# LEVELING UP OUR IMPACT

43rd Annual TNOYS Conference on Services to Youth and Families

AUSTIN, TEXAS | JUNE 9-12, 2026

TNOYS
TEXAS NETWORK OF YOUTH SERVICES

#TNOYS2026

# WELCOME!

On behalf of Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS), I want to personally welcome each of you to TNOYS' 43rd Annual Conference on Services to Youth and Families!

Guided by the theme *Leveling Up Our Impact*, this year's conference calls on each of us to bring our unique talents to the youth services field and help unlock brighter futures for youth and young adults. We're excited to roll out an all-star lineup of next-level sessions, presenters, and keynote speakers that once again reflect TNOYS' deep commitment to youth-adult partnership and youth voice, research-informed policy and practice, and strong collaboration across systems.

Over the next three days, you'll have the opportunity to sharpen your playbook, build connections, and learn alongside subject matter experts and young people with lived experience. With time set aside for specialized training, experiential learning, networking, and reflection, we hope you'll take this opportunity to recharge, celebrate wins, and explore game-changing strategies that can move the scoreboard for young people and families across Texas.

TNOYS is proud to serve as a convener, advocate, teammate, and number one fan of the incredible Texas organizations that show up every day for our state's most vulnerable young people. Our work would not be possible without the member organizations and youth-serving professionals who continue to go the extra mile—often providing life-saving support while navigating tough competition for resources, funding challenges, staffing shortages, and other obstacles. We're grateful for your endurance, leadership, and unwavering commitment, and we look forward to continuing to advance the field together.

True to TNOYS' mission and the missions of our member organizations, our focus remains on ensuring that Texas' most vulnerable and resilient youth and families have every opportunity to succeed. If your organization is not yet a TNOYS member, we encourage you to join the team this week. Thank you for choosing to spend your week with us as we work together to change the game for young people across Texas.



Sincerely,
Fedora Galasso
TNOYS Chief Executive Officer

TNOYS
TEXAS NETWORK OF YOUTH SERVICES

# FEATURED SPEAKERS AND PERFORMERS



## Laura Hughes | Keynote Speaker

Laura Hughes, MPH, is the founder and principal of Gusto Partners, LLC. Laura believes in "harnessing the power of the communities we serve by placing them at the center of content development and storytelling." She specializes in stakeholder and relationship leadership, creating environments for iterative learning, social change, and cross-sector collaboration. She is a strategic leader with a proven track record of scaling impactful models, having held leadership roles in public, private, and philanthropic sectors. Her superpowers are stewarding relationships across systems with discipline and ease, and combining strategic problem-solving with the power of persuasive storytelling to drive meaningful change.



## Steven Teske | Keynote Speaker

Judge Steven C. Teske resides in Tucson, Arizona, and consults with juvenile courts and justice systems on systemic transformations to improve outcomes for youth. He also serves as legal counsel for the Department of Social Services for the Pascua Yaqui Pueblo Tribe. Having written several articles on juvenile justice reform, Judge Teske has testified before Congress and several state legislatures on detention reform, zero-tolerance policies in schools, juvenile justice grant accountability, child welfare reform, and the re-authorization of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act. He is also the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions, notably the 2018 Juvenile Law Center Leadership Prize.



## Natalie Ferguson | Emcee

Natalie Ferguson has served as TNOYS' Operations Administrator for the past five years, supporting the work that makes the organization's programs and events possible. A passionate advocate for youth and a familiar presence at PEAKS Camp and TNOYS conferences, Natalie brings warmth, humor, and firsthand knowledge of the organization to her role as this year's Emcee.



## Isaiah Washington | Co-Emcee

Isaiah Washington is a Texas Emerging Leaders Board (TELB) alum and 2026 PEAKS Camp Peer Leader from San Antonio, Texas. A young leader with a love of basketball and mentoring, Isaiah brings the same playfulness and skill to his role as this year's Co-Emcee as he does to the court.



## Soulshine | Performer

Founded in Austin in 2016, the Soulshine Rhythm Experience's mission has always been about creating connection. Known for her uplifting and inclusive approach, Founder and Chief of Beats Suzy Turner inspires participants of all ages and abilities to relax and connect through the universal language of rhythm. In addition to being trained in multiple evidence-based facilitation methods, Suzy has developed a unique rhythm-based fitness program suitable for all ages and physical abilities.



## Austin Classical Guitar | Performer

Austin Classical Guitar's (ACG) Juvenile Justice programming provides music education and mentoring to youth in juvenile justice settings. Through group guitar classes led by ACG Teaching Artists, these programs foster a sense of accomplishment while providing a positive outlet for personal expression. In addition, participants earn fine arts and community service credits, making these classes the only for-credit performing arts classes for incarcerated youth statewide.

# FEATURED ENTERTAINMENT & ACTIVITIES

## Exhibit Hall and Raffle

Wednesday, June 10 - Friday, June 12; ARBOR

Visit our exhibit hall to learn about dozens of organizations and businesses that can help grow your impact. By checking in with all booths during the conference, you will earn a raffle ticket to use toward prizes including virtual scavenger hunts, wine tasting/classes, gift certificates and baskets, and more!

## How to Purchase Tickets and Enter the Raffle

Raffle tickets are $10 each or 6 for $50! Scan the QR code to pre-purchase, or visit live.givebutter.com/c/2026-tnoys-raffle. On-site purchases are available at the registration table via credit card, digital payment methods, or cash (please bring exact change) Winners will be announced by the conference emcee during the event!

*Scan to Purchase*

## TNOYS Member Lounge

Wednesday, June 10 - Friday, June 12; GUADALUPE

TNOYS members are invited to power up in our conference member lounge. Enjoy a continental breakfast each morning on Wednesday and Thursday, and coffee and tea available each day

## Youth Lounge

Wednesday, June 10 - Friday, June 12; FRIO

Youth and young adult attendees are invited to take advantage of our youth lounge to connect with other young people, take part in fun activities, and enjoy a restful space created for youth, by youth. Youth can also enjoy a continental breakfast on Wednesday and Thursday morning and daily snacks in the youth lounge.

## Caricature Artist

Wednesday, June 10, 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.; FRIO; 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m; ARBOR

Join us in between sessions to have a caricature portrait made by "Crazy Fast Caricatures" artist, Stephen Romero. Take home a keepsake from the conference from the "Fastest Draw in Texas"!

## Relaxation Room

Wednesday, June 10 - Friday, June 12; SAN SABA

Need a moment to yourself to escape the hustle and bustle of the conference? Step into our relaxation room to enjoy a quiet space for sensory soothing, zen, and relaxation.

## TNOYS Member Reception

Wednesday, June 10, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.; GLASS OAKS BALLROOM

All TNOYS professional members and staff from member organizations are invited for game-changing festivities and fun at this reception. Join us for winning activities, prizes, networking, and appetizers. If you aren't yet a member and would like to RSVP for the Member Reception, join at tnoys.org/become-a-member.

## Grow Your Impact: Become a TNOYS Member!

Not yet a member of TNOYS? Join a statewide community of professionals and organizations who are building a brighter future for young people. Member benefits include advocacy at the Texas Capitol and with state agencies, access to TNOYS' members-only training portal, customized technical assistance, discounts on Annual Conference registration, and much more. Learn more at tnoys.org/become-a-member.

