



39th Annual  
TNOYS Conference on  
Services to Youth and Families  
Houston, Texas | May 23-26, 2022

**#TNOYS2022**



# WELCOME!

## TNOYS' 39TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON SERVICES TO YOUTH AND FAMILIES

This year, for our 39th Annual Conference, we encourage you to “Rise to Your Potential.” We are thrilled to collaborate and connect in person after pivoting to a completely virtual conference over the last two years. The many challenges and opportunities of the past two years have demonstrated that when we challenge perceptions and the status quo, we can take our strengths and all youth-serving systems to greater heights. Young people, providers, and communities have demonstrated tremendous resilience throughout the past two years of a global pandemic—all while facing devastating challenges like the ongoing capacity crisis. We recognize that providers and youth alike have been stretched thin trying to do more with less, yet TNOYS members have stepped up to find new ways to achieve their goals, make the most with what they have, and work together to meet their collective needs. We hope that we can come together within a supportive community to inspire and learn from each other, and build the future of youth and family services in Texas.

Now more than ever, we're proud to represent a strong community of youth-serving providers working across systems and in every Texas region. As we welcome more providers to our network, TNOYS strives to help the youth-services community center the voices of youth and young adults with lived experience—especially those within the BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities who are overrepresented in Texas systems. Through authentic partnership with the communities, families, and young people they serve, TNOYS lays the foundation for providers to rise to their collective potential. TNOYS applauds each and every one of you for your resilience, your perseverance, and your creativity to overcome the repeated hurdles placed in your paths and make progress toward our vision of a 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.

After nearly 40 years, TNOYS continues to be at the cutting edge of the youth services field. This year's conference agenda includes opportunities to learn from and alongside young people with lived experience, with time set aside for specialized training, experiential learning, networking, and reflection. We hope you take advantage of this opportunity to reflect, ground, and have fun while you learn from and collaborate with our diverse group of participants.

True to TNOYS' mission and to the missions of our member organizations, our focus continues to be on ensuring the most vulnerable but resilient Texas youth and families have opportunities to succeed. If your organization is not yet a TNOYS member, we encourage you to join this week.

Thank you for choosing to spend your week with us.

Sincerely,  
**Fedora Galasso**  
TNOYS Chief Executive Officer



# FEATURED SPEAKERS AND PERFORMERS

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## Marlon Peterson | Keynote Speaker

Marlon is a writervist. Since his decade of incarceration he has organized and advocated alongside the formerly incarcerated and other marginalized identities. Marlon is the author of *Bird Uncaged: An Abolitionist's Freedom Song* and host of the *DEcarcerated* podcast. His TED Talk, *Am I not human? A call for criminal justice reform*, has amassed over 1.2 million views. As a Soros Fellow, Senior Atlantic Fellow, and Aspen Civil Society Fellow, Marlon has used his activism and pen to advocate for safer communities, reduce the footprint of law enforcement, and amplify the work of others worldwide.



## SaulPaul | Keynote Speaker & Performer

SaulPaul is a two-time Grammy-nominated musician. He has had two #1 songs on Sirius XM as well as a top five and top fifteen album on iTunes. He has also presented three TEDx Talks, performed at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, and been featured on *America's Got Talent*. In 2021, he was featured in *The New York Times* as well as on *NPR*. His life story of transitioning from tragedy to triumph is captured in the documentary, *Tower to Tower*, as well as his memoir, *Be The Change*. Whether via art, entrepreneurship, or community service, SaulPaul is committed to #BeTheChange.



## Malika Whitley | Keynote Speaker

Malika Whitley has worked in art curation and international relationship management since 2007. In 2010 Malika founded ChopArt, which to date has served over 40,000 youth worldwide and continues to grow globally. Malika is frequently recognized for her leadership working with youth experiencing homelessness. She is the recipient of many honors including Atlanta Tribune's "Young, Gifted, and Black" honoree, Atlanta Tribune's "50 Under 50," and Young Nonprofit Professionals Network's "30 Under 30." Malika's passion is fighting for human rights and freedom in all its forms through all facets of her work.



## Christopher "Yungchris" Thomas | Emcee

Christopher Thomas has visited 24 countries around the world as a dance teacher, choreographer, and performer. Thomas spent a year in Bangkok, Thailand training local pop stars and performing at events throughout Southeast Asia before he moved back to Houston in 2011 to start his own dance company, Sonkiss'd Dance Theater. Thomas' students have gone on to work and tour with major artists, including Taylor Swift and Beyoncé.



## Justin Gessel the "Houston Magic Man" | Performer

Justin has performed all over the country in his 10+ years of experience. He has now settled down in Houston, Texas, and he's ready to bring his magic to H-town. Prepare for an interactive performance where you'll see that magic is so much more than just sleight-of-hand!



## Ian Syder Blake (He/His) | Performer

Ian Syder-Blake has made it his mission to promote drag kings and entertainers from all backgrounds. He has been entertaining for over 9 years, winning multiple awards and titles. He is the creator/host of the *HTown Kings* and the *Backyard Drag Show*.



## Tera Bravo "Mystic Flares" | Performer

Tera Bravo has been a variety performer for over 10 years and has performed at events around the world. Tera loves to light up any event with her numerous light up performance props and will be dazzling the 39th Annual Conference audience with an ambient LED.

# FEATURED ENTERTAINMENT

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## **Exhibit Hall and Raffle**

Tuesday, May 24 - Thursday, May 26 - GALLERIA FOYER

Visit our exhibit hall to learn about dozens of organizations that work with youth and families, from health care companies to institutions of higher education. Many exhibitors are also featured in the virtual exhibit hall on our online conference platform. At each virtual exhibit booth, you'll be able to connect with exhibitors via video chat, view pre-recorded videos and other materials, and share contact information.

Visit all of the in-person booths to be entered into a raffle for great prizes. Raffle tickets are distributed as a part of sponsor and exhibitor packages, and may also be purchased on-site at the conference. The conference emcee will announce raffle winners throughout the event. This year's raffle prizes are better than ever and include hunting trips to Argentina and New Zealand, jewelry from Kendra Scott, virtual Excel courses, and gift cards to local businesses!

