



Youth Engagement Project

YEP newsletter

Spring 2020



Each quarter we bring you updates on YEP news and helpful tips for youth engagement.
Email mia.stizzo@cfpic.org be added to our newsletter mailing list!

Would you like to be part of a win-win team and be a statewide leader in youth engagement?

Learn how a partnership with YEP can catapult your county to being a statewide leader in youth engagement. YEP has exciting and new changes to offer counties for the fiscal year 2020-2021.

Learn more about our Win/Win youth engagement strategy by viewing our new [video HERE!](#) Please contact YEP Director, Kelly Hood Kelly.hood@cfpic.org to set up a consulting partner session.

YEP Bids Adieu to Stanislaus County Coordinator, Sheelah Grant

Sheelah has been an active and dedicated County Coordinator for over five years. She is passionate and committed in making the Child Welfare System better. As a leader she included the opinion and ideas of the local youth to the county's practices and programs. Sheelah has been with Stanislaus County for 28 years. YEP is fortunate and grateful that Sheelah will be staying on as a volunteer team member with the Stanislaus County YEP Team. Her fellow team members have the following to say about her:

"Sheelah has always been passionate and advocating for our foster youth. She was a pleasure to work with and will be missed." - Alma



"Thank you for your years of commitment. She has positive approach shifts every project we do forward! I will miss you so much." - Arielle

"You mean a lot to me and you have made a strong impact!" - Traneisia

"Sheelah has always provided space for youth voice to be heard, she seemed to always make our ideas happen. - Lauren

TAYCON2020: Creating a Web of Self-Sufficiency, Stability, and Support

YEP's partnership at TAYCON2020 allowed youth voice to be embedded on many different levels. The Ambassadors played an integral part of all planning and production phases of the conference. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) held their third annual Transition Age Youth Conference (TAYCON2020) on March 2-3, 2020, in The City of Industry. There were 485 attendees including 56 youth who came together for collaboration and learning opportunities. The theme of Superheroes was chosen to represent the strength, power, and resilience of California's Foster Youth.

TAYCON2020 was Co-Emceed by Ta'hari Jackson, former foster youth from Orange County and Sheelah Grant, of Stanislaus County. Welcoming remarks were delivered by Kim Johnson, Director of the California Department of Social Services, who was appointed by California Governor Gavin Newsom in July of 2019.

The Keynote speaker, Miles Cooley, is a partner in the Los Angeles office of the global law firm of DLA Piper. His practice is holistic in the entertainment, music, media and sports areas.

"I knew Miles Cooley was going to surpass my expectations way before I heard him speak at TAYCON. He spoke to my hopes, my dreams, and shot down every negative thought I have ever had about my circumstance or every negative thought I had about myself. He wants every person that encounters him to walk away with this inner strength "our superpowers" and I definitely left that room feeling unstoppable!"

-Arielle Rubio

The youth speaker, Makaelah Perkins, was a former foster and probation youth from Orange County. Her goal is to be a changemaker in the foster care system better for the next generation. A mixed panel of eight former and current foster youth and professionals shared their experiences working and receiving services from the Child Welfare system. Sixto Cancel, founder and CEO of Think of Us, facilitated the panel.

Panel members:

- Anatoli Schwartz-current foster youth from San Bernardino County and his Court Appointed Special Advocate, Rosalinda Martinez.
- Hanna White, probation youth from Tehama County.
- Lauren Mendez former foster youth and her Independent Living social worker, Melissa Hilgen from Stanislaus County.
- Kristina Tanner foster youth and her Resource Mom who is also a social worker, Salena Rodriguez in Butte County.
- Tonya Jacobs who was a former foster youth and is now a social worker at Yolo County Public Defender's Office.

"I loved the keynote speaker and listening to his experience. It really hit home for me because one of my teacher's decided to foster me because it is my senior year of high school. I excelled this year: I had the support I needed. I also related to him because I want to work in the field of criminal justice and become a lawyer someday so that I can represent all the youth who have struggles like me."

- Traneisia Jones

would like their life to look like once they exited the child welfare system.

Career & Vendor Fair

The career and vendor fair was represented by 17 employers and resources throughout California, including the following: The Right Way Foundation, Gardena Transit, CSU, Northridge: EOP and Student Outreach, Bridges to Success, Job Corps , JET Program USA, The CAP Center – AmeriCorps, CDSS, Center for California Studies, and West Los Angeles College.

Workshops

There was a wide variety of workshops focusing on educating attendees on different topics around Transition Age Youth geared toward foster youth and professionals. A list of all workshops can be located on the [TAYCON2020 website](#).

Sponsorship

The Child & Family Policy Institute of California awarded TAYCON2020 sponsorships covered registration fees, transportation, and lodging for 30 foster youth.

Youth Evening Activities

YEP and Sixto Cancel collaborated to host two evenings of Youth Activities and dinner for approximately 40 youth. Both evenings included team building activities and networking. Sixto led the youth through a two-part activity where they created a vision board of what they



MEET THE AMBASSADORS!

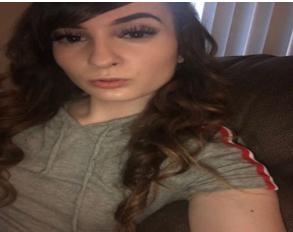
YEP's mission is to strengthen and enhance youth engagement through Adult-Youth partnerships in California's Counties and State Child Welfare Systems--partnerships in which Foster youth are naturally included in policy and practice decisions that affect them. Foster youth are prepared and supported to offer constructive ideas that can be implemented. YEP is a fluid program in progress, tailored to support the shared goals of Ambassadors, counties, and the state.

Meet our newest YEP Ambassadors. The following profiles were provided by the youth Ambassadors:

Sacramento County

Toniesha Tucker

I wanted to become an Ambassador to be able to help youth, inspire them, encourage them to do bigger things in the future. From YEP I hope to obtain professional experience to further my education and career as a social worker. I am very excited to be an ambassador.



Alexia Vasquez

I became an Ambassador to be able to make a positive change in the foster care system for myself, current and future foster kids. I know that there are many changes that need to be done for that to happen.



YEP Ambassador Trainings

YEP provides three different types of trainings: orientation, quarterly topical and project-affiliated. All trainings focus on professional development. During the next two months, our Ambassadors will have the opportunity to partake in the following trainings: Time and Stress Management training, Intro to Project Management, Child Welfare 101, Public Speaking and Presentation Skills, Facilitation and Business Writing.

"YEP's first orientation training was very productive by ensuring that we learned how to use the communicative tools. I believe these trainings are beneficial and that we should definitely have more!" - Jazzmyn LA County

"It was very hands on!" - Arielle Stanislaus County

Resources/ Hot Topics/ Information for Child Welfare

Coronavirus Disease (COVID -19) Information

CDSS website: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/>

Alliance for Children's Rights Webinar: <https://vimeo.com/408587216>

Youth Engagement:

Center for States: <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/youth-development/blueprint-series/>

Child Welfare Enhancing Services

Children's Bureau Podcasts: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/success-story/gateway-podcasts>

Technology/Jobs/Services

Ifoster website: <https://www.ifoster.org/page/get-help/>



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Directions: Locate and circle the words listed below. The words may run horizontally, vertically, diagonally. Be the first person to email kelly.hood@cfpic.org the correct answers and win a gift card.

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Y	E	J	N	Y	C	G	V	R	T	R	V	D	N	T	Q	G	R	R	E
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AB TWELVE
CASA
CHILD WELFARE
ILP
PERMANENCY
SELF SUFFICIENCY
STRONG
TAY CONFERENCE
YOUTH
ADVOCATE
RESILIENT
STABILITY
SUPPORT

MENTAL HEALTH
CHAFEE
FOSTER CARE
INDEPENDENT
PROBATION
SOCIAL WORKER
STRTP
ZOOM MEETINGS
TITLE IV E
CHILD FAMILY TEAM
FOSTER YOUTH
TRAUMA INFORMED
CANS