

All Hands on Deck

Identifying and Supporting Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth in the Juvenile Justice System



In this report you will find reflections on the Los Angeles County Probation Department's efforts over the past eight years to better identify and serve youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. And it is our hope that it can serve as a tool kit for other jurisdictions doing, or just beginning, this work.

- Los Angeles County Chief Probation Officer Ray Leyva

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S U G G E S T E D C I T A T I O N

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THE ISSUE

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth

Los Angeles has been identified as one of the nation's high intensity areas for the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth (CSEC/Y). Commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) can involve child sex trafficking and "survival sex,"¹ which occurs when youth trade sex to meet basic needs. Children and youth who have experienced childhood physical and sexual abuse, emotional neglect, foster care and/or juvenile justice involvement, and/or homelessness are especially vulnerable to CSE. Traffickers target and prey on this vulnerability, often coercing and manipulating children and youth into the sex trade with promises of love and acts of kindness alternated with violence and threats. As a result, many children and youth experience trauma bonding with their traffickers, making leaving the exploitative relationship all the more difficult. In order to overcome the extreme abuse and trauma these children and youth have experienced, and to go on to lead healthy, productive lives, they must be supported with comprehensive, collaborative services and supports.

“

This issue matters to me because people matter – women and children matter. It's become my purpose in life to make sure that they matter and that their voices are heard. Once I learned about this issue, I accepted that challenge. And I'm glad I did.

”

MARKESE FREEMAN

Supervising Detention Services Officer, Central Juvenile Hall, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Our Message To Survivors

Every day you show us how the human spirit can triumph and rise above even the most adverse experiences of life.

Despite the painful pasts you have endured, you refuse to be broken. Your transformational journey may sometimes feel impossible, yet, we have witnessed you face your fears and confront obstacles head on. We know that there will be hurdles.

Just know that you are not alone in your struggles. We are with you every step of the way. We will push you to your potential.

WE WILL SHOW UP!

We want you to remember that no matter how many times you may fall, do not lose sight. Keep going. Keep building.

Keep walking towards achieving your dreams.

- Child Trafficking Unit

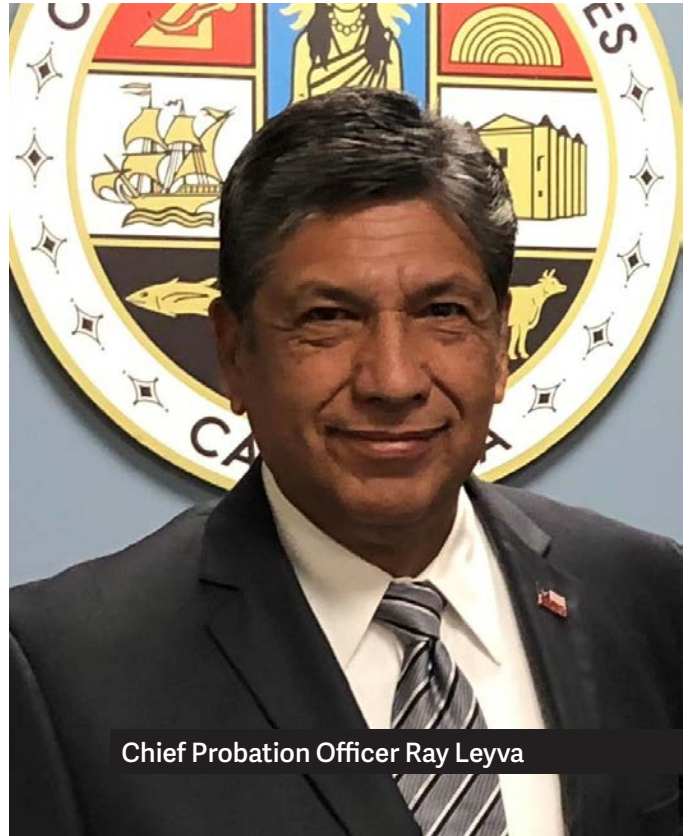
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Chief's Message

Message from Los Angeles County Chief Probation Officer Ray Leyva

Los Angeles County is considered a significant hub for trafficking youth within the illicit sex trade. In an effort to respond to these challenges, the Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation) developed the Child Trafficking Unit (CTU) in January 2012 as a collaborative effort between Probation and the Courts to address the unique needs of this population. This project supported and continues to support a myriad of countywide efforts to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. Probation has worked closely with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (BOS) in these efforts, whose leadership and support has been crucial since the very beginning.



Chief Probation Officer Ray Leyva

Today, Probation is leading the nation in thinking differently about how we respond to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. We've long known that sexual exploitation and sexual abuse are prevalent amongst those that are involved in the juvenile justice system. The CTU works to address

the underlying trauma and abuse that youth have experienced both prior to, and during, their exploitation. Through this approach, the Unit aims to support more positive outcomes and futures for youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.



January 2019 Human Trafficking Awareness Board Presentation



The CTU has grown substantially over the past eight years. In that time, we have identified over 1,900 children and youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and we have provided supervision to over 500 of those youth. Outside of the CTU, CSEC Coordinators within juvenile halls, camps and the Dorothy Kirby Center have been vital in identifying and providing services to CSE youth while in custody. As a result of their commitment, there have been over 600 youth identified as commercially sexually exploited by way of disclosure; these are youth who had not been initially identified, showing how dedicated our staff is to stepping up and going the extra mile.

Because of these continued efforts, Probation continues to be a national leader in the fight against the commercial sexual exploitation of some of our most vulnerable youth. Probation has provided leadership in facilitating CSEC training to over 26,000 County employees and community partners over the past eight years; developed a CSEC

prevention curriculum for girls which is used weekly in our juvenile halls, Dorothy Kirby Center, and across the country in other jurisdictions; assisted in the development of the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol (FRP) for CSEC which has had over 750 CSEC/Y recoveries over the past five years; chaired the LA County CSEC Integrated Leadership Team (ILT) which was implemented by the Board of Supervisors; and continues to provide leadership for various other protocols and initiatives currently being developed in LA County.

The work continues with the implementation of Senate Bill 794 and Senate Bill 855, which mandate the use of a screening tool in order to identify youth who are victims, or at risk of, commercial sexual exploitation; reporting suspected CSEC to the child protection hotline; increased CSEC training; facilitation of multidisciplinary team meetings for youth identified with histories of CSE; and expeditiously locating youth who go missing.

