

BUILDING BRIDGES: COMMUNITY-CENTERED SOLUTIONS FOR YOUTH JUSTICE



CFCC 2024 SYMPOSIUM RECAP

By: Aubrey Edwards-Luce

The 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.

Highlighted was the "Your Voice Matters" youth poetry showcase, reminding attendees of the powerful role of humanity and community in rehabilitation—a core goal of youth justice reform.

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Poetry Showcase Reflection



Arion Alston shares his personal reflection on the poetry showcase.

"Working with middle school students and young adults for the Art and Poetry Showcase was a considerably rewarding and educational experience for me. The five students I coached were diligent and enthusiastic, showing an incredible ensemble spirit with their peers." [Continue Reading...](#)

Panel Discussion on how the Community is the Key to Preventing Youth Legal System Involvement

Opening with panel one, "*The Community is the Key to Preventing Youth Legal System Involvement*," panelists emphasized the importance of community engagement to prevent youth from entering the legal system.

Moderated by Kimberly Martin, the panel featured experts like Robert Bizzell, Robin Campbell, Elyzah Johnson, and Nate Balis, who highlighted that lacking support can lead to mental health challenges and legal trouble. Programs promoting positive activities, like sports and arts, were seen as essential preventive measures. [Continue Reading...](#)



From left: Nate Balis, Elyzah Johnson and Kimberly Martin.

Symposium Panel Highlights



From left, Alice Wilkerson and Judge Charles Blomquist.

During Panel Two, moderated by Alice Wilkerson, executive director of Advance Maryland, panelists shared their insights on “Promoting Community Bonds During Legal Proceedings.”

Kicking off the panel, Hon. Charles Blomquist, reminded us that whenever we are thinking about best practices, we need to remember that we are “dealing with individual kids, children who have names, and not a collective.” [Continue reading...](#)

Bolstering Connection to Community During the Reentry Phase



From left, James Dold, Kelly Quinn, Eduardo Ferrer, Lisa Garry, and Heather Warnken.

The third panel of CFCC’s 2024 symposium, “Bolstering Connection to Community During the Reentry Phase,” featured Eduardo Ferrer of Georgetown Law moderating an insightful discussion on strengthening community ties to aid youth reentry. Panelists included leaders in youth advocacy, such as James Dold of Human Rights for Kids, Lisa Garry of Maryland’s Department of Juvenile Services, Kelly Quinn from UMBC’s Choice Program, and Heather Warnken of UBalt Law’s Center for Criminal Justice Reform.

Ferrer opened by emphasizing that community support is crucial at every phase of youth justice. Highlighting the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on justice-involved youth, Ferrer urged investment in community-driven solutions over systemic responses. Panelists discussed innovative strategies, from DJS’s youth-centered assessments to the Choice Program’s shift from surveillance to mentorship. They agreed on the need for relationships and local support to facilitate meaningful reentry.

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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.



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CFCC in the Spotlight

This fall has been a remarkable season for CFCC, showcasing dedication to family support, youth justice, and legal advocacy. On August 13th, our executive director, Aubrey Edwards-Luce, received the prestigious 2024 *Outstanding Legal Advocate Award from the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC)* in recognition of her impactful work in advancing children’s rights and family well-being.

On October 24, CFCC and UBalt Law’s Admissions team, in partnership with Markus Trent, welcomed students from Western High and the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women for a campus visit. The students heard from state Sen. Jill P. Carter, who inspired them to pursue justice, reminding them of the importance of advocating for change across all career paths.

Continuing her work to promote family-centered approaches, Shanta Trivedi, assistant professor of law and faculty director of CFCC, delivered the keynote “*How Family Policing Harms Parents and Why it Matters*” at the 2024 International Virtual Conference on October 7. She later led a training for the D.C. Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect, underscoring the need for reform in family welfare policies.

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



Executive Director, Aubrey Edwards-Luce receiving NACC Award.



CFCC & UBALT Law hosting Western High and Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women.

Upcoming at CFCC



Fall 2024

Stay tuned for what’s coming from CFCC over the next two months! In October 2024, CFCC held its annual Symposium, bringing together a multidisciplinary panel of professionals and experts with lived experience to address critical, emerging challenges facing children, families, and communities. This year’s discussions explored how innovative, community-based supports can prevent initial or repeat involvement in the youth legal system. Planning is already underway for what’s next—so keep an eye out for more updates and initiatives from CFCC!

[More upcoming at CFCC.](#)

ICYMI

In Case You Missed it

May 17, 2024 - Trivedi presented “*A Legal and Social Science Framework for Considering the Harm of Removal,*” at the Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect in Washington, D.C., furthering the conversation on the harmful effects of family separation.

June 17, 2024 - CFCC Faculty Director Shanta Trivedi presented “*Am I Still a Parent? The Devastating Effects of Family Policing on Parents*” at the Family Law Scholars and Teachers Conference in Baltimore, MD.

[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.

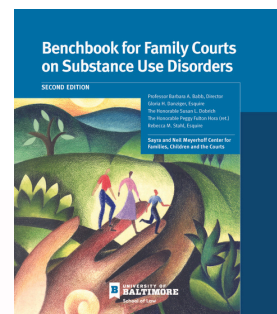


For Families: CFCC's Community Resource Guides

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.



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.

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