



YOUTH ADVOCACY FOUNDATION

2020 Virtual Annual Event

FIGHTING FOR
RACIAL
EQUITY
IN EDUCATION



Thursday OCTOBER 1, 2020 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 1,800 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



Fighting for Racial Equity in Education
2020 Virtual Annual Event
Thursday, October 1

Music

The Buffers

Opening Remarks

De'Lon Grant, MC

Dismantling Structural Racism

Joshua Dohan, YAF President

Client Stories

Patrice & Jayda Lawson
Raven Antoniomar Leon

Keynote Speaker

Dartanyon Crockett

Client Story

Wendy Alexander & Juan David Reynoso

Auction, Raffle, Fund-a-Need

Closing Remarks and Song

De'Lon Grant



YOUTH ADVOCACY FOUNDATION: OUR PEOPLE

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LETTER FROM THE YOUTH ADVOCACY FOUNDATION

Dear Friends,

Thank you for joining us (or more accurately “tuning in”) tonight, to support YAF in our fight to achieve racial equity in the Massachusetts schools. Who could foresee that 2020 would bring a confluence of events that so directly aligns with our work and mission? The murder of George Floyd and the resulting Black Lives Matter protests, alongside the COVID-19 Pandemic which created a new reliance on remote learning, have shone a new light on the unequal and unfair treatment of the most vulnerable children in our schools

Massachusetts is heralded as having the best public school systems in the nation; however, we rank in the bottom three states in terms of racial and ethnic disparities in educational attainment, as well as in juvenile arrest and incarceration rates. 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. The causal connection between failing to provide children with an effective education and future involvement with the criminal legal system is so well understood that it has a tag line: “The School-to-Prison Pipeline.”

Racial inequity is also pervasive in our special education system. Black students are under-identified for special education, and, as a result, never receive critical educational services and fall behind their peers. When identified for special education services, Black students are disproportionately segregated from their peers. In many cases they are moved to classrooms for students with emotional disabilities, where they are warehoused rather than educated, and find yet another path into the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

The cycle of negative school outcomes leading to negative court outcomes leading to negative life outcomes, across generations, undermines public safety and leaves communities of color impoverished and alienated. 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 rather than into prison or onto the welfare rolls. Strategies designed to assure equitable educational outcomes will inevitably lead to a substantial reduction in the number of people imprisoned in our state and nation and to real pathways out of poverty for families and communities of color.

YAF and its leveraged team of pro-bono attorneys know how to give these vulnerable kids the support that will keep them in school and give them the fair shake they deserve. Your presence (and your dollars!) are a critical piece of our work, and we could not be more grateful.

OUR EMCEE AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER

BROADWAY STAR,
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.

In addition to his stage work De'Lon is also photographer specializing in headshot and lifestyle portraits. www.delonphotography.com.

U.S. PARALYMPIAN,
DARTANYON CROCKETT
KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Dartanyon Crockett was born in inner-city Cleveland, OH. Raised in a neighborhood filled with consistent violence, Dartanyon managed to maintain unconditional compassion toward others. In high school he crossed paths with a young man by the name of Leroy Sutton who shared this virtue. The power and beauty of their friendship managed to resonate across the world, thanks to the help of ESPN producer, Lisa Fenn, who eventually became a part of their unlikely family.

The airing of their 2009 documentary "Carry On" aided Dartanyon in pursuing a career as a U.S. Paralympian in the sport of judo. As a Paralympic athlete Dartanyon also began to build a career in inspirational speaking. Dartanyon's speaking career has led him to pursue knowledge and insight from the fields of social work, sociology, and education.

While stepping in to his new career as a sociologist, serving as a Program Manager for YESS Institute, Dartanyon has grown to become an expert in the area of recovery and resilience. Dartanyon addresses these concepts by generalizing knowledge from his lived international experience as an athlete, coach and speaker and his sociological and trauma informed research.

OUR OPENING MUSICIANS



AISLING RYAN



JAMES PREISS

Aisling Ryan and James Preiss are two members of The Buffers — a five-piece band from the Boston and Somerville area. Combining influences from alternative rock, blues, and slap-happy funk, the band is known for their classic & modern sounds, mixed with a dash of vocal harmony. Both James and Aisling (and most other members!) met at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, but have been jamming together since The Buffers' founding in 2015. James is a Marketing Manager, originally from NYC. He has been playing the guitar for as long as he can remember! Aisling is from Millis, MA; she is a Registered Nurse at Nashua, NH's community hospital and a Nurse Practitioner student at UMass Medical Medical School.

The duo are very excited to be a part of this special event on behalf of the Youth Advocacy Foundation!

STUDENT STORIES

Jayda Lawson, age 17

Jayda was a 9th grade METCO student at Lincoln-Sudbury High School. She had been attending school through METCO since first grade. (METCO is a program in which Boston students attend school in a suburban school district.) She started receiving special education services in third grade and she did well through 8th grade. The transition to the larger regional high school was rough for Jayda. She was extremely anxious. She was bullied by some white girls at the school which just added to her anxiety. When confronted in a bathroom by her antagonists, Jayda fought back. Initially she was suspended for 2 days, which was extended to 10 days. The parents of the white student filed charges against Jayda with the police.

At the advice of METCO, Jayda's Auntie Patrice reached out to the EdLaw Project, which put her in touch with Lisa Lana of the Somerville Youth Advocacy Division office. In addition to handling the potential court matter, Lisa also represented Jayda at her school ensuring that she was not disciplined and that her educational needs would be addressed. From June through December she helped Jayda and Patrice navigate the special education process.

Jayda completed an extended evaluation at Dearborn STEP in Arlington, and at the end, her special education team agreed that Jayda would thrive in a therapeutic day school. After visiting a number of schools, Jayda chose the LABBB Collaborative, located at Lexington High School. Her special education team consisting of Dearborn staff and staff from the suburban district agreed, but unfortunately Boston Public Schools, who knew Jayda the least, did not agree and said that they would not fund the placement or provide transportation to LABBB. They wanted her to attend a Boston school that offered none of the things that were so important to her and, in fact, would be more chaotic than the school she had come from.

At the same time as the education issues were being addressed, Jayda was facing delinquency charges for the incident at the school that had led to the disciplinary proceedings. However, due to Jayda's hard work following that incident, her YAD attorney (Lisa) was able to secure a diversion program, which Jayda successfully completed, she never had to go to court and she has no juvenile record!



Due to the disagreement with Boston Public Schools, a Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) hearing request was filed, and Michele Scavongelli from the EdLaw Project assumed Jayda's education representation. She made sure that Jayda was able to start school at LABBB in January 2019. She represented Jayda's wishes at a hearing in April and the BSEA hearing officer ruled in Jayda's favor in July. Jayda has attended LABBB ever since, even through this time of remote learning.

Jayda is a strong student, has been working at a job that the LABBB staff helped her get, she is participating in more mainstream classes, and is on the Lexington High track team. She will graduate at the end of this school year and has her sights set on college and law school beyond.

STUDENT STORIES

Raven Antonionmar Leon, age 21



Raven had fulfilled all of his graduation requirements with the exception of one of the three required Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams. He just needed to pass the Science test and had tried multiple times without success. The school had also prepared a portfolio of his work and had submitted that in the past, but it was rejected.

Raven hadn't given up! He just wanted his diploma so he could move on to the next step in his life: work and perhaps college. In the fall of 2019, his mother reached out to the EdLaw Project looking for help. She felt that Raven needed more tutoring than he was getting to prepare for the exam, and also needed someone to help him complete his portfolio appeal. As a result of the advocacy of pro bono panel volunteers, Andrea McCullough and Kelly Crosby of Liberty Mutual, the school provided significant additional tutoring for the MCAS exam. They also helped Raven complete the missing parts of his portfolio and made sure that even during COVID-19, the portfolio was delivered to the Mass. Dept. of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE).

