reform roundtable, held at New Beginnings Youth Development Center, formerly known as the Oak Hill Youth Center. These organizations developed recommendations to discuss with a prominent panel, such as racial disparities, transfer of youth to adult court, community based alternatives to incarceration, and institutional care. The roundtable was kicked off by the Honorable Eugene Hamilton, former Chief Judge of the D.C. Superior Court and Co-chair of the Blue Ribbon Commission. Other expert panelists included D.C Councilman Tommy Wells, Chair of the Human Services Committee, and Vincent Schiraldi, Director of the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS). Shani O’Neal, Director of Justice for DC Youth (JDCY), facilitated the discussion. The event was hosted by the Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ) and Justice for DC Youth.

Earlier this month, community members and organizations representing all Wards of the District of Columbia, including currently and formerly incarcerated youth and parents who have been directly affected by the juvenile justice system, participated in a strategy meeting to identify and prioritize key “next steps” for juvenile justice reform in the District of Columbia, building off the Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Juvenile Justice issued in 2001, <https://digitalcommons.georgetown.edu/blogs/oakhill/documents-and-resources/blue-ribbon-commission/>.

“These strategy sessions have been so valuable to every stakeholder in the room,” said Eduardo Ferrer, Executive Director of D.C. Lawyers for Youth. “It’s important that we make our concerns known to policy makers, so our children are treated with respect and given the tools they need to become successful adults in the community.”

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Over two dozen community-based organizations participated including The Alliance of Concerned Men, Beyond Vision, Inc., The Brotherhood/Sister Sol, COINNS, the Council for Court Excellence, DC Lawyers for Youth, DC Prisoners Project, Earth Conservation Corps, Educational Alliance Corporation, Empowerment Center, Equal Justice Works, Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative, Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop, Georgetown University, Growing On, Healthy Families / Thriving Communities Collaborative Council, KidsPeace, Justice for DC Youth, Latin American Youth Center, Mentoring Today, Offender Aid and Restoration, Parent Watch, Sasha Bruce Youthwork, See Forever / Maya Angelou, Youth Advocate Program, Youth Education Alliance, and Youth Village.

Additionally, several national organizations sent representatives such as the Sentencing Project and the Justice Policy Institute. A number of juvenile and criminal justice system stakeholders provided support and guidance including the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, the DC Department of Corrections, the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and the U.S. Department of Justice.

JDCY's mission is to shift the city's priorities from incarceration to education and works with youth who are disproportionately affected by crime and the criminal justice system. JDCY manages a youth leadership and mentoring program at New Beginnings and is the first youth advocacy organization to have an office inside a juvenile correctional facility.

The Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ) is a national organization dedicated to ending the practice of trying, sentencing and incarcerating youth under the age of 18 in the adult criminal justice system.

**For more information, visit www.campaignforyouthjustice.org
or e-mail Eric Solomon at esolomon@cfyj.org.**

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