*Join Today*

# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS

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## Next Level Legend

LENA POPE

LIFEWORKS Solving Youth Homelessness

The Benefit Group, LLC Insurance Solutions Benefiting You™

Graduate College of Social Work UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

casebook

## EXHIBITORS

Ambetter from Superior HealthPlan
BCFS Health and Human Services
Cal Farley's Boys Ranch
Casebook PBC
Child Advocates of Montgomery Texas
Foster Angels of Central Texas
Helen's Project
HHSC YES Waiver Program
HHSC 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
HopSkipDrive
Infinity Pharmacy, Specialty Services
LifeWorks
National Network for Youth
Rocksprings Hospital/Lifespoint Health
Soulshine Rhythm Experience
Stephen Braggs Youth Foundation Inc
Superior HealthPlan
Texas Challenge Academy
Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards
Texas Network of Youth Services
Texas Youth Action Network (TYAN)
The Benefit Group, LLC
University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work
University of Texas at Austin, Texas Foster Youth Network
Upbring

# SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

| Tuesday, June 9: Pre–Conference Institutes (separate registration required) | |
|---|---|
| 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. | On-Site Registration and Check-In for Institutes - LOBBY REGISTRATION |
| 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Motivational Interviewing Basics: Building Skills for Effective Change Conversations - CONCHO |
| 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Experiential Strategies for Addressing Trauma and Grief - BRAZOS |
| 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. | Building Alliances to Prevent and Address Children Without Placement - BLUEBONNET |
| 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Early Check-In/Conference Registration - LOBBY REGISTRATION |

| Wednesday, June 10: Conference Day 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. | Check-In & Registration Open - LOBBY REGISTRATION | |
| 9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. | TNOYS Welcome + Keynote (Open to all) - GRAND BALLROOM<br>***Narrative Power: Building an Irresistible Future with Systems-Impacted Youth* with Laura Hughes** | |
| 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Workshops for Professionals | *Professional Track* |
| 12:00 p.m.– 1:30 p.m. | Cross-Systems Collaborative Lunches (Separate registration required) | *Professional Track* |
| 12:00 p.m.– 1:30 p.m. | Lunch on Your Own | *Professional Track* |
| 10:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. | Youth Orientation & Storytelling Workshop - FRIO | *Youth Track* |
| 12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. | Youth Lunch + Meet & Greet (Youth & Young Adults ONLY) | *Youth Track* |
| 1:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. | Workshops for Professionals and Youth | |
| 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Performance + Keynote Panel - GRAND BALLROOM<br>***Experts by Experience: Redefining Impact Across Youth-Serving Systems* with TNOYS' Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC)** | |
| 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. | Member Reception (Open to all TNOYS Members) - GLASS OAKS BALLROOM | |

| Thursday, June 11: Conference Day 2 | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. | Check-In & Registration Open - LOBBY REGISTRATION | |
| 9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. | Performance + Keynote - GRAND BALLROOM<br>***Keynote Plenary - Solving the Puzzle: Addressing Youth Homelessness with Purpose* with TNOYS' Texas Emerging Leaders Board (TELB)** | |
| 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Workshops for Professionals | Workshops for Youth - CONCHO, BRAZOS |
| 12:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. | Youth-Adult Partnership Luncheon: Leveling Up Together - GRAND BALLROOM<br>**2026 TNOYS Member Awards and TNOYS' Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) Graduation** | |
| 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. | Workshops for Professionals | Workshops for Youth - CONCHO, BRAZOS |
| 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Workshops for Professionals and Youth | |

| Friday, June 12: Conference Day 3 | |
|---|---|
| 7:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. | Statewide Collaborative on Youth Homelessness Meeting & Breakfast (Invite Only) - GLASS OAKS BALLROOM |
| 8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. | Check-In & Registration Open - LOBBY REGISTRATION |
| 9:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. | Workshops for Professionals and Youth |
| 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | Performance + Closing Keynote - GRAND BALLROOM<br>***The Architecture of Collaboration: Building Youth Systems That Outlast Us* with Judge Steven C. Teske** |

# PROGRAM GUIDE

The workshops for this year's conference are divided into seven topic tracks. Look for these symbols throughout the program:



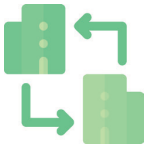
*HEALTH, TRAUMA, & RESILIENCE*



*YOUTH VOICE & YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP*



*NON-PROFIT LEADERSHIP & INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS*



*RESOURCES & CROSS-SYSTEMS COLLABORATION*



*RESEARCH & PERFORMANCE-BASED PRACTICES*



*PREVENTING & ADDRESSING CSEY*



*POLICY & GOVERNMENT*

This year's conference offers a range of programming for youth and young adult (YYA) attendees! On Wednesday, June 10, we strongly encourage YYA ages 15 - 26 to take advantage of and attend the youth-only Orientation + Storytelling workshop. Youth-only programming continues on Thursday, June 11, with Youth Track workshops (see pages 15 and 17 for more details). On Friday, June 12, workshops are open to both professionals and youth to learn from and alongside one another. A limited number of workshops are only appropriate for professionals and are labeled accordingly.

The following symbol marks workshops that are restricted to professionals:



Workshops that are restricted to professionals

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

TNOYS provides continuing education credit hours for professionals. Conference attendees are eligible to earn up to 16 CEU hours throughout the 2.5-day in-person conference programming. Attendees are eligible to earn 4 additional CEU hours for participating in Pre-Conference Institutes. TNOYS is an approved CEU provider for Licensed Social Workers (LSW), Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT), and Continuing Professional Education Providers (CPE). The majority of sessions are typically approved for Juvenile Probation Officers (JPO), Juvenile Supervision Officers (JSO), and Community Activities Officers (CAO) by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. The majority of sessions are also typically approved for Licensed Child Care Administrator (LCCA), Licensed Child Placing Agency Administrators (LCPAA) and for the following substance abuse professional licenses: LCDCs, Associate Prevention Specialists (APS), Certified Prevention Specialists (CPS), and Peer Mentor/Peer Recovery Designation (PM/PRC).

# WORKSHOP MATRIX

| | Health, Trauma, & Resilience<br>SAN ANTONIO | Youth Voice & Youth-Adult Partnership<br>SABINE | Non-Profit Leadership & Innovative Solutions<br>SAN MARCOS |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wed, June 10** | | | |
| **10:30 am – 12:00 pm** | Project Empathy: Reframing Addiction Through Neuroscience and Positive Psychology | Unlocking Engagement: Proven Strategies for Supporting Opportunity Youth | Staff-Driven Approach to Organizational Change / Outreach Academy: Youth-Led Service |
| **1:45 pm – 3:15 pm** | Parallel Processes: Bringing Relational Therapy Principles into System Responses for CSEY Youth | Reimagining Programs as Partnerships with Youth / Strengthening Outcomes Through Belonging | Narrative Change IRL: Tools for Shifting Stories and Systems |
| **Thurs, June 11** | | | |
| **10:30 am – 12:00 pm** | Purpose-Driven Youth Care for Direct Care Staff | Durable Skills and Peer Navigation as Workforce Game-Changers | Driving Change Through Hope and Impact |
| **2:00 pm – 3:15 pm** | Strengths-Based Transformation Tools for Youth in Transition | Reimagining Pathways: Transformative Supports for Youth Impacted by Systems | Culture Shift: Leading with Curiosity |
| **3:30 pm – 5:00 pm** | Youth Perspectives on Services, After-Care, and Aging Out / Pathways Home: Unlocking Doors to Lasting Stability | Heartwork: Walking Youth Towards Wholeness and Vision | TBRI®: Transforming Relationships and Organizations through Connections |
| **Fri, June 12** | | | |
| **9:15 am – 10:45 am** | Creativity as a Bridge: Engagement and Neurodivergence / Essential Soft Skills | Eliminating the Obstacles in Education and Workforce / Supports at the Intersection of Systems | To New Heights: Building an Inclusive Brand |

