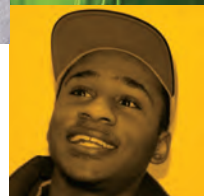
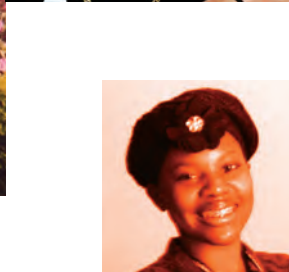
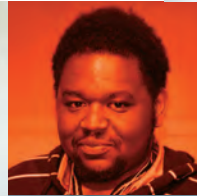
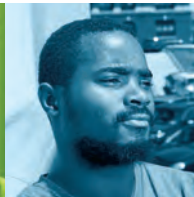
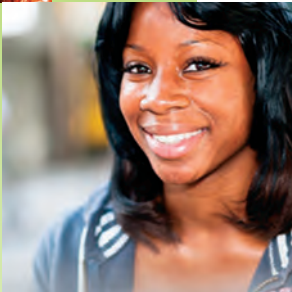


Juvenile Law Center

advancing the rights and well-being of children in jeopardy

2015 – 2017 Strategic Plan



Celebrating Forty Years of Achieving Justice and Ensuring Opportunity for Children at Risk



1975 • 2015

40 years

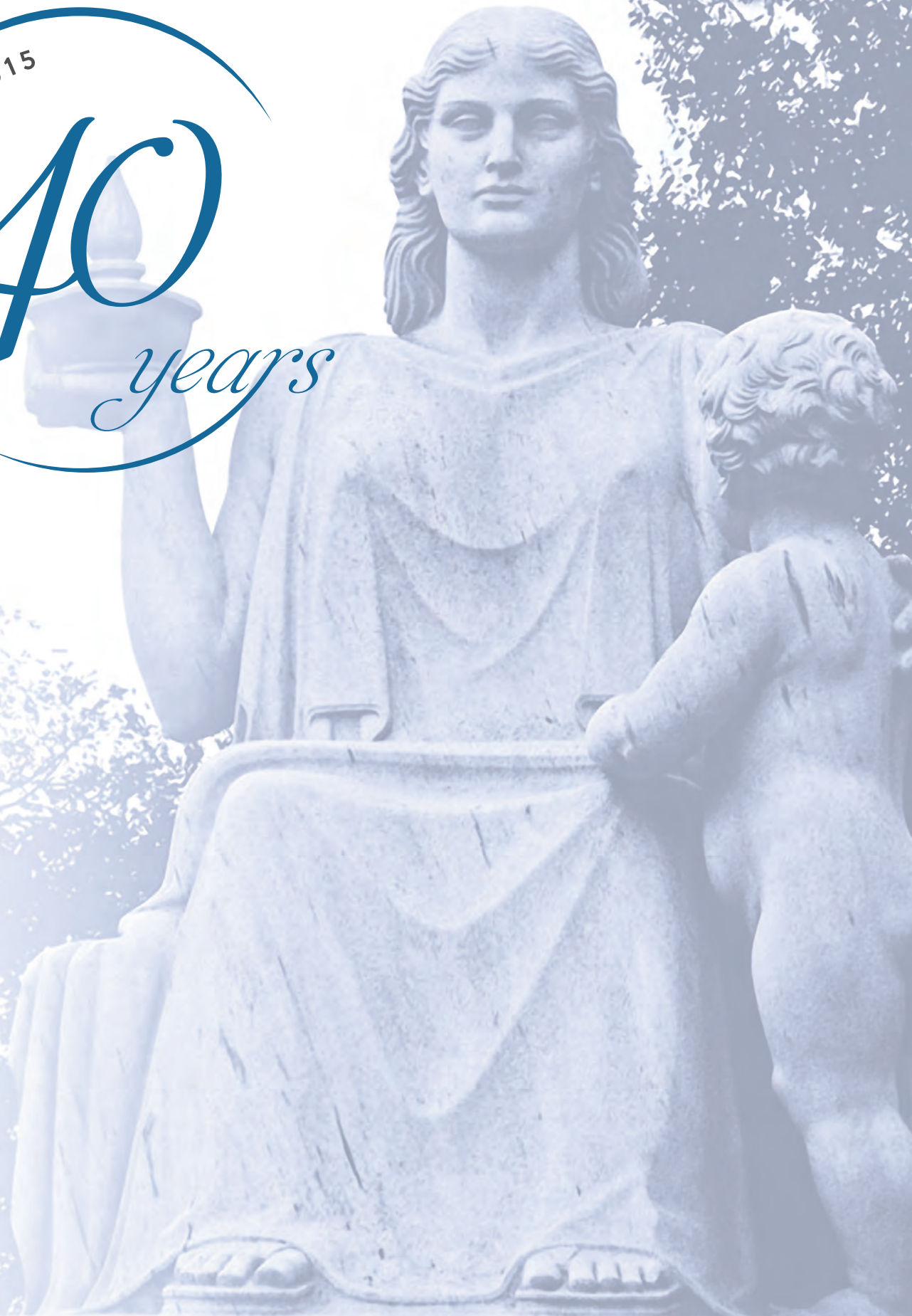
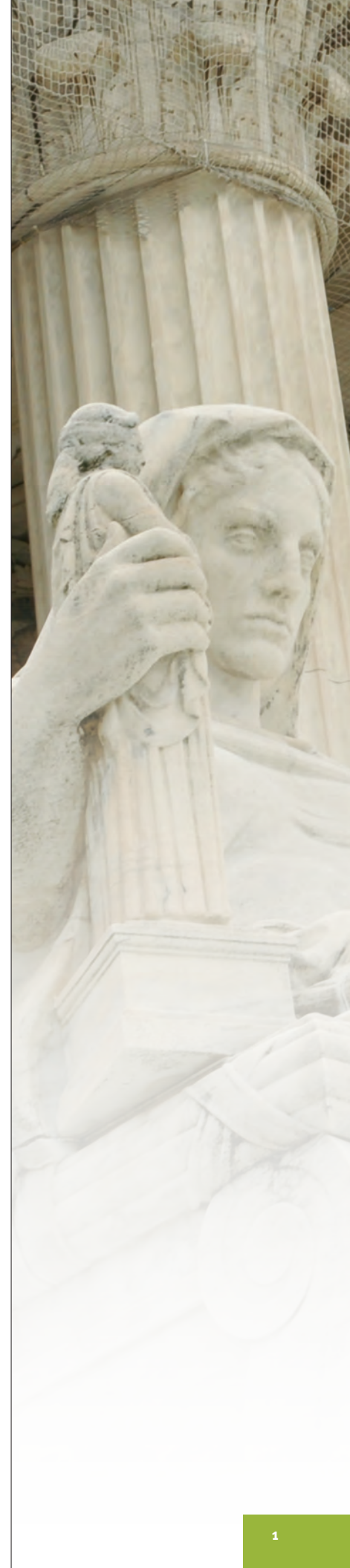


