

VOICES FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE CONFERENCE 2024

3RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 18, 2024 | 9:00AM-4:30PM

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY

WWW.V4JJ.ORG



CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

9:00AM-9:30AM REGISTRATION & COFFEE

9:30AM-9:45AM WELCOME

9:45AM-10:45AM KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

11:00AM-12:15PM

ROUNDTABLE 1

**IDENTIFYING AND NAVIGATING
GENERATIONAL TRAUMA WITH RESTORATIVE
JUSTICE**

ROUNDTABLE 2

**EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS:
UNDERSTANDING THE INTERSECTIONS FOR
JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH**

12:30PM-1:20PM LUNCH BY CAFÉ MOMENTUM

1:30PM-3:00PM ARTISTIC PRESENTATIONS

2:00PM-3:00PM

**ART WORKSHOP: TELLING OUR
STORIES: ART AS SOCIAL ADVOCACY**

ROUNDTABLE 3

**BE THE CHANGE: LEGISLATIVE UPDATES
AND LETTER-WRITING ACTION WORKSHOP
FOR ALLEGHENY COUNTY JAIL (ACJ) YOUTH**

SLAM POETRY WORKSHOP

3:15PM-4:30PM

ROUNDTABLE 4

**INTERVENTIONS: PRE-DIVERSION AND
DIVERSION PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT YOUTH**

ROUNDTABLE 5

**ANOTHER APP? HOW ONE APP HAS CHANGED
SERVICE DELIVERY TO YOUTH IN NEED**

ROUNDTABLE 6

NARCAN AND HARM REDUCTION

DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

9:30AM-10:45AM

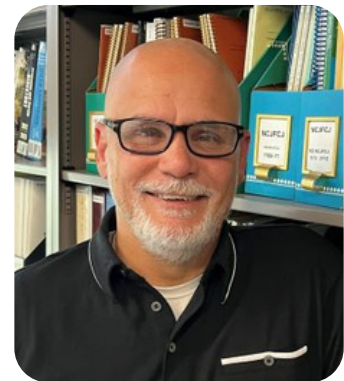
WELCOME AND KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Charles (Chaz) Puzzanchera, Senior Research Associate, National Center for Juvenile Justice

Ray Miles, Allegheny County Reintegration Expert and Workforce Development Specialist

Introduction by Alida Merlo and Walter Harris

Chaz Puzzanchera joined the National Center for Juvenile Justice in 1998. He currently serves as project director of the National Juvenile Court Data Archive (Archive) and the National Juvenile Justice Data Analysis Program, which are supported by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). He co-directs the OJJDP-funded Formula Grants Program Training and Technical Assistance: Data Capacity Improvement project which aims to strengthen states' capacity to provide OJJDP with data to demonstrate their compliance with the JJJPA core requirements and to use data to inform and strengthen their juvenile justice systems.



He co-directs NCJJ's work on the National Opinion Research Center's Youth Defense Delivery Systems and Associated Outcomes project, which will examine the impact of legal representation on case outcomes for youth in juvenile court. He is the primary analyst of various national data sets, including the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports, National Incident Based Reporting System, Uniform Crime Reporting Program, court data collected by the Archive, and OJJDP sponsored data collections regarding juvenile residential facilities and the youth held in them. Chaz is lead or co-author of some of the most widely referenced reports in the field of juvenile justice, including the Juvenile Arrests bulletin and Juvenile Court Statistics report, as well as Youth and the Juvenile Justice System: 2022 National Report.

DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

9:30AM-10:45AM

WELCOME AND KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Raymond Miles is a dedicated advocate and leader committed to addressing the challenges of mass incarceration, homelessness, and workforce development. After overcoming 25 years of correctional supervision, Raymond has devoted his career to advocating for marginalized communities and creating pathways to success for reentrants and the unhoused. He has built vital collaborations with public and private agencies, including the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the Allegheny County Anchored Reentry Coalition, to challenge policies disproportionately affect the formerly incarcerated.



Raymond's educational journey, from high school dropout to earning a cum laude bachelor's degree in social work from Carlow University, highlights his resilience and determination. He has authored essential resources for reentrants, including the "1440" guide for individuals exiting the Allegheny County Jail and the F.R.E.E. curriculum, used in federal and local correctional institutions.

As Workforce Development Coordinator at the Allegheny County Jail, Raymond leads counseling, workshops, and job clubs to prepare individuals for successful reentry. His innovative projects, such as ReEntry412, Reentry T.V., and the Formerly Convicted Citizens Leadership Development Group, focus on shifting public perceptions and building community support for reintegration.

Raymond is an award-winning advocate recognized for his work in community-based research, social innovation, and leadership in reentry. His lived experiences continue to inspire his efforts to drive meaningful change for those impacted by the justice system.

DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

11:00AM-12:15AM

ROUNDTABLE 1: IDENTIFYING AND NAVIGATING GENERATIONAL TRAUMA WITH RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

**Diane Weaver-Thomas and Sean Roy, Canine
Advocates at the Center for Victims**

**Malaya Kirkland and Alexis Richards, Allegheny
SITY (Systems Improving Through Youth)**

**Kristine Demnovich, Deputy Director, Court of
Common Pleas Juvenile, Westmoreland County**

Canine Advocates (Therapy Dogs) from the Center for Victims

What we experience in childhood and youth has a major impact on who we become as adults. Generational trauma refers to the passing down of traumatic experiences or stressors from one generation to another, and it can lead to mental, physical health, and addiction issues. Fortunately, we can take steps to heal ourselves and break the cycle. In this panel, participants share their lived experience and expertise, action steps for addressing trauma, and restorative justice practices for justice-involved youth and their communities.

Introduction of panelists and questions to consider:

- What is generational trauma? How can it impact individuals?
- Why is generational trauma so powerful? What are the risks of talking about it?
- What are some steps we can take to break the cycle?
- How can we support people experiencing generational trauma and those who are trying to break its bonds?
- What is restorative justice? And how might a restorative justice framework help address trauma?
- What are some steps to help offenders and victims?

DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

11:00AM-12:15AM

ROUNDTABLE 2: EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS: UNDERSTANDING THE INTERSECTIONS FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH

Rikia Abdullah, Chair of Western PA Homeless Advocacy Board, Elsinore-Bennu Think Tank on Restorative Justice, and Founder and Executive Director of Heart-Based Coaching

Abigail Baker, Youth Justice Advisory Board and Youth Action Board (Western PA Continuums of Care)

Cindy LaCom, Member, Western PA Continuums of Care, Elsinore-Bennu Think Tank on Restorative Justice

Cheyenne Tyler, Executive Director, Cafe Momentum

Donyae Taylor

There is a strong connection between experiences of youth homelessness and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Youth experiencing homelessness with a history of physical abuse are nearly twice as likely than non-abused youth to be arrested and detained. When young people leave residential juvenile justice placements, they often face a number of challenges, whether that's an unstable home environment, problems with school, or lack of access to mental health services. As part of our efforts to achieve juvenile justice, we must address housing and its impact.

Introduction of panelists and questions to consider:

- What's the data on youth homelessness and involvement with the juvenile justice system?
- How and why might homelessness and housing instability make youth more subject to involvement with the juvenile justice system?
- What do people need to know about experiences of homelessness and justice involvement and their potential overlap?
- What are some action steps we can take to address this issue?

DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

12:30AM-1:20PM

**LUNCH CATERED BY
CAFÉ MOMENTUM**

12:30AM-1:20PM

ARTISTIC PRESENTATIONS

**GLEN SANDERS, FINE ARTS PROGRAM DIRECTOR,
GEORGE JR. REPUBLIC AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR,
GROVE CITY COLLEGE**

INTRODUCTION BY SARAH KUEHN

Fine Arts Director of George Junior Republic (GJR) Glen Sanders, in collaboration with sculptor Jim West, developed an opportunity for George Junior Republic students to use their voice in creating art through the "Man-Up" project, which will be exhibited at the conference. Students created 2D and 3D art that tells their stories of what it means to "Man-Up." While drawing, painting, and working in cardboard, wood, and metal, students told their stories surrounding tough subjects such as abandonment, abuse, death, incarceration, and feeling responsibility for the welfare of their family. While creating their artwork and telling their stories, they also talked about forgiveness, responsibility, wholeness, and hope. The "Man-Up" project has been an opportunity to give a voice to young men who usually don't get the chance to share their stories with others outside the juvenile justice and social service systems. The hope is for this art exhibit to allow these young men to share a part of themselves and help others become part of the discussion of what it means to "Man-Up." Some GJR students will attend the conference to discuss their art.



*Café Momentum's mission is
to transform young lives by
equipping our community's
most at-risk youth with life
skills, education and
employment opportunities
to help them achieve their
full potential.*



DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

2:00PM-3:00PM

ART WORKSHOP: TELLING OUR STORIES: ART AS SOCIAL ADVOCACY

Takara Canty, ACH Clear Pathways R.E.A.C.H.

We all have a story to tell. How can art express those stories? Be a factor in social change? Express both the worlds we live in and the worlds we want to live in? In this workshop, participants are provided with art supplies to share our stories and express our hopes, honor ourselves and others, and demand a world where all youth can thrive.

