



Office of Youth and  
Community Restoration

## OYCR March Newsletter



Youth  
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Community



Equity  
Focus



Compassion



Innovation



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## From OYCR

### Director's Letter

**“Having a voice and knowing how to use that voice leads to positive impact on me and my community.”** - Youth who is currently systems-involved (shared via an OYCR staff member)

At OYCR we seek to ensure youth voices are woven into everything we do. We approach this mission from many angles: creating a youth-led Youth Advisory Board, establishing Youth Advisory Councils inside facilities, ensuring youth participation on committees, having youth review OYCR's policies and written products, and hiring staff who have lived experience with the youth justice system.

We strongly believe that youth deserve to have their voices integrated into our work at every level, and we are endeavoring to make that a reality.



**Judge Katherine Lucero (ret.) Director**  
Office of Youth and Community Restoration  
California Health and Human Services Agency

## OYCR Celebrates Women's History Month

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**Celebrating Women's  
History Month**

This month, we pay tribute to the women throughout history who fought tirelessly for equal rights and honor the women who are still fighting today.

In line with this commitment, OYCR is advocating for comprehensive reforms that address the underlying causes behind girls' involvement in the justice system. By promoting health and healing alternatives to incarceration and providing support systems tailored to the specific needs of girls and gender-expansive youth, we can ensure they receive the opportunities and resources they deserve to reach their full potential.

## **News and Updates**

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### **Voices of Youth Justice: I am not an Outlier**

Miguel Garcia is an OYCR Ombudsperson Liaison, working to support youth in the justice system. But, his journey with the justice system started when he was just 15 years old.

Every youth has the potential to turn their life around and change their perspective.

[Read Miguel's story on OYCR's website.](#)





## **San Bernardino County was Honored for Parent and Child Connection Program and Juvenile Gun Deterrence Program**

California State Association of Counties (CSAC) honored San Bernardino County with CSAC Challenge Awards for two of the county's innovative youth programs: Parent and Child Connection (PACC) and Juvenile Gun Deterrence Program.

PACC allows incarcerated parents to record themselves reading to their children. This strengthens the parent/child bond and encourages literacy, which causes children to do better in school.

Implemented in 2021, the Juvenile Gun Deterrence Program by San Bernardino County Probation is a proactive response to the rise in youth on supervised probation for firearm-related offenses. This program ensures comprehensive



support services, therapy, and treatment, fostering the success of youth on probation. Chief Probation Officer Tracy Reece emphasizes, "Probation is about making a lasting difference in people's lives in the community." [Read more on the San Bernardino County website.](#)

## **New Program Pays Formerly Incarcerated Students to Go to College**

For Leah Richardson — a formerly incarcerated student at Santa Rosa Junior College working multiple jobs to afford her bills — a new California program offers hope.

The \$30 million program, Hire UP, will pay her for every hour she spends in class and on homework. The program focuses on students who are formerly incarcerated, as well as former or current foster youth. Formerly incarcerated students in ten community college districts across California will be eligible to apply for funding. [Read more from CalMatters.](#)



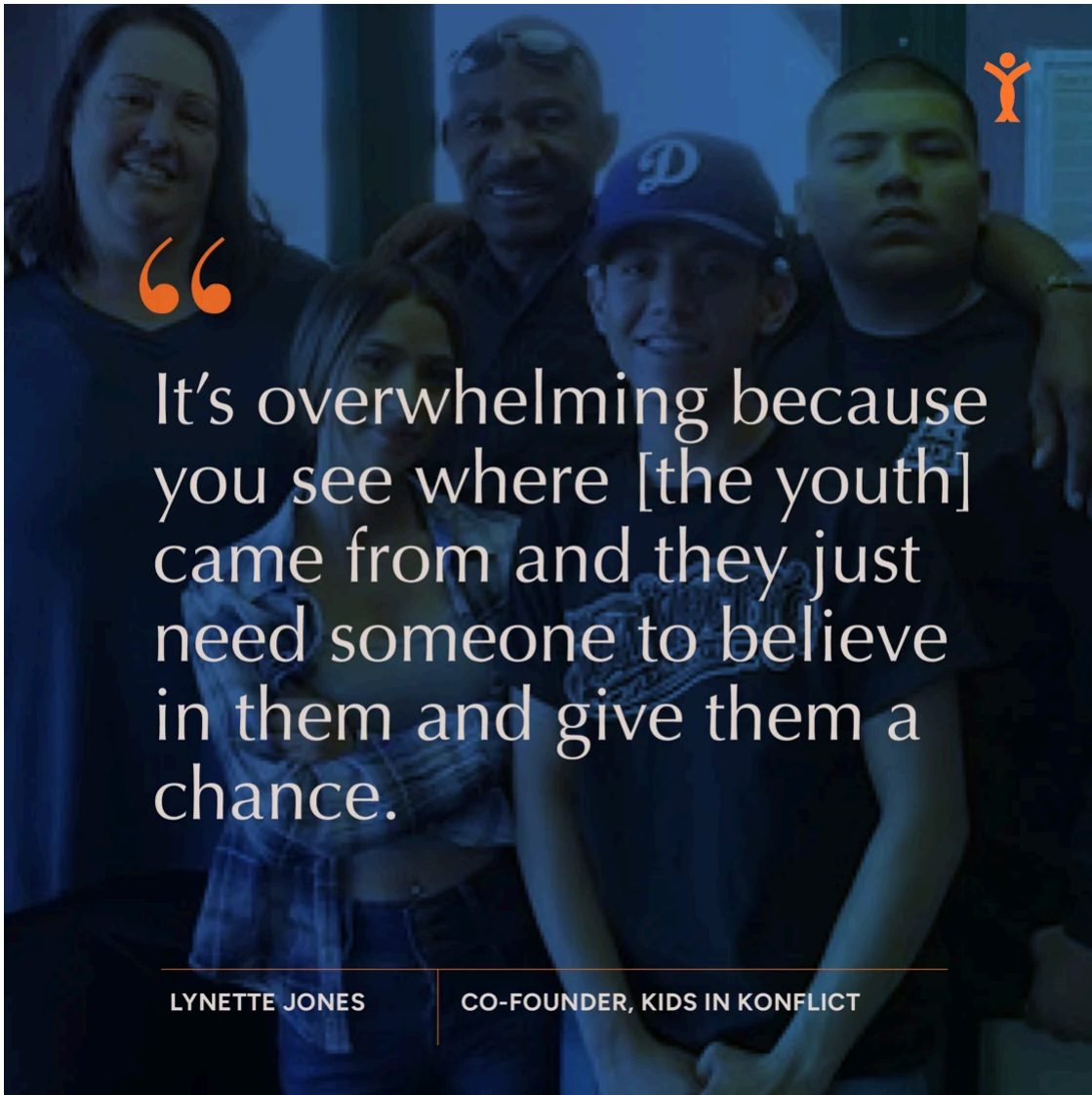
## **At John A. Davis Juvenile Hall: Poetry Unleashes Creativity to Steer Youth Away from the Justice System**

