

Texas Network of Youth Services

2019

Annual Report



TNOYS
TEXAS NETWORK OF
YOUTH SERVICES
THEIR FUTURE IS OUR BUSINESS.
www.tnoys.org

Executive Statement

2019 was an important year for TNOYS as we created our new strategic plan to guide our work forward over the next two years. The strategic planning process gave us an opportunity to think about the values that drive TNOYS' efforts, how our work has reflected them in recent years, and how we can continue to build on them going forward. Over this past year, a few of those key values truly stood out.

Youth Voice and Youth-Adult Partnerships

TNOYS has long held the belief that in order to best support and serve youth, their voices must be incorporated into our efforts and they must be given opportunities for partnership with adults. In 2019, we took steps to more substantively build relationships with youth and incorporate their voices into our work, most notably by hiring several young adults with lived experience as staff members and ensuring that our trainings and annual conference workshops incorporated youth as presenters. And, the advocacy of youth partners during the 86th Texas Legislative Session played a crucial role in securing key funding and policy advances. In the coming years, we have made it a priority to ensure youth, particularly those representing a diversity of backgrounds and experiences, are involved in all we do and that we encourage others to do the same.

Cross-Systems Collaboration

The youth we and our member organizations serve often touch many different systems and institutions. That is why it is critical that we reach across issues and systems to ensure that we take a comprehensive approach to best support Texas' young people and families. In 2019, we were proud to take a truly collaborative approach to many of our most important efforts, including co-hosting with the Texas Department of Family Services our multi-city Building Alliances training, and working on two major collaborative projects — Safety Nets for Students and Families and a new project to address commercial sexual exploitation of youth (CSEY). This focus on cross-systems collaboration was also apparent at our Annual Conference, where participants represented the fields of education, criminal justice, health and mental health, and much more. We also began this year a new partnership with Texas Juvenile Justice Department to support probation departments in securing placements for high needs youth. Keep an eye out for more of this collaboration from us in the coming years.

Research and Data

TNOYS has always made it a priority to bring the latest research and evidence-based practices to our member organizations and others in youth-serving positions. This was a significant year for these efforts, as our staff and partners traveled the state bringing dozens of high-quality trainings to professionals from Dallas to the Gulf Coast, along with multiple online webinars. We also saw several years of research on youth homelessness issues pay off as we were able to draw on groundbreaking research we conducted to secure the first-ever state funding specifically for youth experiencing homelessness. Going forward, we will continue to emphasize our commitment to research and proven practices that ensure the best outcomes for youth and families.

Equity and Inclusion

Issues of equity and inclusion have a great impact on the lives of the young people TNOYS and our members serve. We recognize that advancing values of equity and inclusion is critical to creating successful outcomes for these youth and their families. That's why we have been working to increase our commitment to these values, including by adding a workshop track on equity to our 2019 Annual Conference offerings. Look for us to be more intentional about incorporating equity and inclusion into our work in the coming years.

These are just a few of the highlights of our work in 2019. You can find a full summary of what we accomplished in the body of this report, organized according to our three-pronged approach to systems change: policy, practice, and participation. Thank you for taking the time to learn more about our efforts — we are excited to share with you what we accomplished over the past year together with our many members and partners.

Sincerely,



Christine Gendron
Executive Director

POLICY



Photo: TNOYS YALC member Franklin Fisher testifies during the 86th Texas Legislative Session about funding to support youth experiencing homelessness. He is joined by TNOYS members Leslie Bourne of Covenant House Texas and Danielle Owens of LifeWorks.

"TNOYS owes a special thanks to our member organizations and young adult leadership council members who were actively involved in helping to inform and advocate for tnoys' legislative agenda this session. Having youth and providers share their perspectives and experiences directly with lawmakers makes a real difference in persuading them to make the kind of policy changes that will positively impact youth and those who serve them."

- Lauren Rose, TNOYS' Director of Public Policy

Advocated for a robust legislative agenda to advance the priorities of youth and providers during the 86th Texas Legislative Session. This advocacy resulted in significant wins, most notably securing the first-ever state funding specifically to address the needs of youth experiencing homelessness. Other wins included securing a funding increase for emergency shelters serving children and youth in foster care and securing legislation to support students experiencing housing instability.

Hired a full-time Director of Public Policy, Lauren Rose, as well as a Policy Specialist, Prince Hayward, a young adult with lived experience who has greatly enhanced integration of youth voice into our advocacy work. Hosted two webinars and drafted a report recapping the 86th Texas Legislative Session, to help youth services providers and other key stakeholders understand how policy changes related to youth and families will impact them and their work.

Hosted the second Innovation and Excellence in Child Welfare showcase in Austin during the legislative session, where leading youth services providers from across the state shared best practices with decision-makers working on policy to enhance Texas' youth and family services.

Hosted monthly meetings of the Houston Area Partners for Youth, a group aimed at bringing legislative and regulatory updates to Houston and engaging Houston-area stakeholders in cross-systems discussions focused on building resilient youth, young adults, and families.

PRACTICE

Photo: Attendees at TNOYS' 2nd Annual Leadership Conference for Nonprofit Executives participate in a workshop session.



"I like that TNOYS put youth in charge of the different workshops at the Annual Conference and let us be involved in the event's communications and marketing. It was a good learning experience to show we do have a voice."

- Charles Batiste, member of TNOYS' Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) and attendee of TNOYS' 2019 Annual Conference

◆ Hosted the second annual leadership conference for nonprofit executives, "Leading Together," providing high-level leadership training and professional development for executives in the nonprofit sector. Offered 50+ training workshops for hundreds of professional and youth attendees at our Annual Conference in June.

◆ Hosted 78 virtual and in-person trainings and events throughout the year, exposing over 3,900 attendees to high-quality training incorporating evidence-based and promising practices.

