

## EMPOWERING YOUTH, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES: ADVOCATING FOR JUSTICE AND EDUCATION



### CFCC WELCOMES MELVIN ROY

### MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

We are excited to announce that Melvin Roy joined CFCC as a marketing and communications consultant in October 2024. Roy's collaboration with the team has created powerful and informative content to assist with the development and implementation of CFCC's marketing, outreach and publication initiatives. Roy joined CFCC from Prolegis, an organization that informs policymakers and empowers citizens to improve democracy; has held an internship with California's (former) Rep. Karen Bass (DCA-37th) and the House Democratic Caucus; and, currently serves his community as, a representative on the Virginia State Executive Council on Children's Services, a member of the Board of Directors for United Methodist Family Services and, an Advisory Board Member for Tidewater Friends of Foster Care and Connect Our Kids. Roy received a B.S. in Human Services from Old Dominion University in Virginia.

#### In This Issue:

- CFCC Welcomes Melvin Roy
- TCAP'S New Middle School Model
- CFCC Student Fellows Highlight
- CFCC In the Spotlight
- Upcoming at CFCC
- In Case You Missed It



### Social Media Spotlight

Stay up to date with CFCC's latest initiatives, events, and advocacy efforts by following us on social media! We're dedicated to engaging our community and amplifying the impact of our work supporting children, families, and the courts.

Join the conversation, share our mission, and help us create meaningful change. Follow, like, and engage with our latest posts today! #CFCCImpact #FamiliesFirst

### Introducing TCAP's New Middle School Model

CFCC's Tackling Chronic Absenteeism Project (TCAP) has launched a new Middle School Model to better support students navigating Baltimore City's School Choice process. Through collaboration with Baltimore City Public Schools and legal professionals, TCAP designed a curriculum that equips students with essential skills in academic planning, healthy relationships, mindfulness, civic engagement, and financial literacy. This school year, TCAP is serving approximately 60 sixth graders across four schools, helping them build a strong foundation for high school success.

In Fall 2024, TCAP facilitated workshops on academic success, civic engagement, relationship health, and stress management, partnering with experts from MONSE, the One Love Foundation, and UBalt Law.

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## Meet CFCC's Student Fellows: Sophie Alpert and Bano Syed

Sophie Alpert



Sophie Alpert, a 3L at the University of Baltimore School of Law, is in her third semester as a CFCC student fellow. She was drawn to CFCC's mission of uplifting children and families through community engagement and applied as soon as she learned about the opportunity. With a background in psychology and family science from the University of Maryland, College Park, Sophie has long been passionate about supporting children and families, particularly during critical developmental periods.

Before becoming a fellow, Sophie worked with CFCC's Tackling Chronic Absenteeism Program (TCAP) as a student tutor, witnessing firsthand how the program addresses the root causes of absenteeism. As a fellow, she has led workshops on mindfulness and civic advocacy for Baltimore youth and is currently developing a new session on bullying and cyber safety.

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### YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR TCAP FAMILIES

Many of our TCAP families are food insecure and rely on the free breakfast and lunch that is provided at every City School. For the last two years, we have been providing Spring Break Food Baskets to these families, as a resource when the free meals are not available. This past Spring, we hosted a bake sale to raise funds to support our Spring Break Food Basket project, as well as any other items a family may require (e.g., alarm clocks, school uniforms, warm clothing). If you would like to donate to our TCAP Fund, kindly click on the link.

Bano Syed



Bano Syed, a 2L at the University of Baltimore School of Law, brings a deep passion for advocating for children and families. With a background in marketing from the University of Maryland, College Park, Bano's journey into law was shaped by her volunteer work with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program and her service with AmeriCorps' City Year in Washington, D.C. These experiences exposed her to the systemic barriers children face, from foster care transitions to educational inequities, ultimately inspiring her to pursue a legal career focused on justice and advocacy.

As a CFCC Student Fellow, Bano is eager to contribute to the Center's mission by working with the Tackling Chronic Absenteeism Project (TCAP) to support Baltimore students. She hopes to gain more legal experience this summer in family law, juvenile justice, or immigration law. Grateful for the opportunity to be part of CFCC, Bano looks forward to using her skills to promote fairness and equity for children and families.

