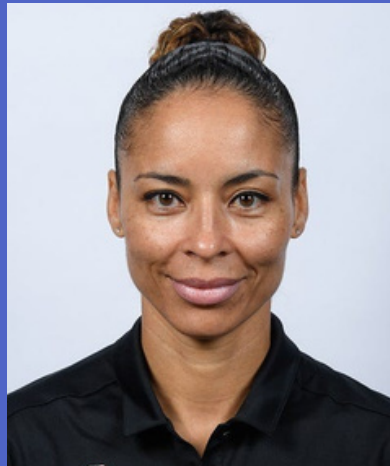




YOUTH ADVOCACY FOUNDATION



2021 Virtual Annual Event
**RECONNECTION 2021:
CLOSING THE GAP**



Thursday MAY 20, 2021 7-8:15 PM



YOUTH
ADVOCACY
FOUNDATION

YAF

The mission of the Youth Advocacy Foundation (YAF) is to end the school-to-prison pipeline in Massachusetts by ensuring that our state's most vulnerable children receive a quality education through expert legal advocacy. By envisioning a future in which all youth enjoy the full rights and protections of a fair and equitable justice system, YAF works to decrease the risk of chronic court involvement and to increase the chance that young people grow into healthy, thriving adults through zealous legal representation, vibrant community-based services, and equitable access to quality education. YAF's EdLaw Project has been in existence since 2001 and has provided direct representation to over 2,000 children



EdLaw PROJECT

The EdLaw Project exists to ensure that the most vulnerable children in Massachusetts--court-involved youth from low-income families, often with disabilities, and predominantly children of color--have equitable access to a quality education by providing legal representation in matters of school discipline, academic failure, and unmet special needs. EdLaw offers training and support to court-appointed attorneys across the state to help them incorporate education advocacy into their practice. EdLaw attorneys are organized by region, and support the 1000 person juvenile bar that represents the 20-25,000 kids involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. By advancing education advocacy, the EdLaw Project seeks to address one of the root causes of the school-to-prison pipeline: children being pushed out of or failing in school. As a result of the work of the EdLaw attorneys, many children are remaining in school with the service they need to thrive.

EVENT PROGRAM



*Reconnection 2021: Closing the Gap
Virtual Gala*

MUSIC

Moussa Segars & Israel Anselme
Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra Musicians

OPENING REMARKS

De'Lon Grant, MC
Broadway Star, "Come From Away"

WELCOME

Joshua Dohan
YAD Director & YAF Board President

CLIENT STORY

Eric Rentas & Olga Rivera

INTRODUCTION OF YAF/EDLAW STAFF

Marlies Spanjaard
YAF Executive Director

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Allison Feaster
Former WNBA Star & Boston Celtics VP of Player Development & Organizational Growth

CLIENT STORY

Jalen Bing Wallace & Michelle Braxton

POEM

Alondra Bobadilla
2020 Boston Youth Poet Laureate

AUCTION, RAFFLE, FUND-A-NEED

CLOSING REMARKS AND SONG

De'Lon Grant



YOUTH ADVOCACY FOUNDATION: **OUR PEOPLE**

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YAF

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 Michele Scavongelli, *Deputy Director*
 Jackie Stimpson, *Acting Operations and Development Coordinator*

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LETTER FROM THE YOUTH ADVOCACY FOUNDATION

Dear Friends,

We are thrilled to “see” your faces as we come together, once again virtually, to reflect on a year like no other. The pandemic has been devastating to the education landscape for our clients. However, you all have stepped up for the children of Massachusetts and we couldn't be more grateful! Together we continue our fight for education equity for the children of Massachusetts. Over the past year, thanks to your support, we have represented over 130 families, answered over 400 requests for assistance, and provided 45 trainings on education rights to over 1,000 participants, including parents, students, lawyers and youth-serving professionals.

The work to reconnect our clients to their education is going to take our continued focus and collaboration. We have seen first hand how the already alarming inequities and disparities in education were magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Massachusetts ranks in the bottom three states in terms of racial and ethnic disparities in educational attainment, as well as in juvenile arrest and incarceration rates. Black, Latinx and low-income students continue to more likely to be learning remotely as compared to their white peers in more affluent areas, resulting in greater learning loss and gaps in achievement.