# WORKSHOP MATRIX

| Resources & Cross-Systems Collaboration<br>BLUEBONNET | Research & Performance-Based Practices<br>PECOS | Preventing & Addressing CSEY<br>TRINITY A | Policy & Government<br>TRINITY B |
|---|---|---|---|
| Connecting Youth to the Path of Success / Cross-Sector Strategies that Strengthen Youth Outcomes | Reducing Housing Instability Among Youth | Safe Spaces, Safe Kids: Building Protective Environments Against CSEC | Your Voice Matters: Reporting Abuse in Texas |
| Building Belonging, Skills, and Stability for Youth Experiencing Homelessness | Whole-Family Healing in Family Justice Centers | From Awareness to Action: Preventing Child Sex Trafficking | Inside Washington: Federal Decisions Shaping Youth Homelessness Policy |
| The Power of Many: Strategies for Identifying Homeless Students | Youth-Friendly Homelessness System Responses | Preventing and Addressing Human Trafficking | Aligning Policy and Practice to Better Serve Opportunity Youth / Strengthening the Juvenile Justice Continuum of Care Across Texas |
| Implementing the Foster Youth to Independence Voucher Initiative | Improving Higher Education Outcomes for Students with Foster Care Experience | Practical Applications to Support Survivors of Exploitation | Informing Policy Through Youth and Provider Insights |
| Youth Screening Insights Across Trafficking Trends in Texas | Heal, Restore, Transform: Community Strategies to Prevent Family Violence | Understanding the Connection Between Familial Sexual Abuse and Familial Sex Trafficking | The Texas Youth and Parent Helpline / Foster Care Ombudsman: Helping Foster Youth Advocate |
| Reducing Trafficking Risk for Foster Youth Through Connection and Family | Charge Up! Team-Based Models to Support Youth Transitioning from Homelessness | Working Together to Elevate Child Safety With Practical Resources | Compliance Confidence for Federal Grants Serving Youth |

# TUESDAY, JUNE 9

Pre-Conference Institutes
(separate registration required)

### On-Site Registration for Institutes
8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. - LOBBY REGISTRATION

### Motivational Interviewing Basics: Building Skills for Effective Change Conversations
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - CONCHO

This session provides a foundational overview of Motivational Interviewing (MI), an evidence-based approach widely used across youth services. Participants will be introduced to the core principles of MI, including partnership, evocation, and autonomy support, as well as essential communication skills such as open questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries. This institute emphasizes practical application and skill development, helping participants recognize change talk, respond effectively to ambivalence, and avoid common conversational traps. This session is ideal for practitioners, supervisors, and leaders new to MI or seeking a refresher on the fundamentals.

Presented by Erin Espinosa, Evident Change

### Experiential Strategies for Addressing Trauma and Grief
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - BRAZOS

This highly experiential and skills-driven training blends foundational lessons from developmental trauma theory and grief work with the practice of play-informed interventions. Participants will explore how developmental trauma and loss shape internal experience, attachment, self-concept, behavior, and relational capacity across the lifespan, from early childhood through adolescence and young adulthood. Using a variety of interactive methods, including sandtray, expressive arts, metaphor work, movement, and structured experiential exercises, participants will develop a toolbox of intervention skills designed to help clients externalize, explore, and integrate difficult experiences.

Presented by Nik Johnson, CCFAM Training

### Building Alliances to Prevent and Address Children Without Placement (DFPS Personnel Only)
10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. - BLUEBONNET

In this interactive training, participants will discuss their more challenging experiences working with youth and explore the bases for difficult behaviors and situations such as refusing or running away from placements, disengagement, and conflict. Participants will gain insight into the critical roles of trust and transparency, humility and responsiveness, authentic relationship-building, and youth voice. Through dialogue, first-hand reflections from youth, and scenario activities, participants will strengthen their framework for addressing and mitigating challenges and add tools to their strategic repertoire.

Presented by Sedoo Ijir, TNOYS

### Early Check In & Registration
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - LOBBY REGISTRATION

### TNOYS Board of Directors Meeting (by Invitation)
2:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. - SAN ANTONIO

# WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10: CONFERENCE DAY 1

Separate Professional and Youth Programming

**8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Check-In & Registration Open -** LOBBY REGISTRATION

**9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. TNOYS Welcome + Opening Keynote - Narrative Power: Building an Irresistible Future with Systems-Impacted Youth** with Laura Hughes **-** GRAND BALLROOM

Narratives are powerful. They shape how we see ourselves, our communities, and what we believe is possible—and they are a key tool for building a just, irresistible future. In this interactive keynote, narrative strategist Laura Hughes challenges participants to use narrative power to transform how systems-impacted youth and young adults are seen, supported, and centered in systems change. Drawing on lessons from her work alongside homeless and runaway youth, participants will reflect on the stories shaping their work and explore how lived experience, research, and storytelling can shift understanding and open pathways to a joyful, irresistible future.

*PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMMING*

**10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Workshops**



### Project Empathy: Reframing Addiction Through Neuroscience and Positive Psychology

Drew Dutton and Jordan Blanks, Phoenix House Texas

SAN ANTONIO

This workshop provides a robust overview of best practices in addiction treatment, including how to use neuroscience to dismantle stigma, leverage positive psychology, and apply evidence-based strategies. Attendees will learn about teen brain and addiction science, critiques of common treatments, and how to implement solution-focused therapy and strengths-based empathy in everyday work.



### Unlocking Engagement: Proven Strategies for Supporting Opportunity Youth and Young Adults

Kimberly Head, Billyann Salomon, Ethan Wilson, Gabriel Estrada, and Fayth Hernandez, Education to Employment Partners; Monica Cisneros, Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend

SABINE

This workshop explores strategies that can unlock stronger outcomes in work with Opportunity Youth and Young Adults. Discover how near-peer leadership, collaborative partnerships, and open-concept reengagement models create transparent, youth-centered environments that strengthen trust, expand support networks, and drive transformative outcomes for youth and young adults.



### Facilitating Organizational Change in Youth-Led Services

SAN MARCOS

#### Beyond Good Intentions: A Staff-Driven Approach to Organizational Change

Melanie Chasteen and Sarah McQueen, Healthy Futures of Texas

Since July 2023, Healthy Futures of Texas' GROW (Guiding Resources & Opportunities for Workers) Group has advanced staff-driven organizational change. In this session, presenters share three real-world examples showing how GROW moved ideas into action—highlighting challenges, staff–leadership collaboration, outcomes achieved, and lessons learned for sustaining momentum without overburdening staff.