Probation also recognizes that a youth's victimization, and their need for support, does not end when they turn 18; in response, the Department is working on programming to address adult survivor needs and services. In addition, Probation has worked to enhance current strategies and protocols in the identification and supervision of adult probationers identified as exploiters and buyers. These efforts include assigning a dedicated Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) to the LA Sheriff Department's Human Trafficking Task Force; reviewing current and incoming cases for human trafficking related offenses to ensure the level of supervision is appropriate; creating an internal steering committee to address the identification, assessment, and supervision aspects of all cases identified as exploiters and buyers; and providing human trafficking training to DPOs who supervise adults.

I would like to recognize the CTU for the commitment, dedication, love, and care they give our youth who have experienced CSE each and every day. These are difficult and often heartbreaking assignments and the staff work tirelessly to support and protect these vulnerable youth. Youth who have experienced CSE often talk about how important their probation officers are in their lives, how they've made a difference in helping them heal, and how excited they are to be moving forward with a life without abuse and exploitation. I am extremely proud of these Probation staff who give of themselves tirelessly, show up day or night in times of crisis, sit with youth in the courtroom as they testify against their exploiters, attend high school graduations, and ensure birthdays are celebrated. Their work is truly awe inspiring.

In this report you will find reflections on the Los Angeles County Probation Department's efforts over the past eight years to better identify and serve youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. And it is our hope that it can serve as a tool kit for other jurisdictions doing, or just beginning, this work.

This report also highlights the many champions who have helped move the work forward in Los Angeles County. Because these youth are often touched by many systems – education, emergency room clinics, juvenile justice, and more – there are many opportunities for systems partners to step up and get involved. Our experience has shown that effectively addressing this issue requires an “all hands on deck” approach. With the tools provided in this report, we hope leadership becomes possible across many agencies and for individuals at every level. These youth have experienced profound abuse, neglect, and trauma, and because of this, they need tremendous support to heal. This becomes possible when systems partners break down silos and come together to serve youth holistically. Our youth deserve nothing less.

In this report you will find reflections on the Los Angeles County Probation Department's efforts over the past eight years to better identify and serve youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. And it is our hope that it can serve as a tool kit for other jurisdictions doing, or just beginning, this work.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WHAT YOU'LL READ IN THIS REPORT

VISIT <https://probation.lacounty.gov/child-trafficking-unit/>
EMAIL childtrafficking@probation.lacounty.gov



Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

Since the beginning, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has prioritized the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth, dedicating County time, attention, and resources to better identify and serve youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation or are at high-risk. Under their leadership and with their support, agencies and community organizations across the County have broken down silos and come together to make this a County issue, supported by countywide efforts. Their leadership has emphasized to Los Angeles County, and counties across the nation, that our children are not for sale.

Our children are not for sale.



Current Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Left to Right): Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, 2nd District; Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, 3rd District; Supervisor Kathryn Barger, 5th District; Supervisor Hilda Solis, 1st District; and Supervisor Janice Hahn, 4th District.

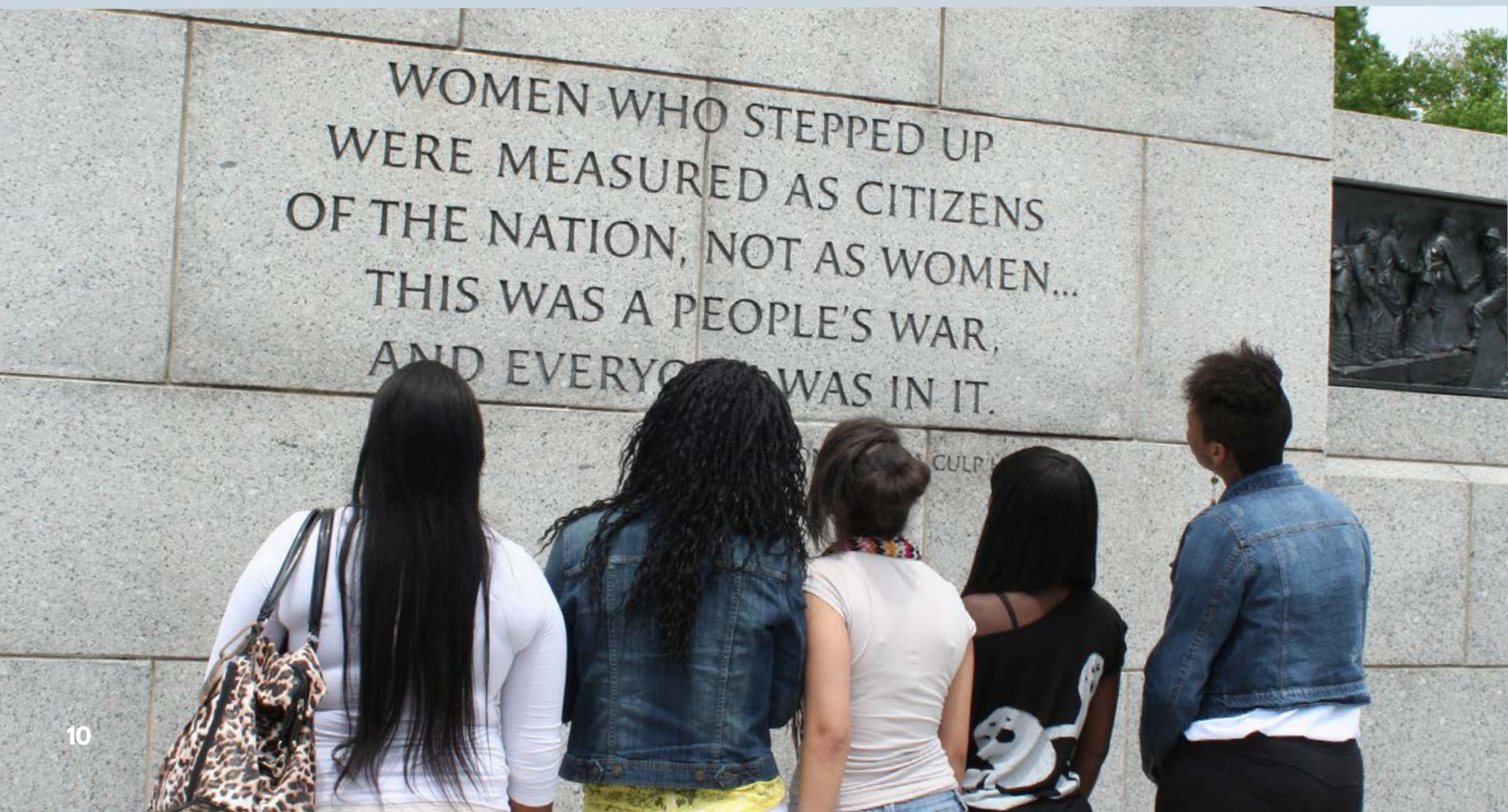
Statement from Congressmember Bass

Sex trafficking is one of the world's fastest growing criminal enterprises and in our country it disproportionately affects those who have been placed in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. I'm incredibly proud of the work that Michelle has done in Los Angeles and the leadership role she has taken on this issue. Protecting victims from the heinous crime of human trafficking must be a priority at the local, state and federal levels. One of the biggest victories was changing the way children were treated by the law in Los Angeles -- today, a minor cannot be charged with prostitution because how can you even be guilty of something you can't legally consent to? There is no such thing as a child prostitute -- and that's a perfect example of the change Michelle has created. My job is to take what's working at the local level and taking those models, learning from those models, and implementing them on a federal level. The work



California Congressmember Karen Bass

that she continues to do here is an example for the nation. Changing the narrative and the paradigm and the stigma surrounding this issue is integral to addressing it and I'm so proud to continue this fight on the federal level alongside warriors like Michelle.





Those We've Lost

Over the years we have sadly lost children who never had the opportunity to reach their full potential. We have not forgotten their lives and often say their names. Through our continued efforts to protect, serve and empower this vulnerable and courageous population of children and youth, we honor the lives of those we have lost.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Probation would like to acknowledge the many County agencies and community partners whose collaboration has made this work possible. Probation would also like to acknowledge every individual both within the Department, and outside of the Department, who have made the work possible or have been involved in the work in some way. Probation's efforts to better identify and serve youth who have been commercially sexually exploited simply would not be possible without the courage and commitment of countless individuals who have stepped up and played their part. Probation thanks each and every one of you.

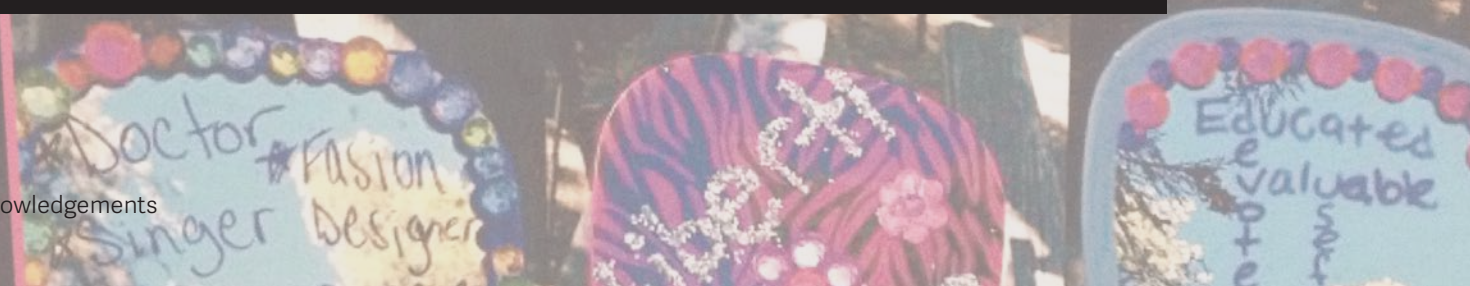
Special thanks to Allison Newcombe, Erin French, and Kate Walker Brown, attorneys at the National Center for Youth Law, who authored this report, and special thanks to Kylee Olson, who designed this report.



All of the beautiful artwork you will see throughout this report was created by survivors at the annual Empowerment Conference.



These mirrors were created by survivors of commercial sexual exploitation at the 2016 Empowerment Conference.



INTRODUCTION

In The Beginning...

Beginning in 2010, officials within the Los Angeles County Probation Department began to recognize the number of youth within their care who had experienced commercial sexual exploitation. With greater understanding of the issue came the realization that commercially sexually exploited children and youth are victims of child abuse and neglect in need of comprehensive, trauma-informed supports and services. Today, the Los Angeles County Probation Department is a leader in their efforts to proactively identify youth who have been exploited and connect them with intensive, specialized services. While it's taken a decade to get here, it all began with a small number of champions.

Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect

In 2010, Michelle Guymon was serving on the Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) committee in her role at the Los Angeles County Probation Department. After Guymon was transferred to Placement Administrative Services, and was no longer working directly with youth, she decided there was no longer a need for her to serve on this committee. At her last committee meeting, an FBI agent came to give a presentation on human trafficking – an issue, Guymon thought, that occurred exclusively in foreign countries.

A couple of weeks later, Guymon received an email from the ICAN committee regarding the creation of a subgroup on domestic minor sex trafficking. Despite Guymon's initial thoughts that, again, this wasn't an issue that was relevant to youth under Probation supervision, Judge Donna Groman persuaded Guymon to attend the subgroup's first meeting. This meeting was where Guymon first realized that youth in the United States – youth often arrested for prostitution-related offenses and under Probation supervision – were victims of child sex trafficking. From this moment forward, Guymon adopted the mantra: *"once you know better, you do better."*

Once you know better, you do better.



Michelle Guymon

Director, Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles County Probation Department

"November 16, 2010. I remember the date so vividly because it was a day that changed my life. It was the first meeting of the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking sub-committee. It was here that I learned that this exploitation wasn't something happening thousands of miles away in a foreign country. In fact, it was happening right here, in our community, to the very girls I was charged to protect."

CHAMPION



Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen

**Senior Probation Director,
Los Angeles County Probation
Department**

"Looking back, working on this issue has been the biggest highlight of my career. It was just an amazing journey. It was heartbreaking. It was educational. It was joyful. I grew tremendously as a human being, as a Probation employee, as a mother. Working directly with these youth was so meaningful to me. And I'm so grateful I had the opportunity to work with them."

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blessed me with
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realized it
I would be
to day Thank you.

I really appreciate
you caring for me
and always being
there for me

Learning from programs across the country

This was the catalyst for Probation to take action to better identify and serve youth who have been commercially sexually exploited. With the support and encouragement of Probation's upper management, particularly Dave Mitchell and Reaver Bingham, Probation leaders set out to better understand the issue and efforts to address it across the country. Probation officials spent the next six months traveling across the country to learn from the efforts of other jurisdictions.