On May 12th, Raven's mom, Angela, received this wonderful news from the school principal: "Raven's appeal to the State has been granted and he is officially a high school graduate!!!!!!!" On July 7th he received his diploma, "something he has always wanted." Angela reported that Raven is now talking about college, which is "music to [her] ears!"



Wendy Alexander and Juan David Reynoso

Wendy Alexander is a proud mother of two and a fierce advocate for her children. Her son, Juan is a 15-year-old student who enjoys time with his family and wants to be a computer programmer when he gets older.

Juan has been diagnosed with depression, ADHD and anxiety. He was extremely unhappy at school and has a history of being a target of bullying. Juan also struggled with suicidal ideation. Wendy and Juan were connected with EdLaw after a bullying incident in school where Juan was then arrested for making threats to the students who were bullying him. Juan's delinquency attorney contacted EdLaw.

It became immediately clear to his EdLaw attorney that Juan's Individualized Education Plan was inappropriate. EdLaw worked together with Juan's family to secure an appropriate evaluation and to fight for a placement that could meet Juan's needs. Juan is now attending a new school and he loves it! He is now an honor roll student and is happy and confident going to school!



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PRO BONO PANEL

Thanks to the efforts of our incredible Pro Bono Panel, 14 additional students have received education advocacy this year.

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Alexandra "Lexie" Reynolds
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Jeffrey Catalano

Solo Practitioners

Allison Boscarine
Jeremy Cohn*
Holly Lynch

* 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.
Gretchen Timmel



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
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



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

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**.
- **David Carter** for your support and guidance on delivering our message.
- **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.
- **Professor Elizabeth Bloom** and **NUSL's LSSC Law Office II** for their project: "From Complaint to Compliance: Catalyzing Corrective Action to Hold Massachusetts Schools Districts Accountable"
- **Tim Sindelar** and **James Baron** for your leadership of the "Massachusetts Attorneys for Students' Education Rights" group.
- **Wilfred Acosta** of **Elevated Thought** for your beautiful T-shirt design.

SPECIAL THANKS: EVENT EDITION

Without the following people our even 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 **The Buffers** 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.
- **Dartanyon Crocket** for generously and graciously sharing your story with us.
- **Jayda & Patrice, Raven & Angela, and Wendy & Juan** 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!
- Thank you to **Danielle Voss**, for all the time and effort you put in to securing us an in person venue that we hope to use in 2021!
- A special thank you to **Sophia Greenberg**, our YAF intern extraordinaire. You came for the summer and stayed to help even when classes started back up. Your talent, hard work, and creativity have infused our organization.
- **Deb Poppel** for being the creative spark behind our communications, the humor she brings to all of our meetings, and the hard work and networking she did on YAF's behalf.
- 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
Lakeisha Gandy
Sophia Greenberg
Katherine Hall Page
Clare Nauman
Ken Nordstrom
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:

Brendan Brooks, Suffolk Law School
Patrick Cremin, Harvard Law School
Sophia Greenberg, Wellesley College
Diana Howatt, Northeastern University School of Law
Hannah Makowske, Harvard Law School
Caitlin Maloney, Boston College Law School
Kayla Pulliam, New England School of Law
Becky Reindel, Boston College Law School

*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:

Boston Bar Foundation
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Cornell Law School Frank HT Rhodes Public Interest Fellowship
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To our 2020 Boston Marathon Team:

Ruby Balborda
Ami Fatula
Becca Keddy
Charlie Kim

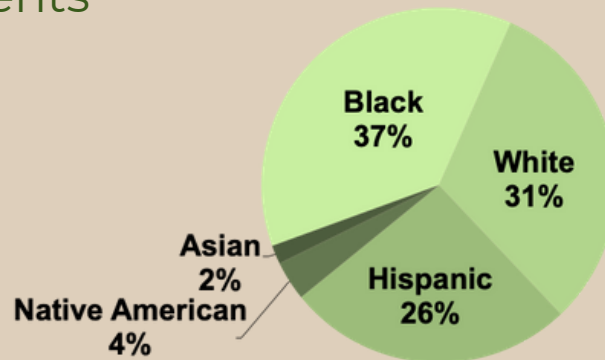
*It did not turn out to be the marathon experience that you hoped for (and we wanted for you),
but your willingness to train all winter and raise almost \$25,000 for
YAF will make a difference in so many lives.*

Since inception in January 2000, the EdLaw Project has

- represented over 2,000 students
- advised 5,465 students and their families
- conducted 589 trainings for 11,085 attendees.