## **TNOYS Member Lounge**

Tuesday, May 24 - Thursday, May 26 - WEST ALABAMA

Individual TNOYS members and employees of TNOYS member organizations are invited to step into our conference member lounge to recharge.

## **Youth Lounge**

Tuesday, May 24 - Thursday, May 26 - PLAZA II

Youth and young adult attendees are invited to take advantage of our youth lounge to connect with other young people, engage in youth-focused activities, and enjoy a restful space created for youth, by youth.

## **TNOYS Member Reception + Member Awards**

Tuesday, May 24, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. - MONARCH ROOM

All TNOYS members and staff from member organizations are invited to this festive and fun reception. You will have the chance to network with other members from across the state and enjoy appetizers and a cash bar. Our Chief Executive Officer will also present several TNOYS awards to outstanding individuals in the youth-services field, in recognition of their achievements and dedication to serving Texas youth and young adults. If you aren't yet a member and would like to RSVP for the member reception, join here: <http://tnoys.org/become-a-member>.



# PROGRAM GUIDE

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



DIVERSITY, EQUITY,  
AND INCLUSION



RESOURCES AND  
CROSS-SYSTEMS COLLABORATION



PERSONAL AND  
ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP



RESEARCH AND  
PERFORMANCE-BASED PRACTICES



YOUTH VOICE AND  
YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP



POLICY AND  
GOVERNMENT



TRAUMA, HEALTH,  
AND SAFETY



YOUTH-ONLY  
PROGRAMMING

TNOYS' conference features programming and activities for both youth and professional attendees. On Tuesday, May 24, we strongly encourage youth to take advantage of and attend the youth-only workshops, specifically curated for youth attendees. On Wednesday, May 25, and Thursday, May 26, 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 will be marked accordingly.

The following symbol marks workshops that are restricted to professionals:



Workshops that are restricted to professionals

# SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

## Monday, May 23: Pre-Conference Institutes

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. On-Site Registration for Institutes - PLAZA FOYER

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Institute #1 Introduction to Motivational Interviewing - PLAZA I

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Institute #2 TBRI®: Practical Applications - PLAZA II

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Institute #3 Introduction to Youth Thrive™ - WEST ALABAMA

3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. TNOYS Board of Directors Meeting (by invitation only) - RIVER OAKS

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Early Check In/Conference Registration - PLAZA FOYER

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## Tuesday, May 24: Conference Day 1

*Separate professional and youth programming*

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Check In & Registration Open - GALLERIA FOYER

9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. TNOYS Welcome + Keynote (Open to all) - GALLERIA BALLROOM

- **The Best Parts of Us** with Marlon Peterson, Author, Youth Development Expert, and Activist for Justice-Involved Youth

### *Professional Programming*

Featuring select sessions designed for youth services providers and stakeholders

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

12:15 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. Lunch on your own

2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Workshops

### *Youth Programming*

Featuring a variety of interactive skill-building sessions designed for youth and young adults

10:30 a.m. - 10:50 a.m. Youth Orientation & Icebreaker Activity - PLAZA II

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Workshops - PLAZA I & II

12:10 p.m. - 1:10 p.m. Youth Lunch (Youth & Young Adults only) - PLAZA II

1:20 p.m. - 2:20 p.m. Workshops - PLAZA I & II

2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Workshops - PLAZA I & II

3:45 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Performance + Keynote Panel (Open to All) - GALLERIA BALLROOM

- **Special Performance by Justin Gessel, the "Houston Magic Man"**
- **Improving Youth-Serving Systems by Centering Youth Voice** with I'munique Liggins, Montoya Thomas, Grace Goetz, Cameren Collins, and Precious West, TNOYS Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) Members; and Brenda Woolley, TNOYS

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Member Reception (Open to all TNOYS Members) - MONARCH ROOM

- **TNOYS Member Awards**

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## Wednesday, May 25: Conference Day 2

*All sessions are open to professionals and youth unless otherwise indicated*

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Check In & Registration Open - GALLERIA FOYER

9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. Keynote & Performance - GALLERIA BALLROOM

- **A Time to Rise** with SaulPaul, A Musician with A Message

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

12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Luncheon (Open to All) - GALLERIA BALLROOM

- **Special Performance by Ian Syder-Blake (He/his), Award-winning Drag King Entertainer**
- **TNOYS Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) Graduation, celebrating:** Brenda Woolley, Jorge Leyva, Kedrick Spivey, Sally Uzomba, Shaylynn Wylie, Zane Ocon, Betty Bajika, Cameren Collins, Elizabeth Madrigal, Grace Goetz, I'munique Liggins, and Tatyana Carraway

1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Workshops

3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Workshops

## Thursday, May 26: Conference Day 3

*All sessions are open to professionals and youth unless otherwise indicated*

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.: Check In & Registration Open - GALLERIA FOYER