Reaver Bingham

***Chief Deputy - Adult Services,
Los Angeles County Probation
Department***

"It's important to have all hands on deck, because this is not an issue that can be tackled by any one entity. Developing a very detailed strategic plan, providing whatever financial and human resources that need to be applied, is also very important. Equally important is to listen to the voices of those who have been affected by exploitation."



Dave Mitchell

***Retired Deputy Director, Residential
Treatment Services Bureau,
Los Angeles County Probation
Department***

"We could not have done all that we did if it wasn't for Dave. He was incredibly supportive, and he got it. Dave understood the issue because he cared about kids and knew the work that we were doing would ultimately benefit them."

- Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen, Senior
Director, Los Angeles County Probation
Department

One of their final stops was in Dallas, Texas, where Probation officials met Byron Fassett, a sergeant with the Dallas Police Department, and gained insight to the issue through a law enforcement lens. Fassett emphasized the importance of getting county and local government involved in the issue.



Byron Fassett

Program Manager, National Criminal Justice Training Center (former Sergeant, Dallas Police Department)

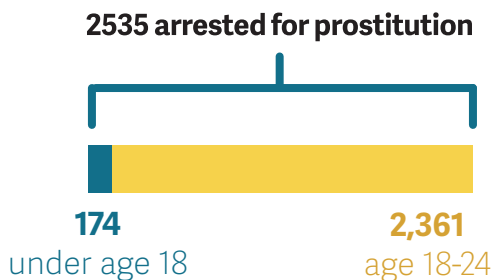
“As we left Dallas, Texas, Sergeant Fassett advised us: ‘One of the most important things you can do is get your local government involved. Find a champion!’ And we did just that. We were eager to partner with LA County government and we found many champions along the way!”

- Michelle Guymon, Director, Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Over the course of these months, Probation leadership learned about several innovative programs across the country serving youth who had experienced CSE. For example, in Las Vegas, there was a specialized courtroom to serve youth arrested for prostitution-related offenses; and in Boston, there was an excellent prevention curriculum. Probation leaders realized, however, that despite these great standalone programs, no jurisdictions had yet developed a comprehensive approach. Probation leaders became determined to create a comprehensive support system for youth who had been commercially sexually exploited in Los Angeles County. To do so, Probation leaders knew it would be crucial to have the support of the Department and of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

Partnering with the delinquency court

Then, in 2011, Probation and the delinquency court jointly applied for, and were awarded, an alternative to detention grant from the California Department of Corrections, aiming to decrease the detention time that victims of sex trafficking had to endure when arrested for prostitution-related offenses and to increase the supports and services available to help them heal within the juvenile justice system. As a result of this grant funding, a specialized unit within Probation--the Child Trafficking Unit--and a collaborative court for probation-involved youth--the Succeeding through Achievement and Resilience (STAR) Court--were born.



In 2010, there were 174 youth under the age of 18 arrested for prostitution-related charges. Of those 174 youth:

- 92% were African American
- 59% had histories with the child welfare system
- 84% of all arrests came from two distinct areas of Los Angeles— Service Planning Area (SPA) 6 and 8

Among 18-24 year olds (Transition Age Youth, or “TAY”), there were about 2,361 individuals that made up a little under 5,000 arrests. It became clear that these TAY were likely exploited before they turned 18, which meant that there were many young people not being identified and provided with supportive services.

CORRECTIONS STANDARDS AUTHORITY

600 Bercut Drive
Sacramento, CA 95814
916-445-5073
www.cdcr.ca.gov/DivisionsBoards/CSA



November 21, 2011

Michelle Guymon
Los Angeles County Probation Department
3965 S. Vermont Ave., 3rd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90037

Dear Ms. Guymon:

Congratulations! On November 10th, the Corrections Standards Authority Board approved the funding recommendations of the State Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (SACJJDP) and awarded Los Angeles County Probation Department a federal Title II

The Request for Proposals process for the Title II grants was highly competitive. Los Angeles County Probation Department was one of 15 successful applicants for funds appropriated by the SACJJDP. CSA staff are working on the contracts for these 12-month grants - which will be submitted to you via email (along with instructions) as soon as possible.

In addition, although the Request for Proposals (RFP) stated awardees would be required to participate in a new grantee briefing in mid-December 2011, CSA has determined that due to the holidays and time necessary to put the contracts in place prior to the first of the year, we will conduct the grantee briefing in Sacramento on January 18, 2012. I will send additional information out regarding this meeting but please note, as this meeting will now take place after the effective date of the grant, you may utilize grant funds to reimburse travel costs associated with this event.

It is my pleasure to serve as the Field Representative for Los Angeles County on this project. If you have any questions or think I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

“Congratulations! On November 10th, the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA) Board approved the funding recommendations of the State Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (SACJJDP) and awarded Los Angeles County Probation Department a federal Title II Formula Block Grant in the amount of \$350,000 for the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) Project.”



CHAMPION



Nick Ippolito

***Chief of Staff, Board of Supervisors,
Fourth District (former Supervisor Don
Knabe's Children's Deputy)***

"I just so happened to be in that meeting that day. Michelle and Hania started to explain the federal grant - they described 12 to 15 year old children who were trafficked, by either their parents or by pimps, and some of the horrific things they go through. But what really made an impression on me was the fact that these youth were directly in our foster care system and in and out of our juvenile halls and our juvenile camps. After hearing this, I got up from the meeting, marched into the supervisor's (former Supervisor Knabe) office, and said, "you have no idea what's going on!"

Gaining the support of local government

Later that year, Probation leadership presented an overview of the grant to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Public Safety Cluster. This caught the attention of Nick Ippolito, former Supervisor Don Knabe's Children's Deputy, who then facilitated a meeting between Probation and Knabe to further discuss the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth in Los Angeles County. Knabe quickly became a champion for this issue, advocating for a countywide response to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth and better identify and serve those who have been exploited or are at high-risk.



“

With Knabe’s support, we were really able to do the outreach we needed to do to educate our Department, County partners, and the public on this issue. I believe that without him, LA County Probation, and LA County overall, wouldn’t be where they are today in their efforts to better identify and serve youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.

”

**HANIA
(CARDENAS) BOCKLEN**

Senior Probation Director,
Los Angeles County Probation Department

CHAMPION



Don Knabe

Former Los Angeles County Supervisor

“I have been honored to serve Los Angeles County for nearly 20 years. Never in my time in office have I heard of an issue as shocking and disturbing as what is happening to young girls right here in the streets of America. A lot of people think human trafficking is happening over there in some third world country just as I did, but in fact, across the nation, communities are waking up to the fact that is happening right here on our streets in our neighborhoods.”