The Contra Costa County Probation Department provides a safe space for youth who are court-involved to express themselves through poetry.

Award-winning spoken-word poet Donté Clark leads bi-monthly poetry workshops for boys in John A. Davis Juvenile Hall. The Poetry Series Program, a recidivism reduction initiative by Arts Contra Costa County (ARTSCCC), provides a creative outlet and mentorship. [Read more in the Richmond Confidential.](#)



## Partner Highlight: Kids in Konflikt



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It's overwhelming because you see where [the youth] came from and they just need someone to believe in them and give them a chance.

LYNETTE JONES

CO-FOUNDER, KIDS IN KONFLICT

Kids in Konflikt give young people who've grown up in traumatic and unstable environments the tools they need to become resilient and productive in adulthood. With recently expanded counseling and mentoring programs, KIK is leveling up its ability to help more youth. [Learn more by watching this video about how KIK is transforming kids' lives.](#)

## Upcoming Events

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### OYCR office hours for 2024 Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) plan submissions

JJRBG plan submissions are due on May 1st, 2024. To ensure county probation departments have what they need to meet the new requirements set forth by AB 505



and address any specific needs, OYCR is hosting office hours during the following dates and times:

- March 27 (Wednesday): 1:00-2:00PM PDT
- April 5 (Friday): 2:00-3:00PM PDT
- April 25 (Thursday): 10:00-11:00AM PDT

For any questions about office hours, please reach out to

[OYCRCounties@chhs.ca.gov](mailto:OYCRCounties@chhs.ca.gov).

## **Webinar: Race, Adolescence, and the Criminalization of Youth of Color**

**April 8, 2024, 12:00-2:00pm PT**

Professor Kristin Henning will join OYCR Director Katherine Lucero to share powerful narratives and persuasive data as she explores the criminalization of normal adolescence and examines how racial disparities in our nation's juvenile and criminal courts are rooted in fears of youth of color. This webinar will offer practical insights for staff and leaders from youth-serving systems to transform policies and practices that harm young people. [RSVP here.](#)

## **Webinar: Adolescent Contact, Lasting Impact - Aligning Youth Justice Practice with Research**

**May 6, 2024, 12:00-2:00pm PT**

Dr. Elizabeth Cauffman, Professor in the Department of Psychological Science at the University of California, Irvine will be joining OYCR Director Katherine Lucero to explore the intersection between adolescent development and youth justice, with an emphasis on emerging research highlighting effective practice with young people who have committed serious offenses. The research covered in this webinar has been used in supreme court cases to abolish the death penalty for youth and eliminate life without the possibility of parole for youth offenders. [RSVP here.](#)

## **Past Webinars**

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# Victims and the Justice System: Myths, Facts, and New Solutions to Better Serve Them

March 4, 2024

If you missed this month's webinar, Lenore Anderson, Co-founder and President of Alliance for Safety and Justice and OYCR Director Katherine Lucero spoke about how the current youth justice system has failed victims, what myths and facts remain, and what can be done to improve the system. [View links to webinar information and recordings on our website.](#)

## Active OYCR Recruitment Efforts



**We're Hiring!**

The graphic features a large orange background with a white silhouette of a person with arms raised in the bottom left corner. Three circular inset photos are arranged around the central text: the top left shows two young men in a classroom; the top right shows a woman in a green shirt talking to a child; the bottom right shows a man in a blue polo shirt talking to a young man in a red shirt.

- OYCR is hiring a [Health Program Specialist II](#) in Sacramento County.
- OYCR is hiring an [Associate Governmental Program Analyst \(AGPA\)](#) in Sacramento County.

## Stay Connected with OYCR

To be added to OYCR's email list, please visit our ["Contact Us" page](#).

Thanks for all that you do to serve our youth.



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