ROUNDTABLE 3: BE THE CHANGE: LEGISLATIVE UPDATES AND LETTER- WRITING ACTION WORKSHOP FOR ALLEGHENY COUNTY JAIL (ACJ) YOUTH

**Autumn Redcross, Founding Director of the
Abolitionist Law Center and the Court Watch
Program**

There have been changes in juvenile justice, but many opportunities for reform remain. This panel will discuss which steps we might take in Allegheny County (and beyond) to help youth, their families, and their communities in meaningful and intentional ways. Please join us at this workshop, where Autumn Redcross will identify some of the problems, discuss legislative measures that matter, and facilitate a letter-writing workshop for youth currently incarcerated at the Allegheny County Jail (ACJ). These letters are meant to be supportive; the intent is to let youth know that they are not alone and that someone in the community is thinking of them.

All letters will be mailed to youth at the ACJ after the conference.

Introduction of presenter and questions to consider:

- What specific issues in Pennsylvania and Allegheny County should we know about?
- What happens when youth are treated as adults in the justice system?
- What action steps can we take to pursue legislative reform? Help incarcerated youth? Reach out to them directly to offer support and build community?

DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

2:00PM-3:00PM

SLAM POETRY WORKSHOP

**Sarah Shotland, Professor of Creative Writing,
Carlow College**

Sarah Shotland, Professor of Creative Writing at Carlow College, has published a novel, *Junkette*, and her work has been performed in venues across the world. She is the author of a nonfiction piece, *Abolition is Everything*, and she co-founded *Words Without Walls* in 2009, which brought creative writing workshops to jails, prisons, and drug treatment facilities in Pittsburgh for 13 years.

3:15PM-4:30PM

ROUNDTABLE 4: INTERVENTIONS: PRE-DIVERSION AND DIVERSION PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT YOUTH

Sara Nevels, Supervisor for Caring Connections for Youth (CC4Youth) and Family Development Specialist at Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

Tawana Butler, Founder of Foundation of Hope

2 youth

Research indicates that diversion programs are successful. Unfortunately, youth who have been minoritized are less likely to be referred to diversion programs. This panel will discuss the nature and impact of pre-diversion and diversion programs, ways to make them more accessible, and ways in which they can change youth lives.

Introduction of panelists and questions to consider:

- What are pre-diversion and diversion programs? How do they work with the juvenile justice system?
- How can pre-diversion and diversion programs interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and address disparities?
- What's the relationship between schools and pre-diversion and diversion programs?
- What factors might determine if a youth will or will not have access to pre-diversion and diversion programs?
- What advice would you offer to a youth who might have an opportunity to participate in a pre-diversion or diversion program?

DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

3:15PM-4:30PM

ROUNDTABLE 5: ANOTHER APP? HOW ONE APP HAS CHANGED SERVICE DELIVERY TO YOUTH IN NEED

Kim Godfrey-Lovett, Executive Director of Center for Improving Youth Justice

Before programs and resources can help youth, youth need to know they're out there. This is often where we get stuck. Ms. Godfrey-Lovett has worked with the Center for Improving Youth Justice to improve youth justice outcomes for young people, their families, and our communities by integrating research into practice. The Center provides tools, resources, and technical assistance to justice agencies and supports justice-involved young people directly with scholarships, mentoring, reentry and employment assistance. In this panel, Ms. Godfrey-Lovett will talk about a new app she has helped develop that will connect youth to an array of services and resources that can help them navigate an often challenging world.

Introduction of panelist and questions to consider:

- How does the app work, and what kinds of challenges does it help youth to navigate?
- Where are you in the testing phase of the app? How and when can youth access and use it?
- What advice would you offer to youth and their families who may want to use this app?

3:15PM-4:30PM

ROUNDTABLE 6: NARCAN AND HARM REDUCTION

Sarah Majorsky, Workforce Development Outreach Specialist, Westmoreland Community Action

Narcan and Harm Reduction Training, through Overdose lifeline and Westmoreland Community Action, offers guidance on a life-saving resource and inspires discussion on stigma and bias related to substance use. Relevant information and statistics on opioid overdose are shared. In a conversational and open way, this training promotes a deeper understanding of the opioid epidemic.

DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

9:30AM-4:30PM

ART EXPERIENCE

Need description for outside art activity



THANK YOU TO OUR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS & SPONSORS



Criminology & Criminal Justice Department



DEPARTMENT OF
Criminology and
Criminal Justice



ABOUT VOICES FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

MISSION

To support, center,
and amplify youth
voices and connect
communities while
creating a more
equitable and fair
juvenile justice
system.

VISION

A world where all
youth can achieve
their dreams.

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Rikia Abdullah
Lyndsie Ferrara
Walter Harris
Sarah Kuehn
Cindy Lacom
Alida Merlo

Jaime Munoz
Autumn Recross
Glenn Sanders
Nik Roberts
Michael Talley
Diane Weaver-Thomas

NOTES: