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Juvenile Law Center's Youth Advocacy Programs Celebrate Ten Years

National children's rights public interest law firm kicks off Youth Justice Action Month with #10YearsofYA campaign

Philadelphia, PA (October 1, 2018): Juvenile Law Center, the nation's first nonprofit public interest law firm for children's rights, kicked off Youth Justice Action Month today with a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the organization's [youth advocacy programs](#). In particular, the organization is highlighting ten years of its internationally recognized [Juveniles for Justice program](#) this month. From October 2018 to May 2019, the organization will highlight its youth advocates' important work and substantial impact over the past decade, using the hashtag #10YearsofYA. May will include a special focus on the [Youth Fostering Change program](#) for National Foster Care Month.

Since 2008, Juvenile Law Center's youth advocacy programs have prepared young people to lead advocacy and policy reform efforts in their local communities and beyond. The #10YearsofYA campaign is not just a celebration of the past, but also a commitment to the future. Juvenile Law Center's youth advocates have led many critical policy changes, from improving access to record expungement to empowering youth in foster care in dependency court. They speak directly to lawmakers and make national media appearances; their resources and toolkits have been used across the country. They have testified at Congressional briefings and met with White House staff, and have many more activities planned, both during this campaign year and in the future.

"I feel lucky to have been part of these programs for more than half of their existence," said Cathy Moffa, Youth Advocacy Program Manager. "So many incredible young people have been given the chance to finally have a say in their future, the future of other system involved youth, and the policies to change these systems. In the same breath, there is so much work to be done for young people with experience in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. I hope these programs stand as a model for other agencies to elevate youth voice and to appreciate the power behind personal experience."

"The campaign will run [from] October 2018 to May 2019, and we'll be highlighting the amazing work that our awesome youth advocates have done in Philadelphia and beyond," said Marcía Hopkins, Youth Advocacy Program Manager at Juvenile Law Center.

For youth who've participated in the program, the anniversary is significant. "The youth voice is important in juvenile justice reform efforts because it allows for greater understanding of what does and doesn't work," said Marcus Jarvis, Youth Advocate and Juveniles for Justice Alumnus, in a kickoff blog post. "Without the input of the people being served, reform wouldn't be of much quality... J4J has been a consistent example of [how the youth voice can be utilized](#). Its

continued success will bring more positive change and inspire others to incorporate similar strategies. It is important because every year the [changes being made by J4J](#) can affect the juvenile justice system for years to come.”

“The tenth anniversary of our Youth Advocacy Program is a cause for celebration for Juvenile Law Center and for all who value youth voice in reform of the justice and child welfare systems,” said Sue Mangold, Executive Director of Juvenile Law Center. “With ten years of experience, our programs are a national model. Our youth advocates have informed thousands of stakeholders who work with us to improve the systems that impact our children.”

Follow the campaign at www.jlc.org/youth-advocacy and with #10YearsofYA, #10YearsofJFJ, and #10YearsofYFC. Youth advocates and Juvenile Law Center staff are available for comment.

Juvenile Law Center advocates for rights, dignity, equity and opportunity for youth in the foster care and justice systems. Founded in 1975, Juvenile Law Center is the first non-profit, public interest law firm for children in the country. We fight for youth through litigation, appellate advocacy and submission of amicus (friend-of-the-court) briefs, policy reform, public education, training, consulting, and strategic communications. Widely published and internationally recognized as leaders in the field, Juvenile Law Center has substantially shaped the development of law and policy on behalf of youth. We strive to ensure that laws, policies, and practices affecting youth advance racial and economic equity and are rooted in research, consistent with children’s unique developmental characteristics, and reflective of international human rights values. For more information about Juvenile Law Center’s work, visit www.JLC.org.

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