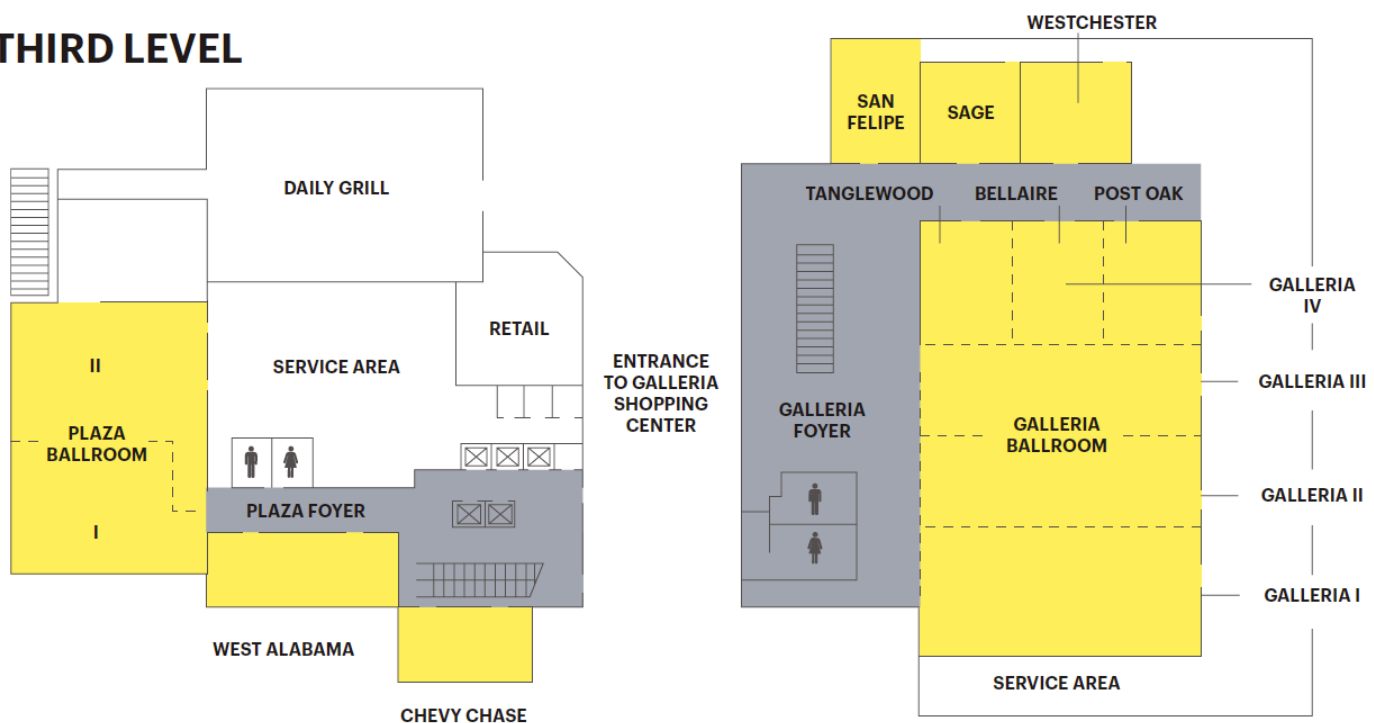
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.: Workshops

10:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.: Closing Keynote + Performance (Open to all) - GALLERIA BALLROOM

- **All Work, All Play Towards Healing: How Creativity Informs Trauma Recovery in Youth** with Malika Whitley; Arts Curator and Activist
- **Special Performance by Tera Bravo, "Mystic Flares"**

# HOTEL FLOOR MAP

## THIRD LEVEL



# WORKSHOPS AT A GLANCE



DIVERSITY, EQUITY,  
AND INCLUSION



PERSONAL &  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
LEADERSHIP



YOUTH VOICE AND  
YOUTH-ADULT  
PARTNERSHIP

## TUESDAY MAY 24

POST OAK

BELLAIRE

TANGLEWOOD

Session #1  
10:30am - 12:00pm  
Professional Track Workshops

Employing Youth  
with Lived  
Experiences

Workforce:  
Challenge and  
Opportunity

Empowering  
Today's Youth for  
Tomorrow's Future

Session #2  
2:00pm - 3:30pm  
Professional Track Workshops

Race, Ethnicity,  
Mental Health,  
Workforce

A Hope  
Journey

Helping Kids  
Be Kids

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## WEDNESDAY MAY 25

Session #3  
10:30am - 12:00pm

Language Matters

Scarcity: How to  
Help Clients  
Manage Time

Resilience  
in Action

Why Do Teens  
Runaway?

Session #4  
1:45pm - 3:15pm

The State of  
LGBTQ+ Equality  
in Texas

Tell Your Story

Youth & Recovery  
Peer Support

Session #5  
3:30pm - 5:00pm

Diversity, Equity, &  
Engagement

Shameless Self  
Care for  
Professionals

Youth  
Health  
Advocacy in  
Schools

Why Youth  
Enter the  
Justice  
System

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## THURSDAY MAY 26

Session #6  
9:00am - 10:30am

Breaking Down  
Barriers: LGBTQ+,  
Homelessness, CSEY

To New Heights:  
Building Inclusive  
Brands

Engaging Youth  
Leaders





RESOURCES &  
CROSS-SYSTEMS  
COLLABORATION

WESTCHESTER

Pathway to  
Desistance

The Quest for  
Identification  
Documents



RESEARCH AND  
PERFORMANCE-  
DRIVEN PRACTICE

SAGE

Using Data to Free  
People from  
Human Trafficking

Data Drives  
Innovation



POLICY AND  
GOVERNMENT

SAN FELIPE

TDHCA ERA Housing  
and Stability Services  
Program

Developing TNOYS'  
Cross-Systems Youth  
Policy Agenda



TRAUMA, HEALTH,  
AND SAFETY

GALLERIA III

Brave  
Conversations

Using SMS to Help  
Teens Access  
Family Planning

Considerations for  
Serving Afghan &  
Central American  
Families

Centering Youth  
Voices in Your  
Trauma Approach

Innovative  
Strategies to  
Connect with  
Military Families

Hope & Healing  
After Trauma

The Science of  
Learning &  
Behavior

Beyond Burnout

Texas  
Workforce  
Commission  
Initiatives

Role of  
Child  
Welfare  
Boards

Youth Rights for  
Youth Experiencing  
Homelessness

Accessing  
Foster Care  
Ombudsman  
Office

Ending  
Youth  
Homeless-  
ness in  
Austin

Neurodiversity,  
IDD, Juvenile  
Justice

Creative  
Connections:  
More Than Art

Neuroscience of  
Addiction &  
Innovative  
Treatment

College Resources  
for Students with  
Foster Care  
Experience

Talk Saves Lives

Prevention &  
Community Well-being  
Division at DFPS

Complex Trauma in  
Overlooked  
Populations (CSEY)