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INTRODUCTION

Celebrating 40 years of successful advocacy, Juvenile Law Center is the oldest non-profit, public interest law firm for children in the country. Juvenile Law Center is recognized as a national leader in protecting the legal rights of children in the foster care and justice systems.

Established in 1975, Juvenile Law Center initially represented individual youth in dependency and delinquency proceedings in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Over time, Juvenile Law Center expanded its focus to advocate for children across Pennsylvania and, eventually, address child welfare and justice system reform issues nationwide.

Demand for our expertise and assistance has grown substantially with increasing success in our advocacy efforts, including our participation in several landmark wins before the United States Supreme Court; our involvement in the highly publicized Luzerne County kids-for-cash scandal; and our receipt of the MacArthur Foundation Award for Creative and Effective Institutions. At the same time, we refined and sharpened our strategies to create positive change through systemic advocacy with greater impact for more children. As a result, Juvenile Law Center's reach and influence now extends across the nation and around the world.

Juvenile Law Center is at the cutting edge of legal advocacy, anticipating the next wave of threats, identifying emerging trends, and recognizing opportunities to give vulnerable youth a better chance to succeed. Our initiatives include keeping youth in the community and out of correctional and other institutional settings; ensuring youths' right to counsel and procedural fairness; promoting safe, humane and supportive conditions for youth when they are confined in institutions; challenging harsh sentencing practices and the prosecution of youth as adults; giving youth a meaningful chance at rehabilitation; and promoting successful transitions to adulthood.

Our strategies include litigation and appellate advocacy, training and education, legislative advocacy, communications, and coordination of amicus support for precedent setting cases in federal and state courts across the country. Juvenile Law Center also is known as a thought leader on child welfare and justice issues; our staff advances scholarship by writing articles and books and serving on advisory boards to groundbreaking research projects.

This 2015-17 strategic plan well positions Juvenile Law Center to continue its leadership in advancing the rights and well-being of our nation's most vulnerable children, and thus create a safer, more humane and better society for us all.