Seventy percent of our children of color are coming out of fourth grade not proficient in reading or math. Although Black students make up only 9% of the student body statewide, 40% of the students who are handcuffed in school are Black. In Boston, a recent report found that Black students made up 1/3 of the student body but comprise 2/3 of arrests. Black students are too often treated as threats and not children, their voices ignored, and their pain dismissed as they are kicked out of the school building, physically restrained, and arrested.

Children and youth who are given a meaningful opportunity to succeed in school are overwhelmingly likely to go to college and/or into the work force. YAF's main initiative, the EdLaw Project, is designed to assure equitable educational outcomes and will inevitably lead to a substantial reduction in the number of people imprisoned in our state and nation and to pathways out of poverty for families and communities of color. As we fight for education equity for the most vulnerable children in the state, your continued support is critical. We appreciate you joining in the fight and look forward to reconnecting in person in the near future.

OUR EMCEE AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER

BROADWAY STAR,
"COME FROM AWAY"
DE'LOH GRANT
EMCEE



De'Lon Grant is an actor and singer currently performing on Broadway in the Tony Award nominated hit musical *Come From Away*. He spent three years touring domestically and internationally as Berry Belson in the Tony Award winning musical *Jersey Boys* and was recently named Best Leading Actor at the 2017 IRNE Awards for his portrayal of Haywood Patterson in Kander and Ebb's *The Scottsboro Boys*; a role for which he also received an Elliot Norton Award Nomination.

Some of his other credits include: Frederick Douglass in *Douglass* (The Wit Theatre, Chicago, IL), Tod Clifton in *Invisible Man* (The Studio Theatre, Washington, DC and The Huntington Theatre, Boston, MA), Jim in *Big River* (Lyric Stage Company, Boston; Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre, Conway, AR; The Barnstomers, Tamworth, NH), Achilles in *Troilus and Cressida* (Actors' Shakespeare Project, Boston, MA), Posthumous/Cloten in *Cymbeline* (Actors' Shakespeare Project, Boston, MA), Gaspard in *A Tale of Two Cities* (The Wheelock Family Theatre, Boston, MA), Kaine in *Dessa Rose* (The New Repertory Theatre, Watertown, MA) and Sawyer in *Harriet Jacobs* (Underground Railway Theatre, Boston, MA).

De'Lon holds a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Acting from the University of Michigan and a Master in Music with concentration in Musical Theatre Performance from The Boston Conservatory of Music.

Keep up with De'Lon at www.thedelon.com

BOSTON CELTICS VP OF
PLAYER DEVELOPMENT &
ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH
ALLISON FEASTER
KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Allison Feaster is Vice President of Player Development & Organizational Growth for the Boston Celtics. She is a former professional basketball player, a global citizen, and a trailblazer in the sports industry who is highly regarded for her leadership and teambuilding skills. During her decorated college basketball career, Feaster was the first player in any sport to be honored as Ivy League Player of the Year three times, leading the first-ever NCAA Division-I Tournament upset of No. 16 seed Harvard against No. 1 seed Stanford. She was a first-round WNBA draft pick and went on to an 17-year professional playing career in the US, Spain, France, Italy, and Portugal. Following her retirement from playing in 2016, Feaster joined the NBA's Basketball Operations Management Development Program. After serving as the lead of Player Personnel & Coach Relations for the NBA G-League, she joined the Boston Celtics organization where she currently leads Player Development & Organizational Growth. Beyond the court, Feaster serves as a co-lead for Boston Celtics United, the Celtics' social justice initiative to impact social and racial inequities in Black and Brown communities in Greater Boston. She maintains her role as an active public speaker, a champion of the advancement of women and girls, and serves as a global advocate for sport, including serving as a Sports Envoy for the US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Feaster is a graduate of Harvard College (BA, Economics), the Universidad Europea (MBA), and Harvard Business School (Exec Ed, Business of Entertainment, Media, & Sports).

OUR OPENING MUSICIANS

BOSTON YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS



ISRAEL ANSELME

Israel is a 16 year old sophomore at Brookline High School. He has been a member of the Intensive Community Program and Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra since he was 5 years old. He loves playing the viola and the violin and talking about his favorite pieces. He is an avid reader who plays sports and video games, and if you can't find him he is probably binge-watching anime.



MOUSSA GUEYE

Moussa is a happy-go-lucky 16 year old, who studies carpentry at Minuteman Regional Technical High School. Moussa is a violist with the Intensive Community Program and the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, and has been playing violin and viola since he was 5. He loves mentoring younger students and going to music camp in the summer. In his free time he plays video games with Israel and also loves to do tricks on his scooter. He frequently whistles while he works, to the joy of those around him.



2020 BOSTON YOUTH POET LAUREATE

ALONDRA BOBADILLA

SPECIAL GUEST



Born and raised in Boston, MA for most of her life, Alondra Bobadilla found and nurtured her love for writing since she learned her first letters. Besides writing, she has participated in multiple performance art forms since she was a little girl, finding ways to express herself beyond poetry alone. She's curious, lively and loves to learn. She spends her free time with friends and loved ones, always trying to put first the people that matter most. She is a student at Fenway High School, and was named Boston's first-ever Youth Poet Laureate in January 2020.

Website:

<https://www.alondrabobadilla.com/>

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/ThePumpchick/

STUDENT STORIES

Eric Rentas & Olga Rivera



Eric was seven years old when he was repeatedly suspended from school. The suspensions were affecting Eric's ability to learn, and they were even threatening his mother's employment. Eric's mother, Olga, had to leave work early to come pick up her son when the school suspended him. EdLaw got involved to stop the suspensions. We attended an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team meeting to advocate for Eric to go to a new school, which could provide the services and accommodations he needed. The school district agreed to send Eric to a new, therapeutic program at the Team meeting. EdLaw also filed a complaint to challenge the past suspensions. As a result of our complaint, those suspensions were determined to be illegal, and they have now been expunged or removed from Eric's student record. Eric is thriving in his new school, where he is in the third grade and performing above grade level. He has not been suspended since.

STUDENT STORIES

Jalen Bing Wallace & Michelle Braxton

Jalen Bing Wallace became a client of the EdLaw Project when although he was in 11th grade, he was only able to read at an early elementary school level. She proactively had him elevated by a reading specialist who identified that he had a learning disability in that had gone undetected by his school district for many years. He was moved to a classroom that promised to provide the services he needed, but after receiving multiple reports from Jalen about the chaos and lack of discipline in the classroom, his foster mom turned to EdLaw for help.

Together, EdLaw attorney Michele Scavongelli and pro bono attorney Jeff Catalano of Todd & Weld advocated on Jalen's behalf, including having the reading expert observe Jalen in class. She reported that given the gap in his skills caused by not receiving what he needed for so many years, his classroom was not equipped to bring his academic skills up to the level of college readiness. Jalen's dream is to attend college and play basketball at a Division One school, with the ultimate hope of being recruited by the NBA. However, given the level of his academic skills he would not be able to succeed in college and something had to be done.

Through advocacy on Jalen's behalf, including pursuing a hearing at the Bureau of Special Education Appeals, we were able to secure a placement for him at a private school that specializes in teaching students with specific learning disabilities and tutoring from Lindamood Bell Learning Services. He started his tutoring in August of 2020 and attendance at the new school in September of 2020. While his public school district was still only providing remote education, he was able to attend the private school in person half of the time and his tutoring over the summer was also in person. Eight months later, Jalen has gone up in reading five to six grade levels and has become much more confident in himself not only for his athletic prowess, but for his academic prowess!

He will graduate in June and continue his tutoring with Lindamood-Bell over the summer. He plans to attend a post-graduate high school on a full scholarship next year where he can continue to build on the strong foundation he has received; he also hopes to be recruited by a college with a competitive basketball program. Jalen never gave up, never lost faith in himself, and with his positive and likeable demeanor motivated everyone around him to want to support this wonderful young man in his pursuit of his dreams.



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Silent Auction at
yaf2021.ggo.bid**

PRO BONO PANEL

Thanks to the efforts of our incredible Pro Bono Panel, 36 additional students have received education advocacy this year.

Anderson Kreiger, LLP

Melissa Allison
Annie Lee
Eliana D. Vivier

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Jeffrey Catalano

Solo Practitioners

Sean P. O'Neill
James Steinhilber*

* Worked on more than one pro bono case

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION PARTNERS

Many thanks to our partners who provided
independent evaluations to our clients:

Achieve New England
Nathan Doty, PhD.

Lurie Center for Autism -- Massachusetts General Hospital
Kirstin Birtwell, Ph.D.
Lisa Nowinski, Ph.D.

Neuropsychological and Educational Services for Children and Adolescents
Erin Gibbons, Ph.D.
Stephanie Monaghan-Blout, Psy.D.
Kathleen Pignone, M.Ed., CRC

Proven Behavior Solutions
Tatiana Duarte, MS, BCBA, LABA
Andrea Hendershott, MEd, BCBA
Lindsey Snider, MS, BCBA
Scott Snider, MPA

Tufts Center for Children with Special Needs
Cathy Mason, M.Ed.
Kathleen Reilly, M.S., CCC-SLP
Christine M. Sadowski, Ph.D.

Additional Practitioners
Barbara Bruno-Golden, Ed.D.
Carol Leavell, Ph.D.
Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes

SPECIAL THANKS

The Youth Advocacy Foundation would like to thank the following individuals and organizations:

- **Anthony Benedetti** and **CPCS**, thank you for having the vision and leadership to invest in comprehensive representation and support of children.
- **Youth Advocacy Division and Children and Family Law Division staff and private bar**, we salute your passion and dedication in demanding justice for children and youth.
- Our wonderful **YAF Board** for all your guidance and generosity through the years.
- Our **Host Committee** for your steadfast support of this event, even as it moved dates and venue from in-person to on-line.
- **Karen Souza** and **Kevin Lucchetti**, for your financial guidance and patience.
- Thank you to **YouthConnect, Justice Resource Institute, Home for Little Wanderers, Children's Services of Roxbury**, and the many other **youth-serving organizations** who partner with us to ensure that our state's most vulnerable kids have access to the services and supports they desperately need.
- Our many partners on education-rights focused coalitions including: **Children's Law Center of Massachusetts, Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee, Greater Boston Legal Services, Center for Law and Education, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, Community Legal Services.**
- **Jeremy Cohn**, for continuing to provide YAF with guidance and support beyond your many years of service on the board.
- **Bob McDonnell** and **Alison Sclater**, thank you for your steadfast support.
- **Ken Parsigian** and **Shay Mayer**, thank you for being our partners in this work for many years in all areas, legal and philanthropic.
- **Citizens for Juvenile Justice**, thank you for leading the charge to reform the Massachusetts juvenile legal system.
- Many thanks to the **MA Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Leadership Forum** for your commitment to increasing equitable access to a bright future for all young people in the Commonwealth.
- **Diana Howatt** for continuing your commitment to this work well after your internship.
- **Tim Sindelar** and **James Baron** for your leadership of the "Massachusetts Attorneys for Students' Education Rights" group.

SPECIAL THANKS: EVENT EDITION

Without the following people our event would not have been possible:

- Our **Host Committee** for your steadfast support of this event, even as it moved dates and venue from in-person to on-line.
- Thank you to **Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra Musicians Israel Anselme and Moussa Segars** for providing our pre-event music.
- **De'Lon Grant** for giving so generously of your time and talent to make this evening a smashing success.
- **Allison Feaster** for generously and graciously sharing her passion and story as our keynote speaker. Go Celtics!!
- **Alondra Bobadilla**, Boston's 2020 Youth Poet Laureate for gracing our event with your amazing talent and youthful perspective on the problems facing the youth we serve.
- **Eric & Olga and Jalen & Michelle** for sharing your stories in the hope that other students and families will learn that help exists.
- A huge thank you to **Jackie Stimpson**—stage manager, website editor, and video producer among the many roles you took on to pull this event off seamlessly, all the while balancing hybrid remote education for your 3 girls!
- **Deb Poppel** for being the creative spark behind our communications, the humor she brings to all of our meetings, stepping into the role of leading our Event Planning Committee and the hard work and networking she did on YAF's behalf.
- Heartfelt thanks to **Randi Stern** and **Chandra Lynch** for designing, ordering & assembling the amazing "Proud Patron Packages"!
- A special shout out to **Katherine Hall Page** and **Theresa Flaherty** for everything you both did to make sure our silent auction was successful.
- **Phylliss Hill**, for guiding us into mobile bidding.
- And of course...

Our Amazing Event Planning Committee:

Laura Bickel
Theresa Flaherty
Katherine Hall Page
Chandra Lynch
Deb Poppel
Randi Stern
Bridget Treco

Without your many hours of attending meetings and continuous help this event would just be an idea. Thank you for believing that we could do this!

MORE THANKS

To YAF and EdLaw interns:

Patrick Cremin, Harvard Law School
Kate DiVasto, University of Pennsylvania School of Law
Diana Howatt, Northeastern University School of Law
Allisen Lowrance, Northeastern University School of Law
Rachel Schaub, Harvard Law School
Jordan Stevens, Boston University
Erin Stewart, Northeastern University School of Law

*Your passion, energy and support have been vital.
We are a stronger organization because of your contributions.*



**A sincere thank you to the foundations that have been
instrumental to the success of YAF and EdLaw:**

Bank of America - Frank Reed and Margaret Jane Peters Memorial Funds
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Marlies Spanjaard
Jackie Stimpson

We are proud to support the Youth Advocacy Foundation in its efforts to ensure the fundamental right to a quality education is realized by all Massachusetts youth.

-The Boreiko-Coolidge Family

End School Exclusion

Black students are **3x** more likely to be suspended than their white peers for the same or similar behaviors.



Of the Massachusetts students who were **pushed out** in the 2016-2017 school year,

42%
are
Latinx

15%
are
Black

53.1%
are
economically
disadvantaged

and **76.5%** are high-needs, despite constituting **only 39.5%** of high-school enrollment.

Prison funding has increased **530%** more than **education funding** over the past 20 years.



The **Youth Advocacy Foundation** defends the right of every child to an education.

The Streck, Burns & Dohan Families

are proudly committed to YAF's mission
to end the school-to-prison pipeline



Children who fall out
of the educational
system are **3x more
likely** to end up in
adult prisons

In Boston, Black students make up



1/3 of the student
body but



2/3 of school-
based arrests.



Black students comprise
9% of the student body statewide but

40% of the students who are
mechanically restrained (e.g.
handcuffed).



Josh Dehan,

Tonight we recognize and thank you for all you have given to mitigating the harsh and punitive aspects of our juvenile justice system in this Commonwealth and to envisioning and realizing a more

humane, holistic, and effective approach to setting our young people back on track.

It has been an honor to get to know you and to work alongside you as pro bono lawyer and board member -- and as friends,

Ken Parsigian and Shay Mayer





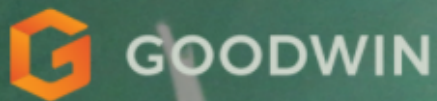
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In 1992, we gave the
Youth Advocacy
Foundation their first
grant award.

Look at you now!

We are so proud of all
that YAF has
accomplished to shut
down the school-to-
prison pipeline in
Massachusetts.



Goodwin is proud to support the Youth Advocacy Foundation's 2021 Annual Event.

During this unprecedented time of school closures and remote learning as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, legal advocacy for Massachusetts' most vulnerable children is more critical than ever in order to ensure all students receive the quality education they deserve.