# YOUTH WORKSHOPS AT A GLANCE



## TUESDAY, MAY 24

### PLAZA I

### PLAZA II

Session #1  
11:00am - 12:00pm

Rise from Pieces  
to Peace

The Quest for  
Identification Documents

Session #2  
1:20pm - 2:20pm

Budgeting  
In 2032

A Path to Higher Education for  
People with Experience in  
Foster Care

Session #3  
2:30pm - 3:30pm

Healthy vs. Unhealthy  
Relationships

Housing: What You Need  
to Know

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

TNOYS provides continuing education credit hours for professionals. Conference attendees are eligible to earn up to 14 CEU hours throughout the 2.5-day in-person conference. Attendees are eligible to earn 5-6 additional CEU hours for participating in pre-conference institutes, and another 5+ CEU hours for participating in the virtual conference day. 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 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 (unless noted in the CEU Certificate) are approved for Licensed Child Care Administrator (LCCA) and Licensed Child Placing Agency Administrator (LCPAA) licenses. This conference is also approved for CEUs for the following substance abuse professional licenses: LCDCs, Associate Prevention Specialists (APS), Certified Prevention Specialists (CPS), and Peer Mentor/Peer Recovery Designation (PM/PRC) through our partnership with Connections Individual and Family Services.

# MONDAY, MAY 23

Pre-Conference Institutes  
(separate registration required)

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## **On-Site Registration for Institutes**

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. - PLAZA FOYER

## **Introduction to Motivational Interviewing**



9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. - PLAZA I

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication with particular attention to the language of change. It is designed to strengthen personal motivation for a specific goal by exploring the person's own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion. This introductory training includes an in-depth discussion around the core principles of MI as well as a practice session in facilitating an MI conversation.

*Presented by Dr. Erin Espinosa, Evident Change*

## **Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®): Practical Applications**



9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. - PLAZA II

TBRI® is an evidence-based, attachment-based, and trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. This session will focus on practical applications of TBRI® principles in various settings, including drop in centers/outreach, emergency shelters, transitional care, and the juvenile justice sector.

*Presented by Ian Bracken, M.Ed, and Dr. Angie Proctor, Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, Texas Christian University*

## **Introduction to Youth Thrive™**



10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. - WEST ALABAMA

Youth Thrive™ is a research-based approach that identifies protective and promotive factors to increase the likelihood that adolescents develop into healthy, thriving adults. This introductory session to Youth Thrive™ is relevant to everyone who works with young people, including child welfare system administrators, caseworks, and staff at private agencies and nonprofits. TNOYS will offer training in the full curriculum in Fall 2022.

*Presented by Sedoo Ijir, MPH, and Kennedy Quintanilla, TNOYS*

## **TNOYS Board of Directors Meeting (by invitation)**

3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - RIVER OAKS BOARD ROOM

## **Early Check In/Conference Registration**

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - PLAZA FOYER

# TUESDAY, MAY 24

Conference Day 1 (Separate Professional and Youth Programming)

**8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Check In & Registration Open** – GALLERIA FOYER

**9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. TNOYS Welcome + Keynote: The Best Parts of Us** with Marlon Peterson – GALLERIA BALLROOM

A firm believer in the possibilities of every human, Marlon will offer words of inspiration through his lived experiences as a formerly incarcerated author, entrepreneur, social justice advocate, and world traveler.

## *PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMMING:*

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



### **Employing Youth with Lived Experiences**

Tiona Moore and Brenda Woolley, TNOYS  
POST OAK

Employing Youth and Young Adults (YYA) with lived experiences can help strengthen organizational practices and services overall. Join us to learn TNOYS' approach to incorporating YYA with lived experience into your organization and the impact for YYA, the organization, and its constituents.



### **Workforce: Challenge and Opportunity**

Frank Eckles, Academy for Competent Youth Work  
BELLAIRE

The workforce is shifting in many ways and finding and retaining staff post-COVID has many programs struggling. Where is this heading and what will help us best position our programs in this new reality? This workshop will discuss these factors and highlight resources to strengthen staffing.



### **Empowering Today's Youth to Protect Tomorrow's Future**

Denise Mears and Youth Presenter, Project Protect Our Children  
TANGLEWOOD

Our youth have the capacity to fight to end human trafficking. Join us to learn how members of the Youth Action Board (YAB) collectively collaborate, brainstorm, and reflect on solutions and event ideas to raise awareness about human trafficking. Workshop attendees will learn about tools and resources to conceptualize, plan, and implement human trafficking awareness events and activities.



### **Pathway to Desistance: Girls, Gangs, and Juvenile Justice System Involvement**

Erin Espinosa, Evident Change  
WESTCHESTER

Data show that girls now account for 38% of gang membership in California as well as increases in both female gang involvement and arrests for serious offenses. This presentation will discuss the relationship of girls to gangs (especially in transnational communities), the pathway girls take to and through the juvenile justice system, and strategies for reducing gang involvement.



### **Using Data to Free People from Human Trafficking**

Rebecca Austen, John Nehme, and Tally Jorn, Allies Against Slavery  
SAGE



In partnership with the Office of the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team, Allies Against Slavery is using data and technology to combat human trafficking. This workshop will discuss how Lighthouse, an innovative software platform, enables professionals across Texas to identify victims of trafficking, coordinate care, and gain insights from data.



### **TDHCA ERA Housing and Stability Services Program**

Cate Tracz, Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)  
SAN FELIPE



The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) provides assistance to local communities and nonprofits to assist income-eligible households to maintain or obtain stable housing. This session will offer an overview of the Housing Stability Services Program, administered by TDHCA and funded by the Treasury through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program.



### **Brave Conversations**

Sharon Hoefer, Texas Institute of Child and Family Wellbeing, UT Austin;  
Ana Belen Zelaya and Carolina Salmeron, Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy  
GALLERIA III



Youth in care disproportionately experience negative health outcomes such as unintended pregnancy and dating violence. Participants in this workshop will learn how to engage youth in foster care in trauma-informed, open, and ongoing conversations about sexual health and relationships, and how to shift from reacting to youth behavior to proactive guidance and support.