Juvenile Law Center is at the cutting edge of legal advocacy, anticipating the next wave of threats, identifying emerging trends, and recognizing opportunities to give vulnerable youth a better chance to succeed.



**Celebrating Forty Years
of Achieving Justice and
Ensuring Opportunity for
Children at Risk**

OUR MISSION

JUVENILE LAW CENTER uses an array of legal strategies and policy advocacy to promote fairness, prevent harm, ensure access to appropriate services, and create opportunities for success for youth who come into contact with the child welfare and justice systems.

OUR VALUES

In all of our work, **Juvenile Law Center** strives to ensure that:

- Laws, policies and practices affecting youth in the child welfare and justice systems are grounded in principles of adolescent development and other relevant research;
- The United States legal system recognizes and incorporates international human rights principles in providing greater protections to youth in the child welfare and justice systems;
- Justice and child welfare systems respond appropriately to the impact of trauma on youths' behavior; and
- Justice and child welfare systems address economic opportunity and minimize disproportionality along race and class lines.

OUR VISION

THAT ALL CHILDREN at risk and who come into contact with the child welfare and justice systems have equal rights and opportunities to succeed.



OUR NATIONAL IMPACT

Juvenile Law Center's geographic reach has dramatically expanded over the years, extending across the nation and around the world. National media coverage of several high-profile cases has dramatically elevated our profile and heightened interest in our work. Juvenile Law Center's experienced and talented staff has cultivated connections and partnerships with key professionals and organizations to advance our strategic objectives.

Influencing Landmark United States Supreme Court Decisions

Juvenile Law Center was the only advocacy organization in the country to write amicus briefs in all four landmark Supreme Court decisions on the impact of adolescent development on justice policy:

- *Miller v. Alabama* (2012): Juveniles convicted of homicide can no longer receive mandatory sentences of life without parole.
- *J.D.B. v. North Carolina* (2011): A child's age must be considered by law enforcement in determining whether Miranda warnings must be given to children during police interrogations.
- *Graham v. Florida* (2010): A sentence of life without parole imposed on a juvenile convicted of a non-homicide offense is unconstitutional under the Eight Amendment.
- *Roper v. Simmons* (2005): Abolished the death penalty for juveniles under the Cruel and Unusual Punishment Clause of the Eighth Amendment.

Shaping Federal Laws

Members of Congress increasingly rely on Juvenile Law Center for advice on important legislative matters. For example, Juvenile Law Center was part of a team that successfully advocated that Congress enact the Uninterrupted Scholars Act, a law that makes it easier for foster youth to obtain an education

by permitting schools to release a child's education records to child welfare workers. Senators Cory Booker and Rand Paul consulted with Juvenile Law Center staff before introducing a bill that will limit solitary confinement, promote juvenile record expungement, and minimize transfer to adult court.

Litigating throughout the United States

We have a strong appellate and amicus practice, especially in the justice field, where we are the “go-to” organization on issues of transfer and sentencing, procedural and substantive due process, and children’s constitutional rights.