◆ Through the collaborative Safety Nets for Students and Families project, trained 1,053 educators and service providers along Texas' Gulf Coast through 51 online and in-person trainings to help them serve youth and families who continue to face housing challenges after Hurricane Harvey. TNOYS also distributed \$550,000 in grant funding from the Rebuild Texas Fund to youth-serving organizations in the area to help them build capacity, meet basic needs, and more.

◆ Collaborated with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to host "Building Alliances with Youth to Prevent Runaway and Other Challenging Behaviors," a full-day training held in three Texas cities featuring youth with lived experience as presenters. The training equipped CPS caseworkers, service providers, and others to address the problem of youth running away from foster care placements.

◆ Partnered with the Texas Office of the Governor to help Texas' service providers in building out specialized services to meet the needs of young people who have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

PARTNERSHIP



Photo: TNOYS Program Specialist Lyric Wardlow leads a session during the youth leadership track at the 2019 TNOYS Annual Conference.

"The TNOYS Young Adult Leadership Council is important because youth with lived experience have the opportunity to build a resume of lived expertise and get to connect with other youth with similar backgrounds."

- Lyric Wardlow, TNOYS Program Specialist

- ✦ Fully integrated youth as partners and participants in our Annual Conference, with a track specifically for them to learn alongside providers and other conference participants, and opportunities for them to participate in the conference planning process and present sessions.
- ✦ Hired three young adults who have lived experience with foster care and/or homelessness to join TNOYS' staff, working alongside our adult staff members and helping to enhance our commitment to elevating youth voice in our work and the work of others.
- ✦ Continued to organize the Young Adult Leadership Council, which incorporates youth voice into TNOYS' and our members' work and provides leadership opportunities for young adults who have experience with foster care, homelessness, juvenile justice system involvement, or other at-risk situations.
- ✦ Hosted the 33rd PEAKS Adventure Camp, which uses a traditional camp setting to help youth develop leadership skills and adult partners value youth contributions.
- ✦ Hosted our biennial Youth in Action Capitol Day, during which hundreds of youth from across Texas who have been part of the foster care system, are experiencing homelessness, or are otherwise at risk traveled to Austin to learn more about the policymaking process and make their voices heard. Young adults were also incorporated into the planning process.

About TNOYS

TNOYS' mission is to strengthen services and support for Texas youth and families to help them overcome challenges and achieve healthy development. We advance this mission through a three-pronged approach to systems change that encompasses policy, practice, and partnership. Visit tnoys.org to learn more and support our work.

THEIR FUTURE IS OUR BUSINESS.

Team

Christine Gendron, Executive Director
Lauren Rose, Director of Public Policy
Ann-Charlotte Proffitt, Program Manager
Rachel Brownlie, Development and
Training Coordinator
Shannon Bloesch, Program Coordinator

Lyric Wardlow, Program Specialist
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Alex Polk, Communications Specialist
Beth Duke, Office Manager
Mary Bergeron, Communications Consultant
Anna Hallmark, Media Consultant

Board

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Kellie Stallings, Vice Chair
Melissa Opheim, Secretary
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Candreas Jones

Robert Ellis
Allicia Frye
Jeffrey Reed
Charles Rotramel
Kym Olson
Sarah C. Narendorf
Diane Santa Maria
Noelita Lugo

Youth Council

Charles Batiste
Franklin Fisher
Robyn Parker
Caleb Pitts
Skylar Younger
Alex Zapata

Member Organizations

ACH Child & Family Services, Fort Worth; Alternative Resident Management Services, Goldthwaite; ACCESS, Jacksonville; Andrews Center, Tyler; Angel Reach, Conroe; Baptist Child and Family Services, San Antonio; Boys Haven of America, Beaumont; Buckner, Beaumont; Cal Farley's Boys Ranch, Amarillo; CCD Counseling, Denton; Central Texas Table of Grace, Round Rock; Central Texas Youth Services, Belton; Children's Aid Society, Wichita Falls; City House, Inc., Plano; Clothed by Faith, Katy; Community Healthcore, Longview; Communities in Schools of Coastal Bend; Communities in Schools of Southeast Texas; Connections Individual and Family Services, New Braunfels; Covenant House Texas, Houston; Deep East Texas Council of Governments, Jasper; East Texas Open Door, Marshall; Ebby House, Dallas; El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission, Austin; El Paso Center for Children, El Paso; Family Ties Family Resource Services, Waller; Fort Bend Family Promise; Fort Bend ISD; Greater San Marcos Youth Council, San Marcos; Gracewood, Spring Branch; Gulfwinds RTC, Bay City; Harmony Family Services, Abilene; Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults, Houston; Hearts with Hope Foundation, Spring; Heartstrings Youth Village, Fort Bend; High Sky Children's Ranch, Midland; Hope's Path, Spring; Houston Community College, Houston; Houston reVision, Houston; Jonathan's Place, Garland; Juliette Fowler Homes, Dallas; K'Star, Marble Falls; LifeWorks, Austin; Manor ISD; Mid-Coast Family Services, Victoria; Montrose Center, Houston; Our Friends Place, Dallas; Parks Youth Ranch, Sugarland; Pegasus Schools, Lockhart; Promise House, Dallas; Reissa Foundation, Austin; Roy Maas' Youth Alternatives, San Antonio; SAFE Alliance, Austin; SCAN, Laredo; STARRY, Round Rock; Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards, Austin; Texas Homeless Education Office, Austin; The Children's Assessment Center, Houston; The Cove Heart of Texas, Waco; The Salvation Army YARC, Houston; Upbring, Austin; Thru Project, San Antonio; Twin City Mission, Bryan; Williams House Emergency Shelters, Goldthwaite; World Youth Foundation, Houston