#### Outreach Academy: Youth-Led Service and Community

Britany Crawford and Kelly Culver, Lake Houston Outreach Academy

Develop renewed excitement for youth leadership in this engaging session. Attendees will uncover strategies, prompts, and reflection questions, and learn how to facilitate diversified groups. Professionals will leave with a framework for youth involvement and insightful content, and youth and young adult attendees will gain connections to pursue leadership and elevate their communities.

# WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10: CONFERENCE DAY 1



## Cross-System Approaches to Foster Youth Success

BLUEBONNET

### Connecting Youth to the Path of Success

Sonia White, Workforce Solutions East Texas; Jasmine Hernandez-Barbosa and Elizabeth Meza, Workforce Solutions; Imelda Trevino, Coastal Bend Workforce Development Board

This session explores capacity-building and strategic partnerships between Texas Workforce Solutions (TWS) Vocational Rehabilitation Services, education systems, state and local agencies, and business and community stakeholders. Attendees will learn about Youth Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs and strategic collaborations that promote disability awareness, vocational rehabilitation services, and pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

### From Silos to Systems: Practical Cross-Sector Strategies That Strengthen Youth Outcomes

Kayla Smith, Helen's Project

Youth routinely navigate multiple systems such as CPS, schools, mental health services, and juvenile justice. However, these systems often do not communicate with each other effectively. This workshop provides practical, Texas-specific tools for cross-system collaboration that improve safety, reduce duplication, and strengthen outcomes for youth and families.



## The Importance of Natural Supports in Reducing the Housing Instability of Youth

Amy Stone and Itzel Ramirez, Trinity University

PECOS

Texas youth experience higher rates of housing instability and homelessness than their peers. This presentation highlights the Family Housing and Me (FHAM) Project, a landmark longitudinal study of youth in South Texas. Presenters will uncover important findings from the study, such as how youth managed housing instability by leaning on their natural supports, particularly non-parental relatives like aunts and grandmothers.



## Safe Spaces, Safe Kids: Building Protective Environments Against CSEC

Amber McCray and Kayla Tennison, Street Grace

TRINITY A

This informative workshop equips youth-serving professionals with practical skills to recognize the warning signs of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and implement protective strategies in schools. Participants will gain knowledge of exploitation pathways, digital vulnerabilities, and grooming tactics, as well as Texas reporting requirements, new laws, and how to create safer environments where vulnerable students feel empowered to seek help.



## Your Voice Matters: Reporting Abuse in Texas

Rachel Winnubst and Lindsey Morin, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

TRINITY B

This presentation covers the basics for reporting through DFPS' hotline and online reporting system and introduces the importance of a reporter's role in prevention. Participants will gain knowledge of legal definitions of abuse and neglect types, as well as an understanding of some common signs of abuse and neglect. Presenters will discuss the implications of reporting Texas families and best practices to strengthen and support families.

**12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Cross-Systems Collaborative Lunches (Registration Required)**

NEW: Led by a TNOYS member topic expert, these lunches are an exclusive opportunity to meet and network with other professional attendees during a themed group discussion of your choosing. This event is for RSVP'd registrants only, and lunch will be provided with your registration.

**12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Lunch on Your Own**

# WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10: CONFERENCE DAY 1

*YOUTH PROGRAMMING*

**10:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Youth Orientation and Storytelling Workshop** - BRAZOS

Join this session to get a breakdown of everything that's in store for our youth and young adult attendees over the next 2.5 days. Meet members of TNOYS' leadership development programs, learn about and participate in our youth storytelling, and break the ice with your peers through a fun get-to-know-you activity! In this session, youth and young adults will also learn how they can use their voice through the power of storytelling. Participants will practice how to share their story safely and effectively, and have the opportunity to record a video or write a piece for TNOYS' storytelling projects.

**12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Youth Lunch with Meet & Greet (Youth & Young Adults ONLY)** - FRIO

Join your fellow youth and young adult attendees for a youth-only lunch and hangout session in the youth lounge! Enjoy an exclusive youth-only meet and greet with special guest and keynote speaker, Laura Hughes. Lunch is free for all registered youth and young adults.

**1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Workshops for Professionals and Youth**



**Parallel Process: Bringing Relational Therapy Principles Into System Responses for CSEY Youth** P

Katie Watson, Anchored Hope

SAN ANTONIO

For survivors impacted by Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEY), "noncompliance" is survival, not defiance. Effective therapy responds with attunement, predictability, curiosity, and autonomy. This workshop explores how to mirror those principles through parallel processes, teaching teams to read safety states, interpret emotional armor, use metaphor-based communication, and apply relational safety at the systems level.



**Partnerships and Belonging with Current and Former Foster Youth** P

SABINE

**Reimagining Programs as Partnerships with Youth**

Tai Kapaji, Transition Resource Action Center

Youth voice is most effective when supported and intentional. This interactive session explores how organizations can move from participation to partnership by engaging youth and young adults as advisors, collaborators, and feedback partners to strengthen programs, services, and organizational decision-making.

**Strengthening Outcomes Through Belonging**

Tai Kapaji, Transition Resource Action Center

This interactive presentation examines community-building as a protective factor, with a strong focus on improving long-term outcomes across housing, employment, and safety for youth and young adults.



**Narrative Change IRL: Tools for Shifting Stories and Systems**

Laura Hughes

SAN MARCOS

How do we shift harmful narratives while staying authentic to our communities? In this interactive workshop, participants will explore practical tools for narrative change—from storytelling techniques to audience insight and collaborative messaging. Together, attendees will identify dominant narratives, practice reframing stories, and apply narrative strategy across youth services, education, employment, and advocacy.

# WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10: CONFERENCE DAY 1

### Beyond a Bed: Building Belonging, Skills, and Stability for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Mary Bonner-Fisher, Cheryl Butler, and Dulce Bebee, Texas Baptist Children's Home
BLUEBONNET

For many young adults, housing instability is more than a season; it is a constant cycle of crisis, couch-surfing, instability, and trauma. This session shares practical, relationship-centered strategies to build trust, strengthen routines and life skills, and reduce the impact of homelessness on long-term stability and hope.

### Whole-Family Healing in Family Justice Centers

Taylor Ozuna and Kat Fahrenthold, One Safe Place
PECOS

This workshop highlights the innovative programming of Family Justice Centers to address domestic/family violence through a family systems lens. Attendees will explore how targeted psychoeducation for caregivers and children improves safety, emotional regulation, and long-term outcomes following exposure to violence.

### From Awareness to Action: Preventing Child Sex Trafficking

Kellye Turner, Office of the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team
TRINITY A

Join this workshop to uncover practical prevention strategies for all communities. Designed for youth, educators, social service professionals, parents, and youth advocates, the session will present evidence-based insights with an emphasis on discussion. Participants will leave equipped with the tools they need to recognize, respond to, and reduce risk factors associated with child sex trafficking.

### Inside Washington: Federal Decisions Shaping Youth Homelessness Policy

Trinady Maddock, National Network for Youth
TRINITY B

Take a look at what's happening in Washington, DC to unpack the federal decisions shaping youth homelessness policy. This session covers shifts across all three branches—from funding to court rulings—and their impact on youth, young adults, and young parent families experiencing homelessness. Participants will explore where to push back, where alignment is possible, and how to engage federal lawmakers with midterm elections ahead.