## **12:15 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. Lunch on Your Own**

## **2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Workshops**



### **Race, Ethnicity, and Mental Health in the Workforce**

Sedoo Ijir and Natalie Ferguson, TNOYS  
POST OAK

National and global attention to racial injustice has prompted many employers to strengthen their commitment to equity, yet racial and ethnic disparities are still impacting mental health in the workplace. In this workshop, participants will strengthen their understanding of how racial and ethnic identities intersect with mental health, as well as best practices to help young people of all backgrounds successfully enter the workforce and maintain their mental health while working.



### **A Hope Journey: Finding the Light from Within**

Adrian Peay, Big Homie, Lil Homie Mentoring  
BELLAIRE

As we put 2020 - 2021 in our rearview mirrors, we must admit our worlds have been disturbed internally and externally. Join the experts of Big Homie, Lil Homie Mentoring to look back but not dwell on the holistic impact of 2020 - 2021, gain insight on navigating your life through a hope-centered lens, and learn how the science of hope can address social change.



### **Helping Kids Be Kids: Understanding and Promoting Normalcy**

Sarah Crockett and Youth Presenter, Texas CASA  
TANGLEWOOD

This workshop will help people learn about normalcy, why it matters, and the role each of us play in supporting normalcy in the Texas child welfare system. By making normalcy a true priority, instilling open communication and collaboration, and ensuring children's voices are heard, everyone involved in the child welfare system can help ensure a better experience for children in foster care.



### **The Quest for Identification Documents**

Mary Christine Reed, Texas Foster Youth Justice Project  
WESTCHESTER

Navigating society without identification is extremely challenging. However, the processes to obtain these documents are complex, and many systems-involved youth and young adults enter adulthood without them. This presentation will cover the basics of how to obtain a birth certificate, social security card, Texas ID cards, and drivers licenses, as well as common barriers and tips to overcome them.





### **Data Drives Innovation: Practical Uses of Data to Support Innovation**



Kyle Kerrigan, Upbring  
SAGE

In this workshop, Upbring's Director of Data & Analytics Kyle Kerrigan will discuss three practical uses of data to support your organization's innovation strategy. Attendees will learn about why and how data drives innovation, the growing need to expand innovation in the youth services sector, and how to frame data questions that uncover solutions, not merely measure performance.



### **Developing TNOYS' Cross-Systems Youth Policy Agenda**



Lauren Rose and Theo Adams-Hernandez, TNOYS  
SAN FELIPE

TNOYS is developing a statewide, cross-systems youth policy agenda to strengthen services and support for Texas youth and families. TNOYS has spent several months researching priority issues and listening to and learning from Texas providers, youth, and young adults across systems. Join us to hear what we have learned so far, and to provide your input on issues that TNOYS should address in our policy agenda.



### **Using SMS to Help Teens Access Family Planning Services**



Graci D'Amore and Youth Presenter, Jane's Due Process  
GALLERIA III

In this session, a youth activist will discuss the legal barriers that young people face when trying to prevent pregnancy in states with parental involvement laws for abortion and contraception. Participants will also learn about the Jane's Due Process helpline, how to support young people who need confidential family planning services, and referral resources for teens who reside in contraceptive deserts.

## **3:45 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Performance + Keynote Panel: Improving Youth-Serving Systems by Centering Youth Voice**

with I'munique Liggins, Montoya Thomas, Grace Goetz, Cameren Collins, and Precious West, TNOYS Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC); and Brenda Woolley, TNOYS. Facilitated by Alex Polk, TNOYS – GALLERIA BALLROOM

- Special Performance by Justin Gessel, the "Houston Magic Man"

During this panel discussion, youth leaders with lived expertise in homelessness, foster care, and juvenile justice will discuss the importance of youth voice when strengthening systems. Attendees will also deepen their understanding of how we can amplify the voices of youth to build systems change.

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

## **5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Member Reception + Member Awards (Open to all TNOYS Members)** – MONARCH ROOM

All TNOYS members and staff from member organizations are invited to this festive and fun reception. You will have the chance to network with other members from across the state and enjoy appetizers and a cash bar. Our Chief Executive Officer will also present several TNOYS awards to outstanding individuals in the youth-services field, in recognition of their achievements and dedication to serving Texas youth and young adults. If you aren't yet a member and would like to RSVP for the member reception, join here: <http://tnoys.org/become-a-member>.



## YOUTH-ONLY PROGRAMMING:

**10:30 a.m. - 10:50 a.m. Youth Orientation and Ice Breaker Activity – PLAZA II**

**11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Youth-Only Workshops**

### **Rise from Pieces to Peace**

LaKeisha Hughes, Harris County Resources for Children and Adults  
PLAZA I

Has the pandemic placed your purpose on pause? Do you feel broken from the many losses? In this workshop, attendees will learn how making healthy connections brings about positive change, how to RISE above the feelings of brokenness, and how to connect and organize the pieces of life in PEACE.

### **The Quest for Identification Documents**

Mary Christine Reed, Texas Foster Youth Justice Project  
PLAZA II

Navigating society without identification is extremely challenging. However, the processes to obtain these documents are complex, and many systems-involved youth and young adults enter adulthood without them. From birth certificates and social security cards to Texas IDs, this presentation will cover steps in each process, common barriers and tips to overcome them.

**12:10 - 1:10 p.m. Youth Lunch (Youth & Young Adults Only) – PLAZA II**

Join your fellow youth and young adult attendees for a youth-only lunch and hangout session in the youth lounge! Lunch is free for all registered youth and young adults.

**1:20 p.m. - 2:20 p.m. Youth-Only Workshops**

### **Budgeting – In 2032**

Lorraine Decker, Financial Mentors of America  
PLAZA I

In this interactive workshop, attendees will project their future for ten years, create budgets, and then identify the decisions they can make now to assure the future they want. Bring your cell phone, paper, and pen, and be prepared to participate as though your life depends on it!

### **A Path to Higher Education for People with Experience in Foster Care**

Sheila Bustillos, Education Reach for Texans  
PLAZA II

People that have experienced foster care are eligible for a variety of higher education benefits, yet 40% of those who are eligible for the tuition waiver do not use it. This session will educate people with experience in foster care and the professionals who support them about higher education benefits and opportunities.

**2:30-3:30 p.m. Youth-Only Workshops**

### **Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships**

Cynthia "CeCe" O'Neal, Sylvia Hebert, Camila Nakashima, zGen Project  
PLAZA I

This interactive session will help young adults identify their support system and understand the difference between a healthy and unhealthy relationship. Participants will evaluate their existing relationships, discuss ways to leave or avoid inappropriate relationships, identify values that are important to them, and ultimately build healthy relationships.

### **Housing: What You Need to Know**

Katy Vittoria, Joan White, Tiffany Smith, and Youth Presenter, The HAY Center  
PLAZA II

Informed by young people, the HAY Center developed a Housing Continuum focused on assisting youth with the housing process, housing navigation, and case management. In this workshop, youth will learn how to select the right housing option for them, how to start the process, realistic timeframes, apartment selection, and how to advocate for their individualized housing needs.

# WEDNESDAY, MAY 25

Conference Day 2  
(Most Sessions Open to All)

**8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Check In & Registration Open** – GALLERIA FOYER

**9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. Keynote + Performance: A Time to Rise with SaulPaul,**  
a Musician With a Message – GALLERIA BALLROOM

SaulPaul's life looks a lot different from his humble beginnings. From juvenile incarceration, to college graduation, to international sensation, SaulPaul transformed his dreams into reality. In this keynote, SaulPaul will share his inspiring story and message about overcoming adversity and grasping greatness. Prepare to move in this interactive session that combines strategic storytelling, inspirational speaking, music, audience participation, theater, and comedy.

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



## Language Matters

Errika Moultrie, Dallas Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation  
POST OAK

In racial equity, language matters. Do you know the history of the word "Caucasian"? How about choosing between saying "Black" and "African American"? All of it matters when it comes to racial equity. We are in an environment that requires lifetime learning and the application of racial equity practices and behaviors. Let's talk about it.



## Scarcity: How to Help Clients Manage Time With Little Bandwidth

Janaye Easter and LaCresha Van, Our Friends Place  
BELLAIRE

For people living in poverty, the tyranny of the moment keeps them from spending their time in productive and effective ways. When a person's day is packed with crisis after crisis, it can be very difficult for them to manage time and address pressing problems, trapping them in a never-ending cycle. This session seeks to help you think creatively about helping your clients overcome this scarcity, plan ahead, and manage their time effectively.



## Listening and Learning From Youth

TANGLEWOOD

### Resilience in Action: Building Authentic Youth-Adult Partnerships with Alex Polk and Kennedy Quintanilla, TNOYS

In this interactive workshop, participants will learn strategies for authentic youth engagement and gain a deeper understanding of complex trauma. Topics will include how trauma impacts brain function, additional consequences, and the resulting behaviors that manifest from trauma.

### Why Do Teens Run Away? with Elizabeth Madrigal, I'munique Liggins, Betty Bajika, and Tiara Kirksey, TNOYS YALC

Join this candid discussion with youth leaders who have lived experience in systems. The presenters will discuss factors that cause teens within various system to run away, including lack of safety, the desire for a peaceful environment, and the lack of normalcy. Participants will learn youth-centered strategies to create environments where teens always feel safe and secure.



## Cultural & Service Considerations for Serving Afghan and Central American Families

Lynsey Tucker and Miriam Camero, RAICES  
WESTCHESTER

This presentation discusses the migration journey of families from Afghanistan and Central America, the key challenges of resettlement, and cultural considerations for effective outreach and service delivery. This session is recommended for any community member or service provider wishing to advance their cultural competency in working with families of these cultures.



## Hope and Healing After Trauma: An Overview of Trauma-Focused CBT

Roy Van Tassell, Centene/Superior Health  
SAGE

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) is recognized as an effective treatment for child trauma by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the California Evidence-based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. Learn from an approved master TF-CBT trainer about the rationale for TF-CBT, specific components of the model, and its cultural application for diverse populations. Information about introductory online trainings for clinicians will also be shared.



## Accessing Important Youth Resources

SAN FELIPE

### Texas Workforce Commission Initiatives with Chris Caballero, Laura Villarreal, and LeighAnn Godinez, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

In this session, participants will gain information on TWC and Vocational Rehab initiatives that are relevant to the foster youth community. Learn about current and new initiatives for foster youth and youth with disabilities, how to apply and/or refer youth to these programs, and additional resources for staff that work directly with youth.

### Accessing the Foster Care Ombudsman Office with Raven McKinley and Zophelia Mays, Texas HHS Foster Care Ombudsman (FCO)

In this workshop, participants will learn about the Foster Care Ombudsman (FCO), the rights of children and youth in all foster care placement types, and how the FCO ensures youths' needs are met when interacting with service providers in Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, and other agencies.



## Neurodiversity, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and Justice Involvement

Ann-Charlotte Proffitt and Tiona Moore, TNOYS  
GALLERIA III

Texas has witnessed a recent increase in high-acuity youth across systems, making it even more difficult to provide the appropriate services youth need to thrive. Join us to strengthen your understanding of, and services to, children and youth with neurodiversity, intellectual, or developmental disabilities, especially as they intersect with the justice system. Participants will also learn key tools and youth-centered strategies to strengthen DEI in their services.

## 12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Luncheon: TNOYS' YALC Graduation (Open to All) – GALLERIA BALLROOM

- Special Performance by Ian Syder-Blake (He/his), Award-winning Drag King Entertainer

TNOYS' reimagined Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) is a paid, 10-month leadership development program in which youth and young adults with lived expertise work alongside TNOYS teams to shape and inform services to youth. We invite you to celebrate the incredible work of our graduating YALC members! Join us to connect over a meal and honor the next generation of young advocates and leaders.

