

January 2005

# YTFG Newsletter

## YTFG Updates

**YTFG Welcomes New Co-Chair Gary Stangler.** The Youth Transition Funders Group is delighted to announce that Gary Stangler has agreed to become the co-chair of the YTFG Steering Committee with Chris Sturgis. Gary heads the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, brings a wealth of experience in programs, policy, research, and media work, and has been a leader in YTFG and the Steering Committee. Michael Wald has stepped down as co-chair but we are pleased that he will continue to be a member of the Steering Committee.

**Farewell to Lorne Needle.** For the last year Lorne Needle has served as consultant to YTFG. Lorne has accepted a position as vice president at the Youth Leadership Institute, which is based in San Francisco and engages young people in making policy change, prevention, and philanthropy. Lorne thanks YTFG for the opportunity to work with the group and for the pleasure it has been to collaborate with YTFG members. Lisa McGill replaces Lorne as director of YTFG.

## Recent YTFG meeting

Volume 2, Number 1

## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:

- YTFG Updates
- Foundations Target Dropout Crisis
- The Re-Entry Policy Council Releases New Report
- YTFG Co-Chair Releases New Book on Foster Youth
- CCFY Crafts New Connections for Youth in Transition
- YTFG Upcoming Meetings Are Scheduled
- Legislation in the News

## Out-of-School/Struggling Youth

- **Foundations Target Dropout Crisis.** On January 12th, YTFG announced grants to enable five cities to strengthen their strategies for reducing the numbers of young people who drop out and reconnecting those who have left school. The grants will also address race and class inequities related to this trend within the grantees' education systems and gain national visibility for this important work. Three major funders are putting a total of \$2 million dollars to this YTFG Initiative to support local efforts to combat the silent crisis of too many students dropping out of high school. Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Portland (OR), and San Jose (CA) will receive grants of \$275,000 each from the Initiative to support struggling students and out-of-school youth. Background information on the dropout crisis and the Initiative is available online at <http://www.jff.org/jff/newsroom>.

- **Race Disparities and the Achievement Gap Highlighted in Recent Essay.** A recent essay from the American School Board Journal, "Class and the Classroom: Even the Best Schools Can't Close the Race Achievement Gap (Fall 2004)," looks at various dimensions of how disparities between students of color and white students surface in schools. The writer considers how much the quality of the school, in contrast to other influences, affects the achievement of young people of color. Available at <http://www.asbj.com/2004/10/1004coverstory.html>.

- **President Bush Announces Focus on High School**

**in Tampa, Florida, November 10-11, 2004.** YTFG held its fall meeting in Tampa, Florida, where the action group of approximately 30 funders met to discuss ground implementation of work group strategies, YTFG's emerging policy agenda, and plans for 2005. The Eckerd Family Foundation graciously hosted the dinner reception.

## YTFG 2005 Upcoming Meetings

**May Meeting scheduled for San Francisco.** The May meeting will include an evening dinner on Tuesday, May 10th, and an action group session on Wednesday, May 11th, in San Francisco, California.

**November Meeting scheduled for Washington, DC.** The November meeting will include an evening dinner on Wednesday, November 16th, and an action group session on Thursday, November 17th. Please mark your calendars!

[Back to top](#)

## NLC Action Kits Are Still Available!

The National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families finished its action kit for local governments in 2004, and the kit does an outstanding job at integrating issues around vulnerable youth. The action kit is available on the NLC website at [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).

[Back to top](#)

- **President Bush Announces Focus on High School Initiative.** In January, President Bush announced plans to expand the No Child Left Behind program to include reading and math tests in the 9th, 10th and 11th grades. For a copy of President Bush's speech, go online to <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050112-5.html>.

[Back to top](#)

## Juvenile Justice

- **States Are Attempting to Address Juvenile Justice Systems.** According to the Center for Policy Alternatives, several states are adopting various bills to address key problems with the juvenile justice system. The Center reports that North Dakota and New Mexico have made reforms in juvenile detention, and that Louisiana, Maryland and Virginia "protected juveniles' rights to counsel" last year. The Center notes that at least "45 states need to repair the system of juvenile transfers to the adult corrections system." For more info, go to <http://www.stateaction.org/publications/policynews/12-04.htm>.
- **The Re-Entry Policy Council Releases New Report.** Each year, nearly 650,000 people are released from U.S. prisons, and over 7 million are released from jails; the vast majority will be rearrested within 3 years. In its new report, *Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council*, the Re-Entry Policy Council offers hundreds of consensus-based, bipartisan recommendations for reducing public spending and increasing public safety by promoting the safe and successful return of these individuals to the community. For more information on and to download the report, visit [www.reentrypolicy.org](http://www.reentrypolicy.org).