**3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Performance + Keynote Panel - Experts by Experience: Redefining Impact Across Youth-Serving Systems**
with TNOYS' Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) - GRAND BALLROOM

Pandorah Ellis, Alana Marquez, Alexa Harrison, Tre'Anthony Howard, Jazlyn Lee, TNOYS' YALC; LaBraia Owens, TNOYS
Redefining impact across youth-serving systems starts with understanding how young people experience systems in real life. This keynote panel brings together young leaders from TNOYS' Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) who have direct systems involvement and firsthand experience navigating youth-serving organizations across Texas. Panelists will explore how centering youth voices and expertise can inform more responsive approaches within systems across the state. Join us as we commit to listening, learning, and co-creating systems that have a positive impact on young people in Texas.

Opening performance by Soulshine Rhythm Experience.

**5:00 p.m. Adjourn**

**5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Game On: Member Reception (Open to all TNOYS Members)** - GLASS OAKS BALLROOM

All TNOYS members are invited to this festive and fun reception! Join us to network with other members from across the state and enjoy fun activities and appetizers. Additionally, TNOYS Chief Executive Officer Fedora Galasso will present winning accomplishments and upcoming opportunities with TNOYS. If you are not yet a member and would like to RSVP for the member reception, we encourage you to join here: tnoys.org/become-a-member.

# THURSDAY, JUNE 11: CONFERENCE DAY 2

Most Sessions Open to All

**8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Check-In & Registration Open** - LOBBY REGISTRATION

**9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. Keynote Plenary - Solving the Puzzle: Addressing Youth Homelessness with Purpose** with TNOYS' Texas Emerging Leaders Board (TELB) - GRAND BALLROOM
Fedora Galasso, Sedoo Ijir, TNOYS; Jasalyn Franco, Betty Bajika, Noah Otote-Ingram, and Daisy Fowler, TNOYS' TELB;
Sarah Narendorf, New York University

This keynote session brings together young people and professionals to help solve the complex puzzle of improving youth homelessness systems. Join TNOYS to explore the latest statewide research and uncover important clues about the challenges, needs, and opportunities facing young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, as well as the providers working to support them. Through a panel of professional and lived experts, participants will work to connect the dots between lived experience and system-level insight, examining which pieces are falling into place, which gaps remain unsolved, and what new approaches are needed to see the full picture more clearly. Together, we'll move beyond temporary fixes to unlock solutions that help build a stronger, more connected support system for youth across Texas.

*PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMMING*

**10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Workshops**



### Purpose-Driven Youth Care for Direct Care Staff

Adrian Jackson and Telita Jackson, Cal Farley's Boys Ranch
SAN ANTONIO

This presentation explores youth care as more than a job—it is a calling rooted in intentionality, consistency, and felt love. Drawing from real-life experience in residential childcare, participants will reflect on the shift from simply "getting through the day" to embracing a purpose-driven mindset that transforms both the lives of youth and the adults who serve them. Attendees will be challenged to reconnect with the heart of direct care services.



### Unlocking Untapped Talent: Durable Skills and Peer Navigation as Workforce Game-Changers

Camille Serelus, Sidney Short, Noah Otote-Ingram, and Adriana Wilson, Greater Houston Opportunity Youth Collaborative
SABINE

The GHOYC's peer navigator program has trained over 1,000 youth, offering a case study for how investing in durable skills and peer-to-peer engagement benefits not only youth and young adults but all youth-serving professionals. Attendees will learn why durable skills matter and gain practical strategies to engage, train, and retain this high-potential workforce.



### Hope and Impact

Tim Packer, The Cove
SAN MARCOS

In this session, Dr. Packer explores the purpose behind The Cove's outcome of hope and its connection to the importance of investing in youth services. Drawing on the arts, research, policy, and experience, this session explores the role hope plays in making meaningful change in our communities. Participants will discuss what hope is and what it does, and how we may get or find hope in our work (and even our lives).



### The Power of Many: Strategies for Identifying Homeless Students

Anne Semmer-Grieshop, Round Rock Independent School District
BLUEBONNET

Identifying highly mobile students can be challenging for schools. McKinney-Vento Liaison Anne Grieshop will explore innovative ways to recognize students experiencing homelessness through a multifaceted approach. Learn how Round Rock Independent School District developed an identification plan that engages all district employees, as well as ways to empower students and families to self-identify by educating families about legal protections for students experiencing homelessness.

# THURSDAY, JUNE 11: CONFERENCE DAY 2



### Developing Youth-Friendly Homelessness System Responses in Your Community

Jay Wilk, Texas Network of Youth Services
PECOS

Building off listening sessions, surveys, and interviews with over 600 providers, young people, and stakeholders, this workshop provides TNOYS' insights on existing youth homelessness responses across Texas and resources to strengthen them. Professionals will leave with an improved understanding of Coordinated Entry (CE), as well as how the process impacts youth and young adults (YYA) and the providers that serve them. Using TNOYS' Coordinated Entry toolkit, attendees will have the opportunity to review their organization's current practices, and how to maximize that impact for cross-systems change in their local system.



### Human Trafficking Training for Youth-Serving Professionals and Community Stakeholders

Devyn Steinhilber, Project Protect Our Children
TRINITY A

Youth-serving professionals and community stakeholders are uniquely positioned to prevent and identify human trafficking. Join this presentation to gain key knowledge to recognize risk factors, grooming tactics, red flags, and the role of technology; understand how trafficking impacts youth; and learn how to identify, respond, and report concerns using a trauma-informed approach.



### Aligning Policies and Strengthening Systems: Case Study Initiatives for Youth Success

TRINITY B

#### Tomorrow's Promise: Aligning Policy and Practice to Better Serve Opportunity Youth

Stephanie Pienta, United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County
Opportunity Youth do not experience education, workforce, justice, and social services as separate systems, yet policy and nonprofit efforts often operate in silos that create barriers to re-engagement and long-term success. This session introduces Tomorrow's Promise, a countywide effort that shifts Opportunity Youth work from divided interventions to coordinated, systems-level alignment.

#### Strengthening the Juvenile Justice Continuum of Care Across Texas

Layla Fry, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute; Matt Smith, Texas Juvenile Justice Department; Elizabeth Meza, Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley; Imelda Trevino, Coastal Bend Workforce Development Board
This workshop presents findings from a first-of-its-kind statewide juvenile justice reform initiative led by Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute in partnership with the Texas Juvenile Justice Department and TNOYS. Drawing on cross-systems data and youth and caregiver engagement, the session highlights key service gaps, opportunities for justice reform, and practical ways providers can act locally to strengthen the continuum of care.

*YOUTH PROGRAMMING*

## 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Youth-Only Workshops

### Hire Learning - Interview Skills for Today's Workforce

Geraldine Denasty, BridgeYear
BRAZOS

This workshop guides participants through a practical approach to interviews by connecting interests, skills, and real-world examples to navigate the changing landscape. Using interactive activities and dialogue, youth learn how to answer questions, build confidence, and adapt to change, thereby developing resilience and developing tools to use during interviews.

### Navigating the Game of Life with Self-Love and Resilience

Jasmin Romano, Dahlia-Rose Alexis, Daniela Williams, and Katherine Squires, TNOYS' Texas Emerging Leaders Board (TELB)
CONCHO

Join this interactive session as we examine youth and young adults' ongoing struggles, including entering adulthood after surviving trauma and systems involvement. Learn from personal stories and existing data about the mental health outcomes that youth in systems typically experience, as well as supportive resources to aid in overcoming challenges and successfully building resilience. We invite attendees to engage in discussions around what trauma looks like and walk away with tools, resources, and self-love practices they can put into action in their own healing.