Prioritizing training

That same year, in 2011, Probation also facilitated the first CSEC-focused, two-day intensive training with Nola Brantley, a nationally acclaimed advocate on the issue of child sex trafficking. This training inspired individuals within Probation leadership and detention facilities to sit down together to discuss what steps needed to be taken to better serve youth who had experienced CSE. Probation leadership recognized early on the value of training people before developing new policies and practices, and thus, would continue to facilitate trainings like this throughout the County, with the support of the Probation Department, the County Board of Supervisors and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

“ The importance of training is to ensure that individuals across the County are on the same page and can work cohesively in responding to this issue. In Los Angeles, we’ve always facilitated multidisciplinary trainings -- reaching people from different disciplines and from different departments. And then when these individuals go back to their departments with what they’ve learned, information can continue to spread. ”

NOLA BRANTLEY

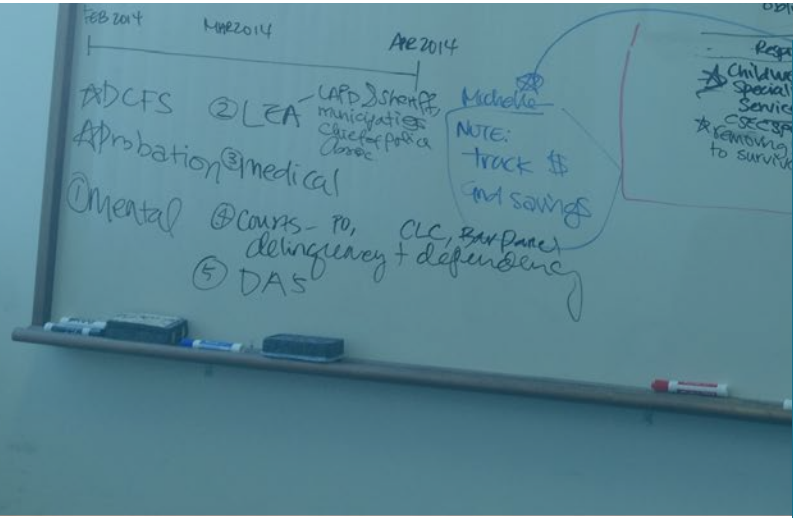
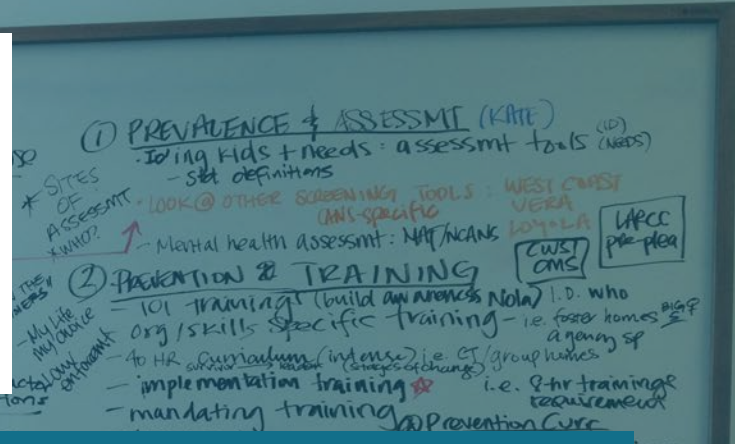
Nola Brantley Speaks



Nola Brantley facilitates training for County partners.

ESTABLISH A SEX TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE

Sex trafficking of minors is becoming a paramount issue for municipalities across the country as law enforcement officials uncover more and more underage prostitution rings. The statistics as they relate to child welfare are staggering: the average age of entry into prostitution is 12 years old; and the average life expectancy following entry is seven years, according to several sources including the United States Department of Justice and the FBI.



Mark Ridley-Thomas

Los Angeles County Supervisor

Creating interagency collaboration

Encouraged by Probation’s advocacy, soon, the entire Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors became champions for this issue, dedicating resources and bringing agencies from across the County together to serve youth’s multifaceted needs. Recognizing that interagency collaboration would be vital, in 2012, the BOS approved a motion to create the CSEC Task Force, co-chaired by the Chief Probation Officer and the Director of DCFS. Then, in 2013, the CSEC Task Force recommended to the BOS that the County establish an interagency response model to serve victims of CSE – a model that would be a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that would bring together law enforcement, child welfare, probation, education, mental health, medical care and public health systems, as well as nonprofit victim advocacy organizations. This later led to the CSEC Integrated Leadership Team, which, as of 2020, is the main body overseeing the County’s initiatives regarding CSEC.

“And they need to know that we will stand up and care for these children. So, anybody who thought this was just a moment for us, that this was just a fad, that we were just trying to catch the wave of what was happening at that time in terms of policy activity and political maneuvering, they were just simply wrong...We are going to stay on the case, and we’re not going to give up on this very, very critically important work. We won’t turn our back on these children.”

- Speaking about the issue of CSEC at a board meeting on July 9, 2019

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

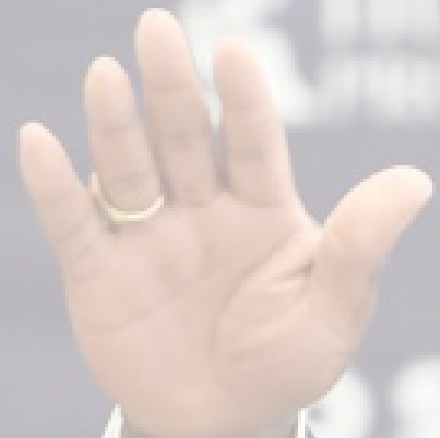
One of the first steps involved changing language—something that did not require significant resources to push forward. By eliminating the terminology “child prostitute,” and replacing it with “victim of commercial sexual exploitation,” public perceptions about the issue, and responses to it, could begin to shift. As this change in terminology shifted perceptions within juvenile hall facilities, small groups were created to support detained youth who had been commercially sexually exploited. This, in turn, provided a safe space for commercially sexually exploited youth to share their feelings and experiences without feeling judged. Soon they too could begin to recognize their own victimization.