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## CFCC in the Spotlight

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The Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children, and the Courts (CFCC) has been actively engaged in advocacy, education, and community support over the past few months. On November 7, TCAP held its semiannual bake sale, raising funds to support Baltimore City students and their families. Later that month, CFCC leadership, including Executive Director Aubrey Edwards-Luce and Christopher Kelly, attended the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency & Prevention's [National Conference on Youth Justice](#) in Washington, DC. December was a busy month, with Edwards-Luce participating in the [State Policy Advocacy and Reform Center's Annual Convening](#) at the Annie E. Casey Foundation and presenting on truancy prevention at a career talk in Baltimore. Additionally, CFCC's work was highlighted in the [Baltimore Sun](#) by Michele Hong, emphasizing TCAP's non-punitive approach to addressing absenteeism. Professor Trivedi also brought CFCC's expertise to a broader audience through the [EPPIC broadcast podcast](#), where she discussed necessary reforms in the child welfare system.

In early 2025, CFCC continued its commitment to education and advocacy. Trivedi presented at the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) Annual Meeting in San Francisco on teaching Parent, Child, and the State. On January 15, CFCC co-hosted a virtual Bill Briefing and Testimony Workshop on key school discipline reform bills, followed by Edwards-Luce's testimony opposing HB 68 and HB 137. CFCC also participated in a law school teach-in on the impact of the new presidential administration on juvenile justice and child welfare. To further raise awareness of systemic inequities, TCAP staff attended a screening of *Stamped from the Beginning* on January 25, underscoring the racial and ethnic disparities in the youth legal system. CFCC remains steadfast in its mission to advocate for children and families while shaping policies that create lasting change.

[Read more about CFCC in the Spotlight...](#)

## Upcoming at CFCC



February 2025

Join us on February 6, 2025, for the virtual CWARE "Know Your Rights" Toolkit Release Party!

This event will showcase CFCC's latest resource designed to empower youth and families with critical legal knowledge. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about the toolkit and how it can support advocacy and legal education. Stay tuned for details on how to participate.

[More upcoming at CFCC.](#)

## ICYMI

In Case You Missed it

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**Fall 2024** - CFCC's Tackling Chronic Absenteeism Program was featured in an article in The University of Baltimore Magazine. The article, "Tackling Chronic Absenteeism - One Layer at a Time," by Maddie Wells, highlighted how TCAP helps young people in Baltimore to thrive without court system involvement.

**Fall 2024** - CFCC's 2024 Symposium, *Keeping Youth in Community: Policies, Practices, and Programs to Promote Youth Justice*, brought together advocates, experts and youth to discuss community-centered approaches to youth justice. Each panel examined how communities can prevent system involvement, support youth during active cases, and aid reentry.

[More you may have missed.](#)

# Resources for You



## [Explore CFCC's Youth Justice Action Month initiatives in our 2024 Symposium Fact Sheet.](#)

This resource highlights the impact of community engagement in reducing youth legal system involvement, insights into the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), and current trends in youth justice reform.

Access essential data, successful strategies, and ways to support ongoing efforts.

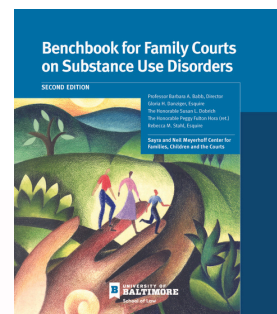


## **For Families: CFCC's Community Resource Guides**

Recognizing that families living in poverty are at greatest risk of involvement with the child welfare system and/or criminal legal system, CFCC publishes comprehensive guides to community-based resources offering help with issues that often lead to family separation through the foster care system or parental incarceration.

## [Access and download our Community Resource Guides.](#)

**Does your organization provide services** for low-income or other marginalized members of our community? Email us with information on your organization at [cfcc@ubalt.edu](mailto:cfcc@ubalt.edu).



## **CFCC's Benchbook for Family Courts on Substance Use Disorders – Second Edition**

provides valuable insight into the science of addiction, the treatment of substance use disorders (SUDs), how SUDs affect children and families in many family law cases, and how family courts can intervene in ways that lead to better outcomes. The good news is that with a recognized neurobiological basis for substance use disorders, there is potential for recovery. Evidence-based interventions can prevent harmful substance use and related problems, and the courts have considerable power to influence individuals suffering from these disorders.

**The Benchbook for Family Courts on Substance Use Disorders is available for \$29 as an e-book or PDF. [Download your order form.](#)**

## About CFCC

The Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts (CFCC) supports families, communities and the justice system to improve the lives of children and families and to strengthen communities.

**LEARN MORE**