# THURSDAY, JUNE 11: CONFERENCE DAY 2

**12:00 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. Youth-Adult Partnership Luncheon: Leveling Up Together (Open to All)** - GRAND BALLROOM

Join us to enjoy a luncheon and celebrate the efforts and successes of TNOYS' member network and youth and young adult partners! To kick off, TNOYS Chief Executive Officer Fedora Galasso will present Texas-sized accomplishments and new initiatives on the horizon. Next, we'll celebrate TNOYS' member network and youth and young adult partners with the presentation of our 2026 Annual Member Awards and our Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) graduation.

*PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMMING*

**2:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Workshops**



### From Cocoon to Flight: Strengths-Based Transformation Tools for Youth in Transition

Bonnie Butler, Bonnie Butler Coaching
SAN ANTONIO

Using the butterfly metamorphosis as a framework, participants will explore evidence-based tools to help transition-age youth identify internal strengths, regulate emotions, and reframe limiting beliefs. This interactive session combines cognitive-behavioral techniques with strengths-based psychology through hands-on activities. Attendees will leave with participant materials and a workshop framework to adapt for their programs.



### Reimagining Pathways: Transformative Supports for Youth Impacted by Systems

Kristina Perez, Denise Hernandez, and Fernando Sanchez, LifeWorks
SABINE

This panel explores programs and strategies that support youth with complex needs, focusing on those involved in juvenile justice, criminal justice, and foster care. Panelists will highlight the Transformative Youth Justice Project in Travis County and share guidance on implementing evidence-based models such as Individual Placement and Support (IPS).



### Culture Shift - Leading with Curiosity

John Hazle, Cal Farley's Boys Ranch
SAN MARCOS

Ever feel overwhelmed or unsure about how to proceed? Whether you are a seasoned leader or seeking to become one, this workshop will provide tools on how to "win the culture war" in an organization. Attendees will learn how to conceptualize problems, lead through transitions, integrate staff into organizational cultures, and ensure that organizational objectives are met.



### The Evolution of the Housing Program Implementing the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Voucher Initiative

Jim Currier, Department of Family and Protective Services
BLUEBONNET

This workshop shares a practical roadmap for preventing foster youth homelessness by implementing the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program. Drawing on real-world systems building, partnerships, and lessons learned, this session explores how housing access, support services, and youth-centered design can create lasting stability.



### Roots to Reach: Pilot Testing a Peer Coaching Program to Improve Higher Education Outcomes for Students Who Have Experienced Foster Care

Kayli Lord, Toni Watt, Jorge Munoz, Ashley Garcia, and Shaye Shows, Education Reach for Texans
PECOS

Students who have experienced foster care face significant barriers accessing and persisting in higher education. The Education Reach for Texans team launched a peer coach pilot program to increase waiver utilization, engagement with support programs, and retention rates. This presentation provides a summary of the program design, evaluation strategy, and preliminary feasibility data from the program's first year.

# THURSDAY, JUNE 11: CONFERENCE DAY 2

### Practical Applications to Support Survivors of Exploitation
Sedoo Ijir, Texas Network of Youth Services
TRINITY A

In 2023, TNOYS published a manual for youth housing and homelessness service providers with guidance on meeting the needs of children and youth who are vulnerable to CSEY. The manual includes 10 key findings and recommendations based on discussions with over 100 youth and providers. Since then, TNOYS has conducted listening sessions on youth homelessness with providers and youth and young adults. This session will provide targeted support to address recommendations from the manual and put them into practice through case studies and real life examples from attendees' work.

### Informing Policy Through Experience: Youth and Provider Insights and the Solutions Ahead
Lauren Rose, Betty Bajika, Texas Network of Youth Services
TRINITY B

TNOYS is preparing for the 90th Texas Legislative Session. With all of the Health and Human Services under Sunset Review, there is opportunity for significant change impacting youth services. Join us to learn what we've been hearing from providers and youth on what should be on the legislature's agenda and other issues on the horizon.

*YOUTH PROGRAMMING*

## 2:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Youth-Only Workshops

### Choices, Time, and Confidence
Tiffany Bailey, Path Makers Consulting
BRAZOS

This practical life-skills workshop for high school and college students focuses on everyday decision-making, goal-setting, time management, and confident communication. Students will learn how to make thoughtful choices, manage their time effectively, and handle challenges or conflict with clarity and confidence: skills they can apply in school, work, and real life.

### Jumping into Adulthood: Road Map to College, Careers, and Beyond
Caitlyn Truitt and Dana Williams, TNOYS' Texas Emerging Leaders Board (TELB)
CONCHO

Join TNOYS' Texas Emerging Leaders Board for an interactive workshop on how to transition from systems involvement and into adulthood. Leveraging their lived experiences, presenters will explore college, trade school, and career pathways while clearing up myths about cost, acceptance, and challenges. They'll also break down key next steps like ApplyTexas, FAFSA, tuition waivers, and application processes for college and trade programs so you know what to do next. For youth with foster care experience, you'll learn about aftercare services, extended support programs, and resources that build stability.

## 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Workshops for Professionals and Youth

### Listening and Learning from TNOYS' Youth and Young Adults
SAN ANTONIO

### Passing the Baton: Youth Perspectives on Service Planning, After-Care, and Aging Out
Jazlyn Lee, Desiree Holliday, and Bri Belcher, TNOYS' Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC)
In this workshop, participants will hear firsthand from youth about how limited resources impact young people as they transition out of systems. The session will explore the challenges and barriers that arise when entering adulthood without adequate support. By the conclusion of this workshop, providers will be better equipped to identify and navigate available resources to effectively support youth aging out of systems and promote successful transitions into adulthood.

### Pathways Home: Unlocking Levels to Lasting Stability

Persia Cubit, Alana Marquez, Drew Sage, and Lynette Owens, TNOYS' Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC)

Preventing homelessness begins with early awareness and support. Join us for an engaging workshop focused on identifying risk factors, understanding housing instability, and exploring practical prevention strategies - all informed by youth leaders' lived expertise. Learn how community members, individuals, and organizations can better share resources while gaining tools and knowledge to promote long-term housing stability and proactive solutions.



### Heartwork: Walking Youth Towards Wholeness and Vision

Anthony Goulet, Roy Maas Youth Alternatives

SABINE

This interactive presentation will empower participants with the necessary skills to meet the basic and deeper needs of the youth and young adults they serve. Through dynamic storytelling and interactive exercises, participants will be anchored in their personal 'why' to facilitate transformation, rather than mere compliance.



### TBRI® - Transforming Relationships and Organizations through Connections

Ann Marie Ronsman and Camille Davis, Child Advocates of Montgomery County

SAN MARCOS

This interactive training series explores how Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) principles can transform not only how we serve youth and families but also how we lead organizations and support staff. By applying TBRI® principles to ourselves first and then extending them to our professional relationships, we create sustainable, trauma-informed organizational cultures that reduce burnout and improve outcomes.