## 1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Workshops



### **The State of LGBTQ+ Equality in Texas**

Ricardo Martinez, Equality Texas  
POST OAK

During this session, we will review what the fight for full equality has looked like over the last two years, dive into current manufactured moral “emergencies” that often use LGBTQ+ people as a wedge issue, and discuss how folks can take action in support of LGBTQ+ equality.



### **Tell Your Story**

SaulPaul, Musician, and Bianca Neal, SaulPaul Productions  
BELLAIRE

Write it! Speak it! Rap it! Share it in a poem! Act it out! Everyone has the power to share their story, but not everyone has discovered the way that works best for them. In this interactive workshop, attendees will learn to reframe their experiences with a positive perspective, identify their story, and practice creative forms of storytelling. Attendees will leave with tips, tools, and techniques to share their own stories.



### **Youth Recovery and Peer Support**

Arianna Mellinger and Paul Daigle, Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD  
TANGLEWOOD

In this workshop, Arianna Mellinger and Paul Daigle discuss the experience of working alongside youth, as well as strategies to provide peer support services and recovery peer support. Both Arianna and Paul have lived experience in different youth-serving systems, and these experiences led them to want to do more to support youth in their work for the Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD at The Mobile Crisis Outreach Team.



### **Centering Youth Voices in Your Trauma Approach**

Kennedy Quintanilla and Jermaine Neblett, TNOYS  
WESTCHESTER

This workshop uncovers a cross-systems approach to addressing and responding to complex trauma, including the impacts of trauma and how it manifests in behaviors. Participants will learn strategies to effectively identify and respond to trauma behaviors, create healthy youth-adult relationships, avoid re-traumatization, and help youth develop healthy coping skills.



### **The Science of Learning and Behavior: How, Why, and What to Do**

Robin Rettie and Youth Presenter, Senso-Science/Lighthouse Learning Resources  
SAGE



Because humans learn through emotions, knowledge of our emotional and rational brain functioning can help us understand the best way to process daily changes and remain regulated. Workshop participants will learn about the limbic system’s integration with the central and peripheral nervous systems and eight sensory systems, as well as measures to reduce environmental triggers through research-based approaches and sensory strategies.



### **Collaboration Within Youth-Serving Systems**

SAN FELIPE

### **The Role of Child Welfare Boards** with George Ford and Tim Allen, Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards

Texas is the only state that has implemented county child welfare boards, with 193 such county child welfare boards throughout. This workshop will explore the origin of child welfare boards in Texas and laws relating to their establishment and operation, as well as the relationship of county boards to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.



## **The Beginning of the End: Leveraging Partnerships, Data, and Lived Expertise to Effectively End Youth Homelessness in Austin, Texas** with Erin Whelan and Liz Schoenfeld, LifeWorks

Austin, Texas, was one of the first ten communities selected as a Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) site. Since 2017, key stakeholders in Austin have worked together to develop three new programs: rapid rehousing, prevention and diversion, and a housing navigation shelter. This workshop will highlight the continual iteration of Austin's YHDP in response to changing environmental circumstances, emerging opportunities, and youth needs, paying special attention to the successes and challenges experienced along the way.



### **Creative Connections: More Than an Art Project**



Gina Moore, ARTreach 180  
GALLERIA III

Discover creative ways to connect with students by giving them a voice through the arts! This hands-on session will equip participants to mitigate the effects of trauma. Participants will explore how to build community and trust using art projects in tandem with group discussion circles and activities. You'll leave with your own artwork and a written guide to facilitate activities in your own program.

## **3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Workshops**



### **Diversity, Equity and Engagement**

Kimberlee Brennan and Marcos Wiggins, ACH Child and Family Services  
POST OAK

This training is intended to expand participants' knowledge and awareness of diversity, equity, and engagement. Several types of media and activities are used to relay this information and explore how we can be more inclusive and accepting in our agencies and within society.



### **Shameless Self Care for Professionals**

Fedora Galasso and Theo Adams-Hernandez, TNOYS  
BELLAIRE

Too often those of us in the helping profession forgo our own self-care in order to take care of others. This workshop discusses why self-care is important and equips you with techniques to support yourself during challenging times. You'll learn about restorative practices such as pranayama (breath work), linking breath to movement, and Yin Yoga to promote greater health and peace of mind.



### **Listening and Learning from Youth**

TANGLEWOOD

### **Health is Wealth: Youth-Led Health Advocacy in Schools** with Betty Bajika, Gabriel Marquez, Grace Goetz, and Precious West, TNOYS YALC

In this workshop, youth with lived experience will present on health resources for students in school, the specific sexual and mental health needs of students, and youth-friendly and youth-driven resources that schools and students can benefit from.

### **Why Youth Enter the Justice System** with Cameren Collins, Montoya Thomas, and Tatyana Carraway, TNOYS YALC

Youth and young adults with lived experience in the juvenile justice system will discuss information and resources youth need to prevent justice-involvement and after they exit the system. Participants will learn how mere survival tactics are often criminalized, as well as youth-focused solutions for providers to help break the cycle of justice-involvement.



### **Innovative Strategies to Connect with Military Families**

Kimmalla Mitchell and Kelli Avellaneda, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)  
WESTCHESTER

In this workshop, presenters from the DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention Service Members, Veterans, and Families (SMVF) program will share innovative ways to connect with military families. There are many programs to assist service members and veterans, but oftentimes assistance is limited for youth and families in this unique demographic. The presentation will provide tools and resources to connect not only with the service member but also the entire family unit.



### **Beyond Burnout: The CE-CERT Model for Secondary Traumatic Stress**

Roy Van Tassell, Centene/Superior Health  
SAGE

Many youth-serving providers know the stress, fatigue, and secondary traumatic stress that can come with serving youth who have experienced maltreatment, removals, and reunification. Components for Enhancing Clinician Experience and Reducing Trauma (CE-CERT) is a skills-based approach for ALL helpers in any role to get beyond self-care to emotionally connect and thrive.