In 2019, the EdLaw Project:

- represented 174 students from low-income families
- advised 432 students and their families
- served 37.2% Black and 26.2% Hispanic clients



**KEEP UP THE GREAT
WORK, YAF!**

- CHARLES AND LAEL CHESTER



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

Thank you, YAF and EdLaw,
for your work toward
achieving Racial Equity in
Massachusetts schools!



*Krishna and Kate
Ramaswamy*

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

- MICHELE AND PETER SCAVONGELLI



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In 1992, we gave the
Youth Advocacy
Foundation their first
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We are so proud of all
that YAF has
accomplished to shut
down the school-to-
prison pipeline in
Massachusetts.



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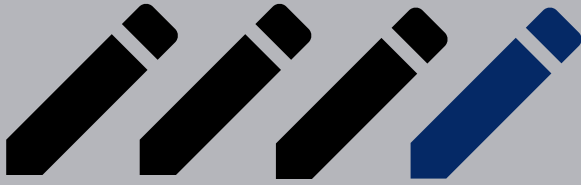


YOUTH ADVOCACY FOUNDATION

2020 Virtual Annual Event

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

LW.com



Black students are suspended and expelled 3x more than white students.



Students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be suspended than students without disabilities.



Liberty Mutual[®]

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is joining YAF in the fight against discrimination in schools.

Gordon Brothers is proud to support the Youth Advocacy Foundation.



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We commend YAF's mission to protect and defend Massachusetts most vulnerable youth!



Morgan Lewis

Morgan, Lewis and Bockius LLP
is a proud supporter of the
Youth Advocacy Foundation
and the commitment to fighting
for racial equity in education.



Julie Bowden and Richard Grudzinski

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

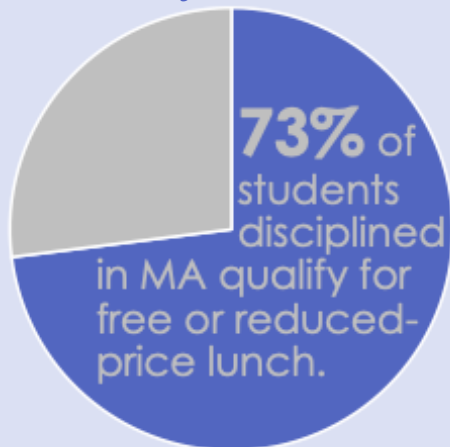


40% of the students who are **mechanically restrained** (e.g. handcuffed).



Thomas and Sarah Reed

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.

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



**Boston
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Goodwin is proud to support the Youth Advocacy Foundation's 2020 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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Julie and Dennis Murphy

are proud to support YAF's mission to end the school-to-prison pipeline.



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Lia and William Poorvu

are proud supporters of YAF's
fight against racism in
schools.



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

Let's raise a quaff
And toast to YAF*!



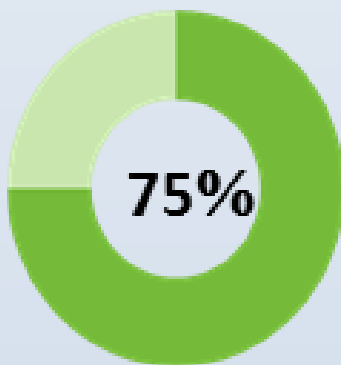
- **Deb Poppel**

*only if you're 21+!