### From Data to Action: What Youth Screening Insights Reveal About Trafficking Trends in Texas

Becky Austen, Deniz Cansin Rodoplu, and Kerri Taylor Richard, Allies Against Slavery

BLUEBONNET

This presentation will explore key findings from an extensive analysis of youth trafficking screening data collected across Texas, highlighting trends, indicators, and recommendations to improve victim identification. Using the "Youth Screening Insights Report," presenters will showcase how the Commercial Sexual Exploitation - Identification Tool (CSE-IT) is enabling early detection and intervention to support safety across the state.



### Heal, Restore, Transform: Community Strategies to Prevent Family Violence

Mallory Deets, Danielle Williams, and Jessica Benavides, LifeWorks

PECOS

For decades, youth arrested for family violence in Travis County cycled through a system unable to address root causes or keep families safe. This session presents the Travis County Transformation Project, a community-led, pre-arrest intervention that replaces arrest with respite, family advocacy, wraparound supports, counseling, and healing circles—reducing youth recidivism by 94% and offering a replicable model.



### Understanding the Connection Between Familial Sexual Abuse and Familial Sex Trafficking

Nicole Kelly, Klasey Consulting

TRINITY A

Although familial sex trafficking has been a known pathway of entry into commercial sexual exploitation, it is often overlooked. As more entities are learning about trafficking, familial trafficking is becoming a more prevalent point of discussion. This training will provide an overview of current data about familial trafficking, examples of it, warning signs, and options for providing support to those impacted.

# THURSDAY, JUNE 11: CONFERENCE DAY 2

Most Sessions Open to All



### Listening and Learning From TNOYS Youth

TRINITY B

#### Listening, Supporting, Connecting: The Texas Youth and Parent Helpline

Lindsey Morin, Texas Youth and Parent Helpline

The Texas Youth and Parent Helpline is available 24/7 and provides free, confidential services to vulnerable youth and their families via phone, text, and online chat. Helpline advocates provide a listening ear and connect those seeking help with crisis intervention, as well as support with creating an action plan and mobilizing state and local resources.

#### Foster Care Ombudsman: Helping Texas Foster Youth Advocate

Deirdre Ford and Navorria Plummer, Texas Health and Human Services Office of the Ombudsman

Foster youth in Texas confront a range of challenges as they navigate the child welfare system. The Texas Foster Care Ombudsman exists to protect their rights, resolve concerns, and ensure their voices are heard. Through investigations, the Ombudsman determines if a youth's rights were violated and makes recommendations to DFPS.

**5:00 p.m. Adjourn**

# FRIDAY, JUNE 12: CONFERENCE DAY 3

Half Day -
Most Sessions Open to All

**7:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Statewide Collaborative on Youth Homelessness Meeting & Breakfast (Invite Only)** - GLASS OAKS BALLROOM

The Statewide Collaborative on Youth Homelessness (SCYH) will hold an in-person meeting to bring together stakeholders for networking and information sharing. Staff and leadership from relevant state agencies will join to provide updates and network with other SCYH members. Breakfast will be provided.

**8:30 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. Check-In & Registration Open** - LOBBY REGISTRATION

**9:15 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. Workshops**



## Reimagining Resilience: Cultivating Strengths from Adversity

SAN ANTONIO

### Creativity as a Bridge: Inclusive Engagement Through Neurodivergent Strengths

Winter Sinclair, BCFS Health and Human Services

Neurodivergence comes in all shapes, sizes, and forms, and neurodivergent people are often some of the most creative individuals around. In a world where neurodivergent people often feel silenced, this workshop will help youth and professionals alike learn to leverage their creativity and perspectives to connect with their communities.

### From Adversity to Advantage: Soft Skills That Help Youth Thrive

SaulPaul, Dr. Bianca Neal, and Tyler Neal, Skill Builders Career Academy

Led by GRAMMY-nominated artist SaulPaul and the Skill Builders Career Academy team, this workshop shares a practical, engaging approach to teaching the soft skills today's youth need to thrive. Attendees will experience interactive activities and gain adaptable tools to strengthen communication, professionalism, and career readiness.



## Listening and Learning from Youth

SABINE

### Next Level: Eliminating the Obstacles in Education and Workforce

Alexa Harrison, Des Stemley, and Pandora Ellis, TNOYS' Young Adult Leadership Council

In this workshop, attendees will learn from youth with lived experience on how to help youth overcome the obstacles they face in pursuing higher education and entering the workforce. Through small-group discussions, participants will explore the challenges that create uncertainty and instability while uncovering their strengths and future goals. Join us in leveling the playing field between youth and opportunity to help them reach their goals!

### Home Base: Supports at the Intersection of Multi-System Navigation

Breyton Crittendon, Lukas Anderwald, and Tre'Anthony Howard, TNOYS' Young Adult Leadership Council

This workshop explores how community supports, such as shelters, food pantries, and financial assistance, can serve as prevention tools to reduce foster care, juvenile justice, and homelessness involvement. Participants will examine how policy and regionalized placement practices can keep youth closer to home when placement is necessary, and discuss how stronger, more consistent regulation of SILs can improve extended care outcomes for youth with complex needs. Join us to discuss the existing barriers and support needed for those navigating multiple systems.



## To New Heights - Building an Inclusive Brand



Mary Bergeron and Alex Pryor, Texas Network of Youth Services

SAN MARCOS

Oftentimes, organizations need their brand and marketing to resonate with a range of audiences. This workshop will explore strategies to make an impact among audiences such as youth clients, potential funders, and partners. We'll discuss developing a marketing and storytelling strategy, narrative change, and best practices to amplify the voices of youth and young adults.

# FRIDAY, JUNE 12: CONFERENCE DAY 3

Half Day -
Most Sessions Open to All

### Presence Disrupts Predators: Reducing Trafficking Risk for Foster Youth Through Connection and Family

Jordan Hope Vera, Fostering Hope
BLUEBONNET

Foster youth face an increased risk of trafficking due to instability, unmet emotional needs, and a lack of consistent relationships. This workshop explores how traffickers exploit vulnerability and how safe, relational presence—from families, mentors, and community—acts as a powerful protective factor. Participants will learn practical ways to reduce risk through connection, awareness, and advocacy.

### Charge Up! Building a Team-Based Model to Support Youth Transitioning from Homelessness

Sarah Narendorf, New York University; Alex Shelley, Convenant House Texas; Travon Bailey, Joseph Greenmun, Hannah Lopez, and Nadeem Justice, Charge Up! Alumni Board
PECOS

This workshop describes the creation of Charge Up! - an adaptation of Critical Time Intervention designed to support young adults as they transition from homelessness into a supported housing setting. Together with a group of youth lived-experience experts and partners at Covenant House Texas, a team-based intervention was developed and implemented in a pilot study featuring the Transition-Housing-to-Rapid-Rehousing program. Attend this workshop to hear successes and challenges, as well as preliminary findings on mental health, housing, and employment outcomes. Young adult alumni board members who participated in the program will share their vision for building upon the Charge Up! intervention model.

### Working Together to Elevate Child Safety with Practical Resources

Belinda Swan, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)
TRINITY A

This session invites multidisciplinary professionals to level up their impact on child safety through practical, trauma-informed strategies. Attendees will explore free NCMEC resources, identify emerging online exploitation trends, strengthen prevention efforts, understand reporting procedures, and engage in an interactive discussion on building partnerships to support youth.