Don Knabe

February 2, 2015 · 🌐

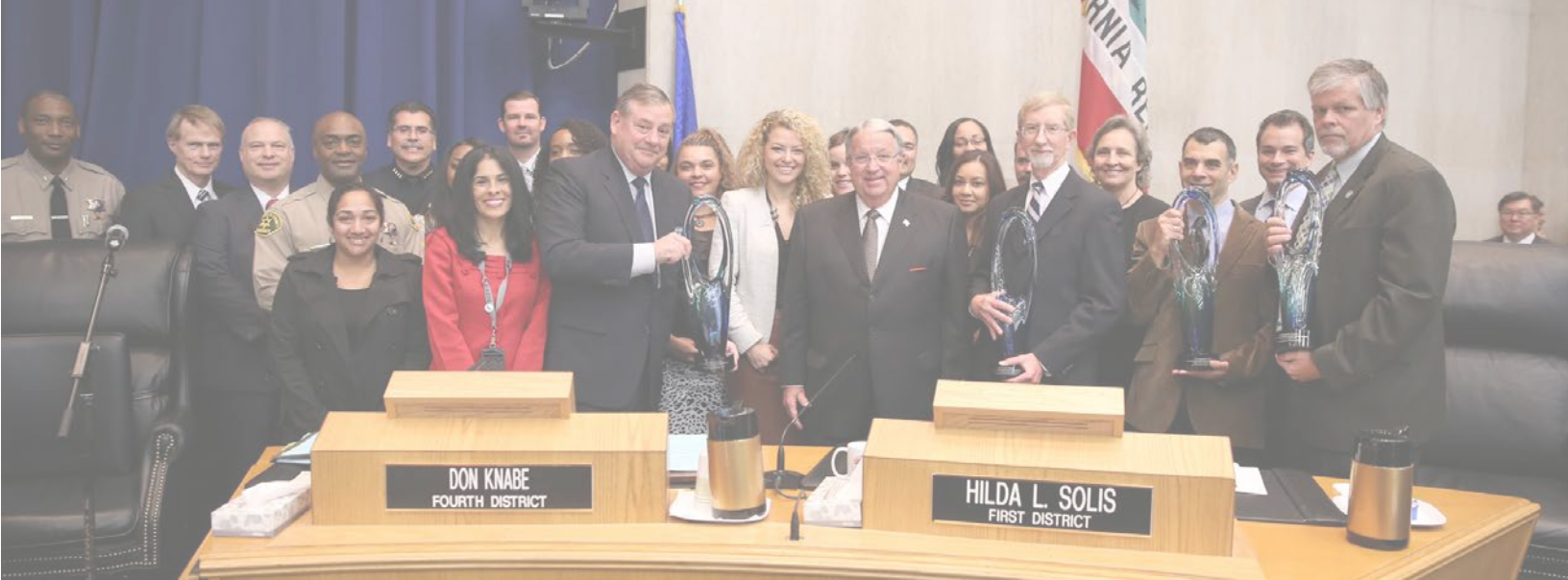
I sent these bracelets to over 150 local, state, federal, non-profit, and business leaders because there's #NoSuchThing as a child prostitute <http://bit.ly/1EBCI9F>



NO SUCH
AS A CHILD



NO SUCH THING CHILD PROSTITUTION



Changes in Legislation

In response to a greater understanding of the dynamics of commercial sexual exploitation, and in an effort to further its commitment to preventing criminalization of youth for their exploitation, in 2016, California passed Senate Bill 1322 (SB 1322). Effective January 1, 2017, SB 1322 rendered the crimes of prostitution and loitering with the intent to commit prostitution inapplicable to minors. Since youth would no longer be entering the juvenile justice system on charges related to prostitution, counties across the state believed that Probation would no longer have a significant role to play in this issue. However, this has not been the case.

As time moved on, Probation continued to identify substantial numbers of youth under their care who had experienced commercial sexual exploitation and were not entering the system on prostitution-related charges. Probation learned that these youth become entangled in varying extremes of delinquent activity, oftentimes related to their exploitation or at the direction of their exploiter, or sometimes as a means of survival. As a result, Probation has continued to identify large numbers of youth under their care who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Therefore, Probation has continued to focus their attention on improving identification of, and supports for, youth who have experienced CSE.

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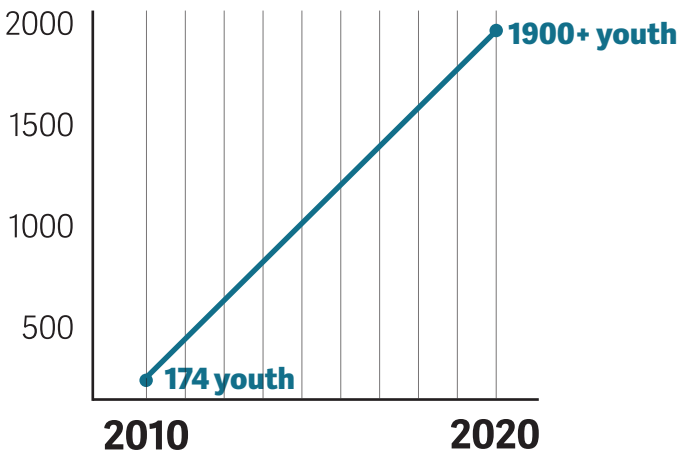
We did not see this coming. I thought that after we stopped arresting children for prostitution, Probation would have a minimal role with youth who were being exploited. I didn't anticipate how many kids would disclose their exploitation while they were in juvenile hall. Once we knew better, we had to do better for these young people.

”

MICHELLE GUYMON

Director, Child Trafficking Unit,
Los Angeles County Probation Department

Youth Identified as Commercially Sexually Exploited



In 2010, 174 youth who had been CSE were identified as a result of arrests for prostitution-related charges. Today, because of collective efforts to increase awareness of CSE, train individuals across LA County, and better support youth who have experienced CSE, over 1,900 youth who have experienced CSE have been identified by Probation.

From then until now

Since 2010, Probation has been an instrumental leader in the County's efforts to better identify and serve children and youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Today, Probation has identified over 1,900 children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited. While there remains work to be done, Probation has made tremendous progress to better identify and serve youth within its care who have experienced CSE.

What started with a few committed individuals has now become a countywide endeavor to better identify and serve children and youth who experience commercial sexual exploitation or are at high-risk. Through creativity, collaboration, and commitment, together with County agencies and leaders, Probation is taking steps to ensure children are not criminalized for their exploitation, but instead empowered with the supports and services they need to heal and thrive. And Probation will continue to make clear that our children are not for sale.

The goal of this report is to reflect on Probation's work over the years to serve exploited youth, to highlight innovative programs and practices Los Angeles County has developed, and to share lessons learned with other jurisdictions across the country.