### **Youth Rights for Youth Experiencing Homelessness**

Brett Merfish and Martin Martinez, Texas Appleseed  
SAN FELIPE

What rights do youth experiencing homelessness have? Can they rent an apartment? Can they consent to medical treatment? Can schools deny them enrollment, especially if they are not with a guardian? Are there shelters for them? This session will cover these rights and more!



### **The Neuroscience of Addiction and Innovative Treatment Approaches**

Drew Dutton and Dusty Vigil, Phoenix House Texas  
GALLERIA III

This workshop will detail the current problem of adolescent addiction and best practices for engaging teenagers in treatment and recovery. Presenters will provide an overview of the neuroscience of adolescent addiction, the current national and global state of addiction, barriers to treatment and successful outcomes, the impact of COVID-19 on addiction and treatment, and various innovative approaches for counseling addictions.

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

# THURSDAY, MAY 26

Conference Day 3  
(Most Sessions Open to All)

**8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Check In & Registration Open** – GALLERIA FOYER

**9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Workshops**



## **Breaking Down Barriers: LGBTQ+ Youth, CSEY, and Homelessness**

Theo Adams-Hernandez and Alex Polk, TNOYS  
POST OAK

In this workshop, participants can begin to understand the challenges that LGBTQ+ youth may face when entering, experiencing, and exiting homelessness. Presenters will uncover and address the complex needs of LGBTQ+ youth and intersectionalities within systems, especially the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEY).



## **To New Heights: Building An Inclusive Brand**

Mary Bergeron and Alex Pryor, TNOYS  
BELLAIRE

Oftentimes, organizations need their brand and marketing to resonate with a range of audiences across age, gender, race, ethnicity, and ability. This workshop will explore strategies to make an impact among diverse audiences, from youth clients to potential funders and partners. We'll discuss branding 101, inclusive marketing tactics, and best practices to amplify the voices of youth and young adults.



## **Engaging Youth Leaders as Positive Change Agents**

Joe Markiewicz, Building Strong Communities  
TANGLEWOOD

Most evidence-based prevention frameworks such as the 40 Developmental Assets, Communities That Care, and other SAMHSA models recommend that youth are involved in the prevention planning process. However, many are unsure how to utilize them in a meaningful way. This workshop will demonstrate impactful ways to train young people as leaders and agents of positive change in their schools and communities.



## **College Resources for Students With Foster Care Experience**

Drew Melton, BCFS Health & Human Services  
WESTCHESTER

This workshop will explore the challenges facing youth who age out of foster care as they navigate the post-secondary education process. It will also highlight several resources available to current and former foster youth as they pursue post-secondary education.



## **Talk Saves Lives**

Ned Strauss, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
SAGE

Participants in this workshop will learn life-saving information and skills in response to the tragic regional, national, and global epidemic of deaths-by-suicide and suicide attempts. This heart-wrenching epidemic affects all age, race, geographic, and economic demographics and is increasing the fastest among young adults and children.



### Updates from the Prevention and Community Well-being Division at DFPS

Sasha Rasco, Rachel Duer, and Mosley Hobson, DFPS - Prevention & Early Intervention  
SAN FELIPE

Come learn from Chief Prevention and Community Well-Being Officer Sasha Rasco and her team about the latest updates from DFPS, including: faith-based and community engagement, prevention and early intervention, prevention efforts of the Family First Prevention Services Act, and new disproportionately efforts.



### Complex Trauma in Overlooked Populations

Landon Dickeson and Robert Williams, Ranch Hands Rescue  
GALLERIA III



This workshop provides a clinical picture of Complex PTSD with a special focus on male victims of sex trafficking. Workshop attendees will learn about what makes complex trauma different and all that is required to effectively treat it. The workshop will also provide attendees with a clearer picture of special populations who are disproportionately impacted by complex trauma.

## 10:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Performance + Closing Keynote: All Work, All Play Towards Healing: How Creativity Informs Trauma Recovery in Youth with Malika Whitley; Arts Curator and Activist – GALLERIA BALLROOM

- Special Performance by Tera Bravo, "Mystic Flares"

Understanding the play potential of young people with traumatic life experiences provides critical insights into possible long term coping strategies. This discussion explores the elements of creative expression that offer promise for improving the efficacy of programs, as well as approaches for incorporating creative expression into practice.

## 12:15 Adjourn

## ABOUT TNOYS

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  
Michael Grisham, Chief Operating Officer  
Natalie Ferguson, Operations Manager  
Lauren Dimitry, Grants Director  
Lauren Rose, Director of Public Policy  
Theo Adams-Hernandez, Policy and Research Manager  
Ann-Charlotte Proffitt, Director of Practice  
Sedoo Ijir, Program Manager

Alexander Polk, Program Coordinator  
Tiona Moore, Director of Partnerships  
Jermaine Neblett, Engagement Manager  
Kennedy Quintanilla, Partnerships Coordinator  
Mary Bergeron, Director of Communications  
Tessa Ammons, Outreach Manager  
Alexander Pryor, Communications Consultant

## TNOYS YOUNG ADULT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Betty Bajika, Canyon  
Cameren Collins, Houston  
Elizabeth Madrigal, San Marcos  
Gabriel Marquez, San Antonio  
Grace Goetz, Austin  
Helaina Hackett, Houston

I'munique Liggins, Dallas  
Montoya Thomas, Houston  
Precious West, Houston  
Tatyana Carraway, Houston  
Tiara Kirksey, Houston

## TNOYS AMERICORPS MEMBERS

Brenda Woolley, TNOYS  
Isaiah Garza, Communities in Schools of Coastal Bend  
Jorge Leyva, El Paso Center for Children  
Kayla Wells, Promise House

Sally Uzomba, Communities in Schools of Coastal Bend  
Tiata Collier, Harris County Youth Services Division  
Alysa Hinojosa, Communities in Schools of Coastal Bend

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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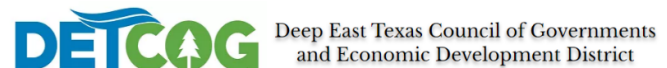
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