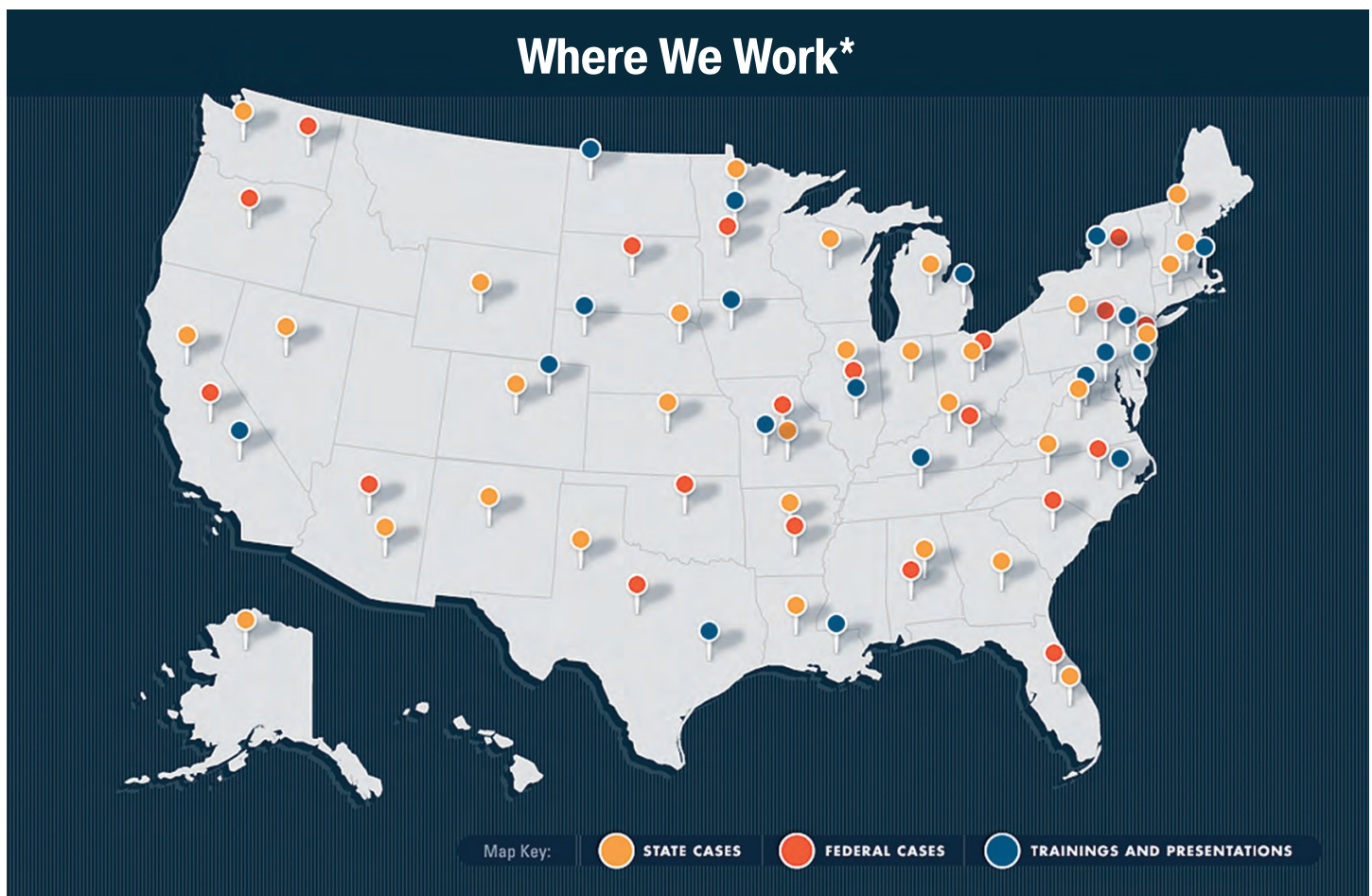
For example, in 2014 we successfully challenged Pennsylvania’s mandatory juvenile sex offender registration statute. In two cases in which Juvenile Law Center argued as amici – *People v. Caballero* (2012) and *People v. Guttierrez* (2014) – the California Supreme Court limited sentences for juveniles that are the equivalent to life without parole in non-homicide cases, and end presumptions in favor of life sentences for juveniles.

Educating State Policymakers

Juvenile Law Center increasingly provides briefings, trainings and technical assistance to state policymakers.

Our recent work includes collaborating with Georgetown University’s Center for Juvenile Justice Reform and the National League of Cities to educate key stakeholders about best practices for diverting youth from the juvenile justice system.

With our partners, the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and Education Law Center-PA, we established the Legal Center for Foster Care and Education, which provides training and technical assistance nationwide and serves as a central clearinghouse for information on foster care and education.



*As of March 2015. Visit the “About Us” section at www.jlc.org to see an up-to-date map.

OUR CURRENT INITIATIVES



KEEPING KIDS IN THE COMMUNITY

Diversion Strategies
Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)
Reducing Length of Stay



FAIRNESS AND DUE PROCESS

Access to Counsel
Mental Health Treatment and Self-Incrimination
Trauma-Informed Advocacy



PROTECTING INCARCERATED YOUTH

Access to Quality Education
Ending Solitary Confinement and Making Institutional Placements Safer



YOUTH IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Challenging Juvenile Life Without Parole (JLWOP) and Other Harsh Sentences
Reducing Transfer to the Adult System



PROMOTING SECOND CHANCES

Community and School Re-Entry
Protect and Expunge Juvenile Records
Juvenile Sex Offender Registration
Information Sharing



TRANSITION TO ADULthood

Extended Care and Re-Entry
Normalcy: Providing Age and Developmentally Appropriate Services
Services and Planning For Permanency and Transition
Older Youth with Disabilities
Access to Education
Youth Engagement Programs

OUR CURRENT INITIATIVES



Keeping Kids In The Community

Reducing referrals to the juvenile and adult justice systems and decriminalizing typical adolescent behavior

Many youth who are arrested for low-level offenses, including acts that are typical yet undesirable adolescent behaviors, are inappropriately referred to the justice system. Research shows that sending such youth into our courts and correctional facilities increases the risk that they will re-offend. These youth do much better when they are able to stay in their communities. Juvenile Law Center works to divert youth from the juvenile justice system. We seek alternatives to adjudication. We promote community-based, evidence-based interventions that reduce the use of detention and residential correctional placement. We work to reduce youths' length of stay in correctional facilities. These strategies promote positive youth development and enhance public safety. They also are critical tools in reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system.

