



2012 YAB Summit

By Greta Weiss, Youth Ambassador



Once again, the Youth Advisory Board has been busy learning and making themselves heard! At the recent 2012 Youth Summit, held in State College, youth representing all of the regions of PA YAB met to discuss the new Fostering Connections Law, learn about strategic sharing, and participate in either a Know Your Rights workshop, or a time management workshop. The summit culminated in a panel of youth presenting ideas of why parts of Fostering Connections are important and some recommendations for the implementation of the new law.

All parts of the Youth Summit created great discussion and we all learned a lot. Youth learned about taking care of themselves while sharing their stories, and considering their audience and purpose. Youth also became experts of the Fostering Connections law and learned all about the requirements and

important components of youth reentering the system. These trainings were extremely productive and we all had a great time getting to know each other while increasing our knowledge.

During the Know Your Rights workshop, youth had the opportunity to learn about updated Know Your Rights information. The time management workshop showed youth great ways to minimize stress and prioritize their schedules. In this workshop, youth brainstormed ways to motivate themselves and stay organized, and how to apply these skills to being involved with the Youth Advisory Board and participating in the Youth Summit.

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Important Dates

Statewide Dates

- 10/25/12 (WebEx) 3:30-5 pm
- 11/15/12 (10-2pm)
- 1/17/13 (10-3pm)

Regional Dates

- North Central:**
11/12/12 at 6-7:30pm
- South Central:**
11/29/2012 at 4:40-7pm

South West:

1/14/13 at 4pm

Continue sending your Regional Meeting Dates to Janice to be included in the Blast and website



YAB is looking for Submissions!

- Does your Regional or Local YAB have something to say?
- Do you enjoy writing or blogging?
- Is there poetry you would like to share?
- This year's theme will be C.L.A.I.M!





2012 YAB Summit Participants

North Central

Ashley*

North East

Demara*

Collin

Amber

Cheyenne

Robert

North West

Dazhae

Hope

Erin*

South Central

Octavia

Jose*

Aaliyah

South East

Samantha*

Harold

Victor

Danae

South West

Maggie

Marissa

Greta*

*PCYA Panel
Participants

NYTD Needs **YOUth!**

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) sounds unimportant to youth who are transitioning out of care, but what if I said that it provides valuable information to lawmakers and could impact future funding amounts? Or that the data collected helps administrators paint a clear picture of how well Pennsylvania is providing Independent Living Services to youth? Did I get your attention? NYTD is important to transitional age youth for those two reasons, and this is why YAB is getting on board.

Why do the NYTD? NYTD was a federal requirement created in 1999 by the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act, and as stated above, is tied to the funding we get from the Federal Government.

What is NYTD? NYTD collects data about transitional age youth from three sets of data.

Served— County IL programs provide a lot of neat services, and this data set keeps track of every youth, in or out of care, receiving Independent Living Services.

Baseline— A survey to all 17 year old youth in care to collect important, basic information.

Follow-up— You may be randomly selected to complete additional NYTD surveys at age 19 and 21. In Pennsylvania, slightly less than 300 young adults were selected to complete the survey. They are followed up at 19 years old and 21 years old.

What is your Role? Be aware. Spread the word. Complete the survey accurately and timely if you are asked to do the 19 or 21 year old follow up survey. This helps the state avoid a penalty that would reduce funding for services.

Be SMART! Working Your Action Plan

During the YAB Summit, regions were given tools to create a Strategic Plan. Along with a Facilitator's guide and an Action Plan Template, your reps came up with a plan to tackle four issues facing foster youth:

Housing Options,
Age-Appropriate Freedoms,
Permanency and Re-entry
Planning.

Plans need to be
continuously monitored for
success!

When you are monitoring
your plan think **SMART!**

Are your Action Steps
Specific?
Measurable?
Attainable?
Realistic? and
Time-specific?

A Note: About Your YAB Elected Representatives!

Every year Regional Youth Advisory Board members are to vote for the four youth they would like to have represent them at our statewide meetings.

When you have your four representatives for the 2012-2013 year, please forward their names and email addresses to Janice Coplin at jtc30@pitt.edu



Youth Fostering Change: Teen Success Agreement

Written by Brian Mertens—Juvenile Law Center

The Teen Success Agreement is a written agreement that outlines the age-appropriate activities, responsibilities, and life skills for youth ages 13-21 in the foster care system, and how the caregiver and agency will support those goals.

This individualized agreement is created by the youth, caregiver, and provider agency. In developing the plan together, the team also discusses and outlines appropriate house rules, rewards, and consequences. The agreement should be updated every 6 months.

Youth Fostering Change has created a template Teen Success Agreement that we would like provider agencies and children and youth agencies to use with all older youth in care.

The goals of the Teen Success Agreement:

- ◇ To ensure normalcy for teenagers and young adults in the foster care system.
- ◇ To actively work toward a successful transition to adulthood.
- ◇ To facilitate communication between the caregiver and the youth.
- ◇ To hold the youth, caregiver, and agency accountable for their part of the agreement.
- ◇ To give teens and young adults in care greater access to age-appropriate activities.

If you would like to find out more information about Youth Fostering Change or the Teen Success Agreement please contact Brian Mertens at 215-625-0551 or bmertens@jlc.org.

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Finally, each region represented at the youth summit came up with recommendations for the implementation of the Fostering Connections law and what it should look like for older youth reentering care. The parts of the law that were focused on were permanency, housing, re-entry and planning, and age appropriate freedoms. The Youth Advisory Board regions determined what their recommendations were and recognized potential barriers to their goals for their recommendations. From this, they made strategic plans that outlined quick wins and goals for their ideas. The youth developed some great recommendations and excellent plans for follow through!

For the second and last day of the summit, six youth representing the Youth Advisory Board spoke as a panel to the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators. The youth talked about why permanency, housing, re-entry and planning, and age appropriate freedoms are such important parts of Fostering Connections. Some of the recommendations that were planned the previous day were also shared. Some impactful personal experiences were also shared by the members of the panel, who represented 65 years of experience with the child welfare system. The input was powerful and was clearly heard by child welfare leaders. It's exciting and inspiring to think about where these recommendations will lead and how they will impact older youth!



Questions? Submissions?
Barbara Huggins (Babs)
Statewide YAB Coordinator
Bmh75@pitt.edu
717.795-9048

PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

is comprised of current and former substitute care youth ages 16-21. Youth leaders on the YAB educate, advocate, and form partnerships to create positive change in the substitute care system.