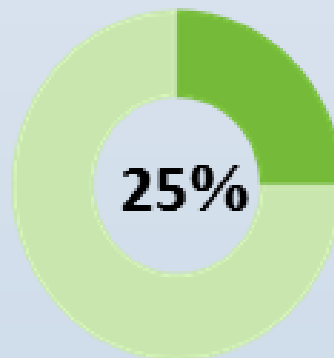
We are proud to support YAF's efforts to ensure our state's most vulnerable youth have access to a quality education.

-Ken Parsigian & Shay Mayer

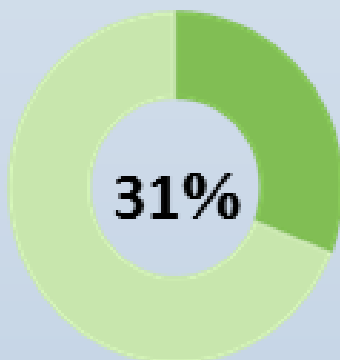
Education Outcomes for Youth in Foster Care



...of children in foster care are behind at least one grade level.



...of foster students have a disability, compared to 10 % of the general Population.



...of children who grow up in foster care graduate from high school. Less than 3 % graduate from college.

We need to stop the cycle of inadequate and inequitable access to education for youth in foster care. The Youth Advocacy Foundation is training child welfare attorneys statewide to support youth in foster care.

The Streck, Burns, & Dohan families

May you grow up to be righteous
May you grow up to be true
May you always know the truth
And see the light surrounding you
May you always be courageous
Stand upright and be strong
May you stay forever young
(R. Zimmerman)

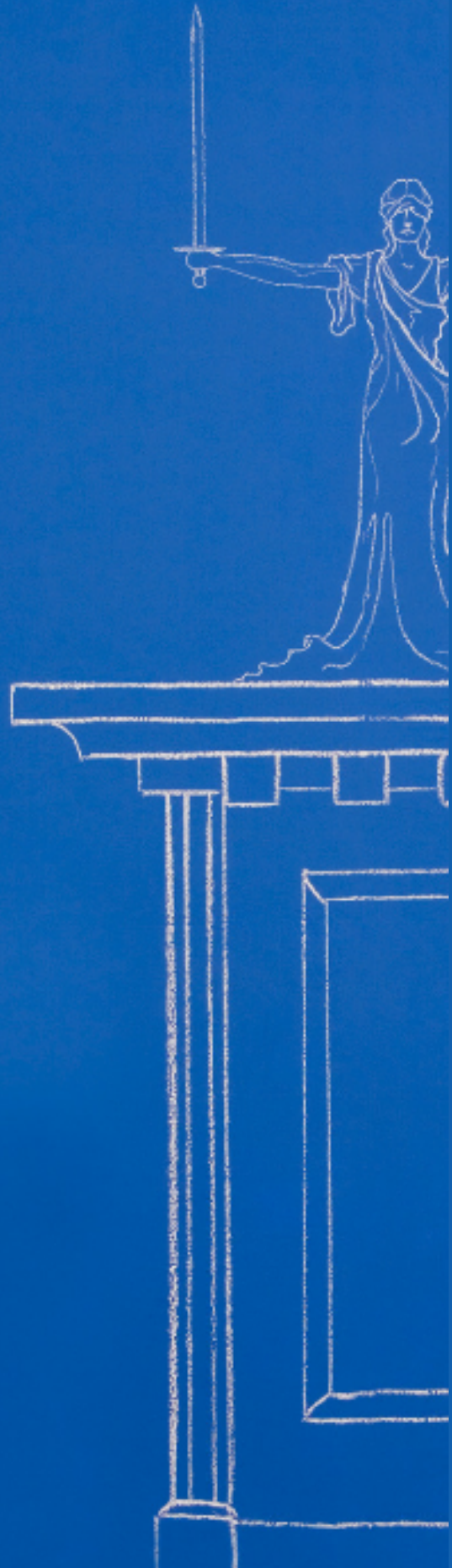
J. Lawrence Dohan MD
1934-2020, Forever young.



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

-Bryan
Stevenson

The Treco Family Foundation



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.