Juvenile Law Center's goals in 2015-17 include:

Diversion Strategies

- Promoting initiatives to divert youth into treatment and other alternatives to justice system involvement by providing training and technical assistance to jurisdictions.
- Supporting diversion programs aimed specifically at stemming the school-to-prison pipeline and reducing cross-over from the dependency into the delinquency system.
- Advocating for policies that divert youth from prosecution for typical yet undesirable adolescent behaviors.

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)

- Reducing unnecessary reliance on secure confinement of youth by educating justice stakeholders about alternatives.
- Assisting states in embedding detention reform in statutes, regulations, and court rules.

Reducing Length of Stay

- Developing publications that highlight promising practices to safely reduce length of stay for young people who are in out-of-home facilities.
- Providing technical assistance to state policymakers and courts to implement laws, regulations, and court rules aimed at reducing length of stay.



In less than two minutes and without legal representation, Chad was sentenced to 90 days at a wilderness camp for delinquent boys, shackled to other juvenile offenders, and escorted from the courtroom. "My heart dropped," said Chad's mother, still in disbelief. "I didn't even get to hug him or kiss him goodbye."

OUR CURRENT INITIATIVES



Fairness And Due Process

Fighting for procedural due process, access to counsel, and promoting racial and economic justice

Since its founding in 1975, Juvenile Law Center has fought to ensure that youth in the foster care and justice systems have skilled and well-resourced attorneys to advocate for them. Our society's most vulnerable youth need the assistance of qualified, effective counsel to enforce their due process rights, protect them from harm, and promote their well-being. Without the zealous advocacy of attorneys, children involved in the courts can experience negative and life-changing outcomes such as removal from their homes, separation from family, multiple placements, disruptions in education, and incarceration. Attorneys hold courts and state agencies accountable under the law and ensure that the systems that are supposed to help these children actually do so.

The police officer assured Hillary's bewildered mother that the court would go easy on her daughter and she shouldn't invest in a lawyer.

After all, he said, it was just a prank and Hillary had never been in prior trouble.

On the day of the hearing, the high school student entered the courtroom without anyone to protect her legal rights and the judge took full advantage.

Juvenile Law Center goals in 2015-17 include:

Access to Counsel

- Enforcing the right to counsel for youth in dependency, delinquency, and adult criminal proceedings through law reform and litigation.
- Training counsel to provide zealous representation to youth.

Mental Health Treatment and Self-Incrimination

- Advocating for protections so that youth in the justice system can obtain the treatment they need without sacrificing their constitutional rights.
- Litigating to prevent statements made by youth during examination and treatment from being used against them in trials and other court proceedings.

Trauma-Informed Advocacy

- Providing training and technical assistance to attorneys on incorporating research about trauma and resilience into their advocacy for youth.

OUR CURRENT INITIATIVES



Protecting Incarcerated Youth

Ensuring safe, humane and supportive conditions for incarcerated youth

Juvenile Law Center works to ensure that children in the justice system are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like settings that will meet their needs. When children are removed from their homes and communities, they should be placed in safe environments where they have access to effective, individualized services including quality education. Juvenile Law Center has long advocated for education and treatment for youth in institutions and combatted harsh conditions of confinement. We are particularly concerned with the use of solitary confinement, an inhumane and traumatizing practice that also deprives youth of the support and services they need for healthy development.

Juvenile Law Center goals in 2015-17 include:

Access to Quality Education

- Promoting policy reform at the federal and state levels so that youth in correctional facilities can access high quality education, and career and technical training.
- Advancing re-entry policies that ensure that youth do not lose earned school credits when they return home to their communities.

Ending Solitary Confinement and Making Institutional Placements Safer

- Working with partners to abolish solitary confinement nationally through federal and state legislative advocacy, litigation, publications, and education.
- Litigating against unsafe and abusive institutional conditions that put youth at risk of harm and trauma.