### Compliance Confidence for Federal Grants Serving Youth

Matt Lashlee, Texas Education Agency
TRINITY B

Managing federal funds requires strong internal controls, proactive oversight, and compliance with evolving regulations. Learn strategies to identify key requirements, address findings, and implement safeguards to protect funding and ensure accurate reporting, illustrated through practical examples and actionable guidance.

**11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Performance + Closing Keynote - The Architecture of Collaboration: Building Youth Systems That Outlast Us** with Judge Steven Teske - GRAND BALLROOM

Effective youth services depend on collaboration that endures beyond personalities, programs, and leadership changes. Drawing on nationally recognized reforms, Judge Teske will share how cross-system partnerships, including leadership opportunities for youth, helped reduce juvenile crime by 76%. This keynote explores practical strategies for building sustainable collaboration through partnerships, shared data and strategy, and practices that embed collaboration into the culture of youth-serving systems, placing youth on a path to a positive and healthy future.

**12:30 p.m. Adjourn**

# ABOUT TEXAS NETWORK OF YOUTH SERVICES

The mission of Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) is to strengthen services and support for Texas youth and families to help them overcome challenges and achieve healthy development. Our members share a vision of Texas where all youth and young adults are valued, their strengths are recognized, their voices are heard and respected, and they have access to the resources, opportunities, and support they need to meet their goals.

## TNOYS STAFF

Fedora Galasso, Chief Executive Officer
Natalie Ferguson, Operations Administrator
Lauren Rose, Director of Public Policy
Sedoo Ijir, Director of Practice
Jay Wilk, Training Manager
Jermaine Neblett, Director of Partnerships
LaBraia Owens, Partnerships Coordinator
Monique Trejo, Partnerships Specialist and Austin Public Health Intern
Mary Bergeron, Director of Communications
Elizabeth Medina Madrigal, Communications Coordinator
Alex Pryor, Graphic Designer
Isaiah Washington, Alumni

## TNOYS YOUNG ADULT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Alana Marquez, Conroe
Alexa Harrison, El Paso
Bretyon Crittendon, Austin
Bri Belcher, Austin
Desiree Holliday, Dallas
Des Stemley, San Antonio
Drew Sage, Amarillo
Elleana Wade, Marble Falls
Jazlyn Lee, Amarillo
Lukas Anderwald, Austin
Lynette Owens, Hallsville
Pandorah Ellis, Houston
Persia Cubit, Corpus Christi
Tre'Anthony Howard, Fort Worth

## TEXAS EMERGING LEADERS BOARD MEMBERS

Aniyah Richardson, Lufkin
Betty Bajika, Denton
Caitlyn Truitt, Mission
Dahlia-Rose Alexis, San Antonio
Daisy Fowler, Corpus Christi
Dana Williams, El Paso
Dani Williams, Houston
Jasalyn Franco, Austin
Jasmin Romano, Houston
Katherine Squires, Waco
Lilyana Kunkel, Mineral Wells
Noah Otote-Ingram, Houston
Derussell Saunders, Houston

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

TNOYS is led by a Board of Directors comprising representatives from member organizations, member regions, and the greater community.

Ashley Barnes, Lena Pope, Fort Worth - Chair
Aurora Harris, Young Invincibles, Houston - First Vice Chair
DaVina Morris, BCFS Health and Human Services, East Texas - Second Vice Chair
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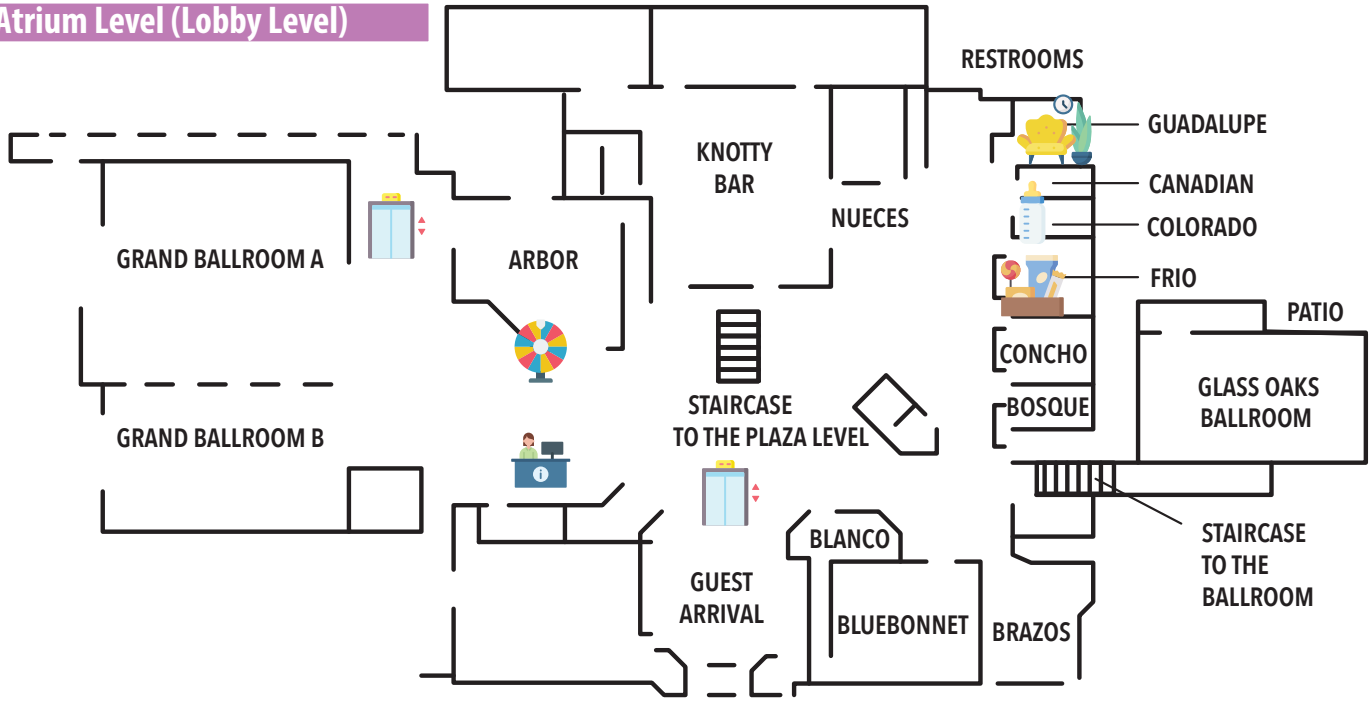
Courtney Seals, LifeWorks, Austin
Veronica Constante, Deep East Texas Council of Governments, Lufkin
Jeff Alexander, Harris County Resources for Children and Adults, Houston
Derrick McKnight, Austin Public Health, Austin
Krystale Bezio, Upbring, Austin
Delesha Jones, Covenant House Texas, Houston
Katherine Valencia ,El Paso Center for Children, El Paso
Erin M. Espinosa, Evident Change, Austin
Tim Packer, The Cove - Heart of Texas, Waco

# HOTEL MAP

## MAP KEY

- Registration
- Relaxation Room
- Youth Lounge: Open to youth and young adults aged 15-26
- Exhibit Hall
- Lactation/Nursing Room
- Member Lounge: Open to TNOYS professional members and staff at member organizations
- Elevators

## Atrium Level (Lobby Level)




## Plaza Level (Lower Level)