EVERYTHING GETS BETTER
EVERY DAY

LITTLE BY LITTLE,
ONE TRAVELS FAR

“

It's so important as a probation officer in the CTU that you are there for the youth, really taking the time to understand them, meet them where they are at, and be their voice at times. Basically, being in this unit means that you are doing your job with your heart.

”

NICOLE JAMES

CTU Deputy Probation Officer,
Los Angeles County Probation Department

I CAN FORGIVE AND
UNDERSTAND OTHERS
AND THEIR MOTIVES

CHILD TRAFFICKING UNIT

“They care about the kids and really want to help. They connect with them. They aren’t just doing an assignment, checking boxes off -- they are going out there and advocating for these kids. They’re like advocates, going out there and fighting for these kids. And that’s what makes them different.”

*- Joan Pera, Director of Community Relations,
Los Angeles County Probation Department (former CTU Supervisor), speaking about the
DPOs in the Child Trafficking Unit*

Child Trafficking Unit

When Probation, in collaboration with the delinquency court, was awarded grant funding in 2011 to develop a specialized unit within Probation, the Child Trafficking Unit was born.

The CTU's Director, Michelle Guymon, determined at the onset that the foundation for the Unit would be strong, positive relationships with youth. Because these youth had endured extreme trauma and abuse, **Guymon believed that strong relationships, rather than stronger sanctions, would be more effective when working with this population.** In order to accomplish this, Probation leaders knew it was important to bring on the right people, establish clear expectations for engagement with youth, and provide ample support to enable staff to fully dive into the work.

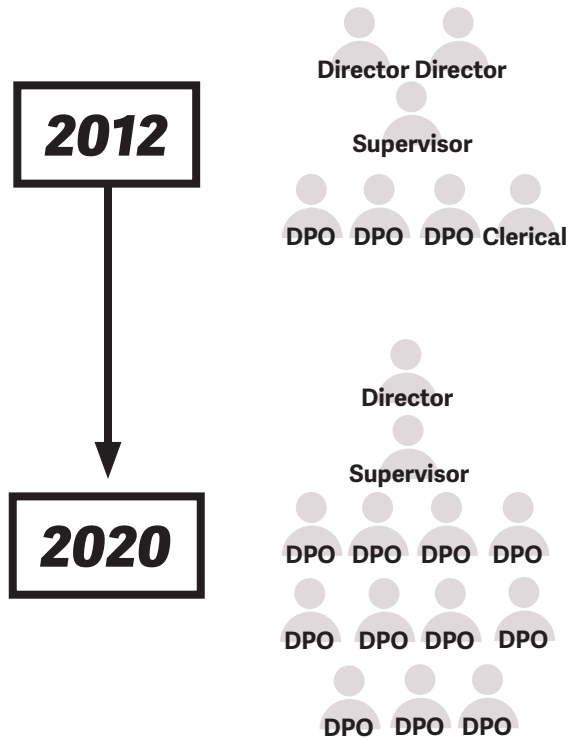
The CTU provides intensive, strengths-based support and case management services to children and youth involved in Probation who have been identified as CSE in the County. CTU's staff have been carefully selected and trained to support youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. The CTU began with four part-time staff in 2010, grew to seven full-time staff in 2012, and today, has 13 full-time staff. Today, the Unit includes: one director, one Supervising Deputy Probation Officer (SDPO), one staff assistant, one Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) STAR Court liaison/Probation MDT coordinator to work in the specialized delinquency court, one DPO who specializes in Transition Age Youth services, and eight case-carrying DPOs. Several of these deputies are responsible for conducting assessments of youth referred to the Unit.

“
When creating the Child Trafficking Unit, I knew that the most important thing that we can do in the lives of kids is build relationships, and this became its foundation. I was lucky to have the support of the Department in making this a reality.
”

MICHELLE GUYMON

Director, Child Trafficking Unit,
Los Angeles County Probation Department

GROWTH OF CTU





CHAMPION



Joan Pera

Director of Community Relations, Los Angeles County Probation Department (former CTU Supervisor)

“Joan always listened. She would take her time and listen to whatever concerns you had. And you could go to her if you needed help with anything, such as completing a youth’s report. She would walk with you step-by-step through the report to ensure you are turning in exactly what the court needs.”

- Shantel Crum-Hill, Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Kiesha Durham, Jane Oshiro, Lucrezia Carter, Katrina Wade, Terrika Woolfolk, and Jennifer Salveson (not pictured) were the first individuals in the CTU (from front to back).

CTU leadership developed several components of the Unit that differentiate it from other juvenile Probation units, and which facilitate the goal of building strong relationships with youth: increased engagement, consistency with probation officer, and extensive multidisciplinary teaming with other agencies. In addition to prioritizing relationship-building with youth, the CTU focuses on strong collaboration with partners to ensure youth have the supports and services they need to succeed.

“A lot of times our kids don’t feel like they’re on Probation at all. They just feel they’ve got someone they can count on or someone they can call who will show up. It’s about relationships, not about ‘gotcha, now you’re going to juvenile hall.’ We’ve maintained this philosophy consistently throughout the eight years we’ve been doing this.”

- Joan Pera
Director of Community Relations,
Los Angeles County Probation Department
(former CTU Supervisor)

Increased Engagement

In order to facilitate closer relationships with youth and their families, CTU DPOs maintain lower caseloads than traditional Deputy Probation Officers. This allows them to devote more time to each youth, through both in-person visits and other forms of communication (such as texting, phone calls and social media). While the formal requirement is for CTU DPOs to visit with youth at least two times each month and have some type of additional communication at least one time every three days, most CTU DPOs will connect with youth on their caseloads more frequently than that. In addition to formal visits, CTU DPOs also frequently attend other important events, such as school graduations, birthday celebrations, baby showers, and empowerment events. CTU DPOs also spend time helping youth develop practical life skills, including assistance with interview preparation (for transitional housing and job interviews), grocery shopping and food preparation, and budgeting.

CTU DPOs meet with youth two times per month, and communicate with them at least once every three days



“ **These kids amaze me -- the fact that they get up every day and face the world, given what they've endured.** ”

TIFFANY ESQUEDA

Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer
Los Angeles County Department of Probation

"[E]ven though I was not open with [my] PO at first, having the same PO the entire time has given me the chance to develop a relationship of trust."