Bruce was 15 years-old when he entered the juvenile justice system. Over the next 16 months, Bruce went to four different placements, including spending 11 months in a facility more than 300 miles from his home. While in these facilities, Bruce witnessed and experienced aggression by staff. On one occasion, a staff member pushed Bruce and choked him after Bruce refused to stand in a corner.

OUR CURRENT INITIATIVES



Aaron is serving a sentence for life without the opportunity of parole for a crime he committed when he was 17 years-old. He has been in prison for nearly three decades. “There’s a profound sense of hopelessness and despair as you watch your life slowly withering away year after year, decade after decade with no end to the suffering in sight,” he says.



Youth In The Criminal Justice System

Challenging harsh sentencing of youth, including life without parole, and preventing the prosecution of youth as adults

The United States Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed what any parent knows: adolescents are poor decision-makers, are more vulnerable to negative peer influences, and have a greater capacity for rehabilitation and change than adults. Building on the Court’s findings, Juvenile Law Center works to ensure that youth are never sentenced to life without the opportunity for parole or other extreme sentences. Juvenile Law Center also works to reduce the number of youth transferred to the adult system, and to ensure that youth are treated fairly and given due process when they are tried as adults. Juvenile Law Center collaborates with national partners and employs various strategies, including authoring amicus briefs in U.S Supreme Court cases such as *Miller v. Alabama* and *Graham v. Florida*, in the campaign to end the sentencing of juveniles to life without parole.

Juvenile Law Center’s goals in 2015-17 include:

Challenging Juvenile Life Without Parole (JLWOP) and Other Harsh Sentences

- Litigating throughout the country to end the practice of sentencing any juvenile to life without the possibility of parole or “virtual” life sentences.
- Challenging harsh sentences for felony murder, where the youth neither personally killed, nor intended to kill, the victim, but criminal law nevertheless permits their prosecution and sentencing for homicide.

Reducing Transfers to the Adult System

- Litigating and promoting policy reform to reduce the number of youth tried as adults and to ensure that youth are treated fairly when they are tried in adult court.
- Challenging statutes that do not allow judicial review of transfer decisions, particularly in states where youth are subsequently subject to mandatory harsh sentencing.

OUR CURRENT INITIATIVES



Promoting Second Chances

Challenging the disclosure and misuse of juvenile records and promoting community and school re-entry for youth in the justice system

Helping troubled youth get their lives back on track is one of the juvenile justice system's core objectives. Yet, too often, youth find that their justice system involvement poses barriers to becoming productive, responsible members of society. Youth returning from placements face obstacles to re-enrolling in school and transferring academic credits, thus undermining their educational progress. Court and law enforcement records impede community reintegration and success for youth who already have been held accountable for their offenses. This is particularly true for youth subject to lifetime sex offender registration, despite data demonstrating that these youth are at low risk of re-offending. Juvenile Law Center advocates for policies and practices that support community and school re-entry and minimize the harmful impact of juvenile records.

Juvenile Law Center goals in 2015-17 include:

Community and School Re-Entry

- Advocating for comprehensive reentry planning for youth returning home from correctional facilities, including prompt re-enrollment in community schools and credit and records transfer.
- Challenging policies that push youth returning from juvenile justice placements into inferior alternative education programs.

Protect and Expunge Juvenile Records

- Educating key stakeholders about the negative consequences of juvenile records on youth rehabilitation and the need for confidentiality safeguards.
- Advancing law reform nationwide to limit access to juvenile records and to promote their swift expungement once a youth's case is closed.

Juvenile Sex Offender Registration

- Educating the public that teenagers who are adjudicated delinquent of sex offenses are extremely unlikely to re-offend.
- Litigating against Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) statutes that subject youth adjudicated delinquent to the same registration requirements as convicted adult sex offenders.

Information Sharing

- Providing training and technical assistance to promote information sharing that respects the privacy and due process rights of system-involved youth while facilitating coordinated case planning and data analysis for policy and program development.



Dina always wanted to become a Nurse Practitioner and has worked very hard to achieve her goal. But Dina's juvenile record is preventing her from fulfilling that dream. "Anyone with \$18 can pay online and see all of my juvenile offenses," she says. Even though she was successfully discharged from the justice system, Dina's records limit her opportunities, including preventing her from being licensed in numerous healthcare professions.

OUR CURRENT INITIATIVES



Samantha entered foster care at two years old when her mother, struggling with drug addiction, was no longer able to care for her and her siblings. By the time Samantha turned 21 and aged out of care, she had been in five foster homes, one group home, two residential treatment facilities, and a Supervised Independent Living (SIL) program.