## Foster Youth

- **Chapin Hall Conference Call on Youth in Out-of-Home Care Draws 140 Participants.** Connect for Kids, with support from YTFG, held a conference call on December 2, 2004, to brief stakeholders on findings from the Chapin Hall study on the education of youth in out-of-home care. Mark Courtney, director of Chapin Hall and one of the principal investigators of the study, presented a review of the research and some policy implications. Over 140 people signed up for the call, including assistant attorney generals, congressional staff, and advocates across the country. The study can be found on the Chapin Hall website at [www.chapinhall.org](http://www.chapinhall.org).
- **YTFG Co-chair Releases New Book on Foster Youth .** Gary Stangler, with journalist Martha Shirk, recently released *On Their Own: What Happens to Kids When They Age Out of*

[Back to top](#)

## Legislation in the News

### The National Conference on State Legislatures

recently released a summary of state by state legislative developments in foster care and child welfare. The summary includes updates on laws affecting youth in transition, and the education of foster youth. This summary is entitled *State Child Welfare Legislation 2002-2003*. It is available online at [www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org).

In November 2004, the **United States Government Accountability Office** published a report on Chafee, entitled *Foster Youth: HHS Actions Could Improve Coordination of Services and Monitoring of States' Independent Living Programs*. The report is available in PDF online at [www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov).

[Back to top](#)

*On Their Own: What Happens to Kids When They Age Out of the Foster Care System* in the fall of 2004. The publisher of the book is Westview Press in Boulder, Colorado. For more information, visit [www.perseusbooksgroup.com](http://www.perseusbooksgroup.com).

[Back to top](#)

## Cross-Cutting Issues



### CCFY Crafts New Connections for Youth in Transition.

Just prior to the Council on Foundations' Fall Conference for Community Foundations last October, the Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth held a workshop about promising practices to reconnect vulnerable youth. Sixty people attended from 36 community foundations, including three new ones in Mexico. Participants heard from Akilah Watkins, Program Officer at the Greater Atlanta

Community Foundation, and a young person on their youth advisory board about the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. There was great interest in the Youth Opportunity Passports and IDAs that are central to the Initiative. Mike Finley of the W. Haywood Burns Institute and Mike Howe, President of the East Bay Community Foundation, talked about their work to reduce racial disparities in juvenile justice and Ed Hatcher, President of the Hatcher Group, a public policy and communications firm, discussed strategies designed to communicate the needs of youth in transition to the larger public and to policymakers. Chris Sturgis, Co-chair of YTFG, presented a framework for taking action on issues concerning youth in transition. For more information about the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative go to [www.jimcaseyyouth.org](http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org). For more information about CCFY go to [www.ccfy.org](http://www.ccfy.org) or call Becky Hornbeck at 800-292-6149 ext 610.

### Juvenile Law Center partners with Education Law Center (PA).

The Juvenile Law Center is working with the Education Law Center in Pennsylvania to ensure quality education for children exiting the juvenile justice system. Through the Model Systems Project, funded by the MacArthur Foundation, the partnership is devoting special attention to reforming Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system so that returning youth are quickly readmitted to school as a key to successful rehabilitation. For more information, go to [www.jlc.org](http://www.jlc.org).

[Back to top](#)

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0525.pdf>  
<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/childlegislation.pdf>  
<http://www.nlc.org/content/Files/IYEF-Action%20Kit-DY%20Youth.pdf>

The YTFG Newsletter is a monthly e-newsletter published by the Youth Transition Funders Group. For more information, contact Lisa McGill at [lmcgill@ytfg.org](mailto:lmcgill@ytfg.org).

Unsubscribe to [lmcgill@ytfg.org](mailto:lmcgill@ytfg.org) | [www.youthtransitions.org](http://www.youthtransitions.org)