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We proudly support the

YOUTH ADVOCACY FOUNDATION

and its commitment to
closing the gap in education



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YOUTH ADVOCACY FOUNDATION

2021 Virtual Annual Event

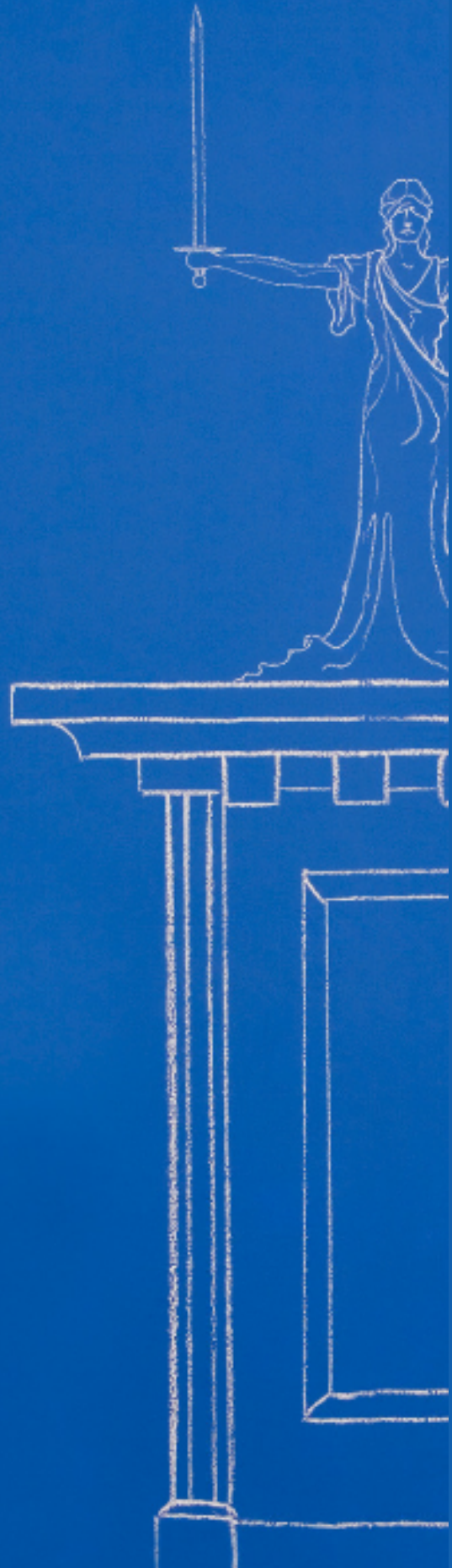
Latham applauds YAF's mission to protect and defend Massachusetts' most vulnerable youth.

LW.com

“The opposite
of poverty is
not wealth...in
too many
places, the
opposite of
poverty is
justice.”

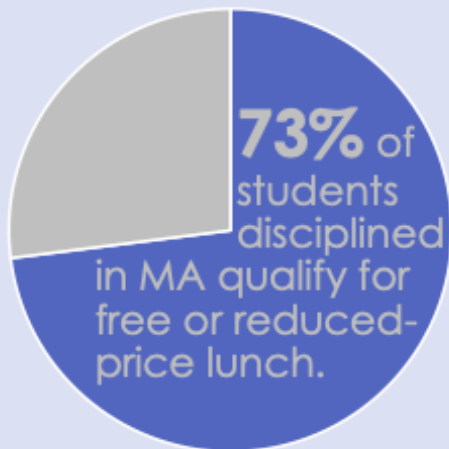
-Bryan
Stevenson

The Treco Family Foundation



Lael & Charles Chester

are proud to support YAF's efforts to protect Massachusetts' most vulnerable youth.



Students with disabilities are suspended **3x** as often as their non-disabled peers in Massachusetts.



LET'S RAISE A QUAFF
AND TOAST TO YAF*!

- Deb Poppel

*only if you're 21+!



*Thank you
to the YAF and EdLaw staff,
the board, the host committee,
De'Lon, Allison, and Alondra,
and everyone who has donated their
time, talent, and tireless work
toward securing a brighter future
for every child.*

- MICHELE AND PETER SCAVONGELLI

**Thank you YAF and EdLaw for all your work
on behalf of our most vulnerable youth, and
thank you Josh for your inspiring and
visionary leadership. - Jeremy Cohn**



Salute those who make a **difference.**

Choate is proud to support the work of the **Youth Advocacy Foundation** and the **EdLaw Project** and congratulates the team on their leadership and the differences they make for Massachusetts' highest-risk youth.

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THE YOUTH ADVOCACY FOUNDATION WOULD LIKE
TO THANK OUR CLIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR
TRUSTING US TO ADVOCATE ON YOUR BEHALF.

Boston Children's Office
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is proud to support the
work of the Youth Advocacy
Foundation.



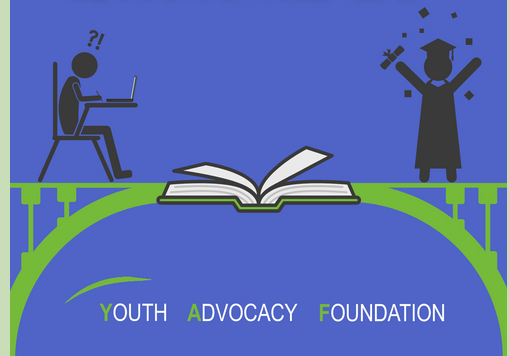
governmentrelations.childrenshospital.org



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of preschool children
suspended more than
once are **Black**.



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