Transition To Adulthood

Promoting successful transitions to adulthood for youth involved in the foster care and justice systems

Older youth in foster care and the justice system often miss out on opportunities to build strong relationships with peers and supportive adults or to develop critical life skills. Many youth who “age out” of foster care experience poor adult outcomes including homelessness, reliance on public assistance, and incarceration in the absence of forming permanent family relationships. Young people with physical and intellectual disabilities face even greater challenges. Juvenile Law Center advocates for policies and practices that help teenagers achieve permanency with a family before they age out of foster care and, failing that, provide support and services for a successful transition to independence.

Juvenile Law Center goals in 2015-17 include:

Extended Care and Re-Entry

- Promoting policies that provide all youth in foster care with extended support and services that are high-quality, trauma-informed, and age-appropriate.
- Advocating for legislation that allows youth who leave state care after turning 18 to re-enter care before their 21st birthday.

Normalcy: Providing Age and Developmentally Appropriate Services

- Drafting and promoting the adoption of model “normalcy” legislation that ensures comprehensive state implementation of recent federal law, including rigorous court oversight and youth grievance procedures.
- Working with states to develop an age-appropriate continuum of the most family-like living arrangements for older youth and young adults in the child welfare system.

Services and Planning For Permanency and Transition

- Crafting model statutes that implement the permanency and transition planning requirements of recently-passed federal laws, and collaborating with partners to enact the model statutes in their states.
- Providing guidance to courts and advocates to play an active oversight and advocacy role in permanency and transition planning for older youth.

OUR CURRENT INITIATIVES

Older Youth with Disabilities

- Promoting guidelines that prompt child welfare agencies to timely and appropriately screen, identify and track youth with disabilities in state care in order to improve service delivery and planning.
- Advocating that youth with disabilities in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems be placed in the least restrictive settings and integrated into the community to the greatest extent possible.
- Pursuing policy reforms that enable youth with disabilities to have full access to permanency and transition services, including providing reasonable accommodations to support their participation.

Access to Education

- Advocating for laws and regulations that allow foster youth to stay in the same school when they change placements if that is best for them.
- Promoting policies that provide support to older foster youth to facilitate their success in postsecondary education or career training.
- Supporting federal legislation that will make it easier for current and former foster youth to attend college.

Youth Engagement Programs

- Facilitate two Philadelphia-based youth engagement programs, Juveniles for Justice (J4J) and Youth Fostering Change (YFC), which create opportunities for these youth to advocate directly for systemic reforms.

“Growing up in the foster care system was tough,” Samantha says. “I didn’t always feel like I was part of the family that I lived with and felt like no one understood what it was like to be in foster care.”

LUZERNE LEGACY PROJECT

In the aftermath of the kids-for-cash scandal, Juvenile Law Center worked with key stakeholders to successfully advocate for the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to adopt key reforms. Through the Luzerne Legacy Project, we seek to promote the following similar reforms in other jurisdictions across the country:

- improving due process protections, including proscribing waiver of counsel by youth;
- ending shackling of youth in courtrooms;
- promoting expungement of juvenile records;
- reducing collateral consequences of juvenile convictions, such as the inability to get jobs, obtain housing, or join the military;
- promoting diversion from juvenile court, with an emphasis on reducing school referrals; and
- reducing the unnecessary incarceration of youth.

In the aftermath of the kids-for-cash scandal, Juvenile Law Center worked with key stakeholders to successfully advocate for the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to adopt key reforms



Image courtesy of Kids For Cash the movie, reprinted with permission of SenArt Films Releasing. The Kid In Cage image is a registered trademark of Justice Project, LLC. For more information, or to bring the film to your community, go to www.KidsForCashTheMovie.com.

HOW WE ARE FUNDED

Juvenile Law Center receives no local, state, or federal dollars, nor do we charge for our services.

Juvenile Law Center carefully grew in the last 15 years to support the expansion of our national reach. We tripled our staff during this time and now deploy a team of 21 professionals, including 12 lawyers.

Our budget increased from \$900,000 in FY2000 to almost \$3 million in FY2015. Our strategic plan calls for us to hold our budget steady at \$3.0 million through the end of FY2017.

Juvenile Law Center's expenditures closely track revenues and through prudent management and investment we have built a reserve fund of more than \$5 million to support our work.

As FY15 began, 70% of our revenue came from foundations, and 14% - 16% from individuals, corporations and United Way. The remainder came from fees for trainings, publications, speaking events, cy pres awards, and dividend investments.

Our strategic plan calls for increasing the percentage of our budget that comes from individuals, corporations and United Way to 24% by the end of FY17.

FY15 FOUNDATIONS

Atlantic Philanthropies
Casey Family Programs
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Jim Casey Youth
Claneil Foundation
Samuel S. Fels Foundation
Flom Foundation
Ford Foundation
Foundation for an Open Society
Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation
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Stone Foundation
Stoneleigh Foundation

1975 • 2015

40
years

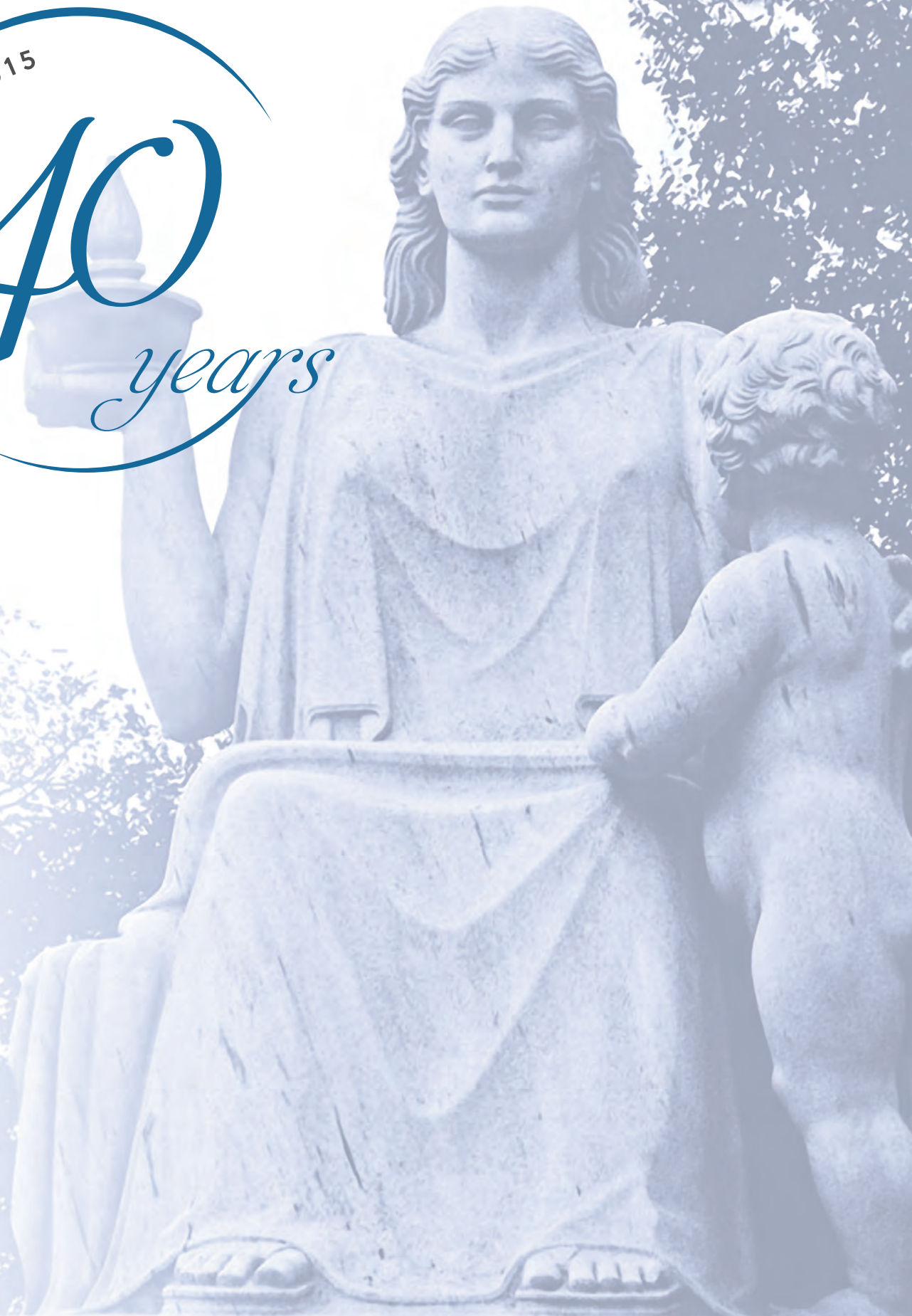


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bktkn@yahoo.com

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www.JLC.org

Juvenile Law Center
The Philadelphia Building
1315 Walnut Street, Suite 400
Philadelphia, PA 19107

215.625.0551 / 800.875.8887
215.625.2808 fax