-Survivor²

When the Unit was first developed, there were fewer DPOs and each carried a caseload of approximately 20-22 youth. Given the intensity of the cases and expectations for extensive engagement, this number has gone down over the years. Currently, CTU DPOs have approximately 12-15 youth on their caseloads, which is lower than the average caseload of a traditional Deputy Probation Officer for juvenile supervision. **In these ways and others, CTU is about far more than supervision.**

“

The best part of the job for me is continuing to have a relationship with my girls who are no longer on probation.

”

SHANTEL CRUM-HILL

Child Trafficking Unit
Deputy Probation Officer
Los Angeles County Department of
Probation

CHAMPION



Violet Dawson

Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Violet Dawson has been a Deputy Probation Officer in the Child Trafficking Unit since 2013. She has been a champion for this issue and these kids since she first got involved. Violet goes above and beyond the expectations of a CTU DPO, and is selfless in the amount of time and energy she devotes to building and maintaining relationships with the youth.

“I love this Unit. The structure gives me the freedom to actually spend quality time with the youth and really develop a relationship – it wouldn’t be the same somewhere else.”

Case Consistency

Another unique component of the CTU is case consistency. When a youth is first referred to the Unit, the CTU team is thoughtful about which Deputy Probation Officer would work best with the youth. Once a DPO is assigned, there is an effort to ensure that they remain with the youth until they exit Probation jurisdiction. This means that regardless of where the youth is placed (from juvenile hall to a local group home or an out of state placement), they will have the same DPO. In contrast, if a youth is not in the CTU, they have a different DPO assigned at every step. For example, a youth may be assigned one DPO while in a juvenile hall or camp, a different DPO when they are sent home on probation (HOP), and then yet another DPO if they are moved to placement. For youth in CTU, having a consistent DPO throughout several life transitions makes a tremendous difference in their ability to connect, heal, and thrive.

"It's good to have a PO who knows what you have been through and has watched you grow. It helps to have the same PO: no change and/or transfer."

- Survivor⁴

“

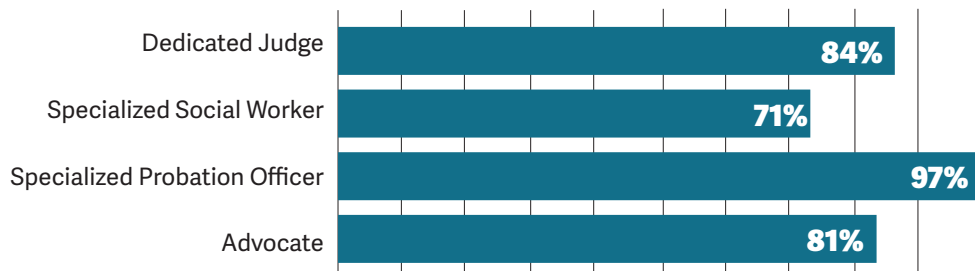
Most of these kids already don't have stability in their primary family, so to actually give them stability in their probation family, I can't speak highly enough about it... It's a game changer.

”

GINA GIACONE

Child Trafficking Unit,
Deputy Probation Officer,
Los Angeles County Probation Department

In a recent study, CSE girls and young women were asked whether it helped to have a specialized probation officer; **97% reported that it was**. In their responses, youth emphasized the importance of consistency with their specialized Probation Officers and that they were non-judgmental and trustworthy.³





“
There’s just no way we could do this on our own...Teamwork, and everyone coming together to support each youth, makes our work do-able.
”

LILLIAN JIMENEZ

Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Weekly Multi-Disciplinary Meetings

Recognizing that youth are more than just their exploitation or their court case, and that system-involved youth have myriad needs spanning across several agencies, Probation developed a weekly multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meeting for all youth involved in Probation who have been identified as having experienced CSE. The Weekly Probation CSEC MDT brings together professionals from across multiple agencies and organizations to collaborate, share information, set and discuss progress towards goals, and problem solve. Participants include child welfare, mental health, public health, children’s attorneys, educational liaisons, service providers and specialized community-based advocates. The participants remain consistent each week, which has allowed the team to develop rapport and comfort with one another, ultimately enabling them to more effectively work together and better support youth.

“
We’re all experts in our own discipline, so it’s always important to have different people at any table - who have different opinions than you, who have different backgrounds than you...Having other people at the table, having other resources, is really important...Having a team of different people in different disciplines is really important for a child.
”

URSULA CASTILLO

Child Trafficking Unit, Deputy Probation Officer
Los Angeles County Probation Department

Through the MDT, youth are connected with a variety of services and supports provided by individuals with in depth training on the dynamics and impacts of CSE. For example, services include specialized advocacy, education advocacy and support (including assistance with school enrollment, IEPs, and credit recovery), and connection to health clinics and services in the community. The team also works together to identify appropriate housing options, including transitional housing programs. The team works together to identify appropriate services and supports for youth, and collaborates to facilitate warm referrals, when appropriate.

“
I am encouraged by the CTU -- by how deeply the CTU Probation Officers have taken this as their call and have been flexible, creative, and available in every context.
”

S A R A

TAY Program Manager & Case Manager,
Saving Innocence



Terrika Woolfolk

Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Terrika has worked in the Department since 2006, and started in the Child Trafficking Unit in 2012. As a long-time case carrying DPO, Terrika's approach with youth has always been one of respect, consistency, trust, and nurturing. Terrika understands the importance of showing up, and even if that means seeing a youth every day, Terrika makes it happen. Over the years countless youth have attributed their healing to Terrika. Today, she is the CTU STAR Court Liaison, chair of the Probation CSEC MDT, and everything else in between.

“Terrika's a valuable member of the team because of her experience, especially with this population, and she's really easy to talk to. She gets things done, gets whatever questions you might have answered, and is well respected by everyone. She's a ROCK STAR!”

- Lizet Barboza,
Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation
Officer, Los Angeles County Probation
Department

Support for Transition Age Youth

While youth were receiving incredible support while under Probation jurisdiction, the CTU recognized that youth really struggled with the transition to independence at 18, often feeling ill-equipped to learn about and access the resources available to them. With this realization, Probation created a new position in the CTU to specifically support the TAY population. The CTU now has a dedicated Probation Officer who works closely with youth as they approach their 18th birthdays, providing secondary support to the Primary DPO on the case so as not to interrupt the continuity of care. The TAY DPO meets with youth to educate them on what resources are available through the Independent Living Program (ILP) and Extended Foster Care (EFC) programs, and works with youth to apply for and access these resources.

“

It's really important to support Transition Age Youth because the fact that they've aged out of probation and oftentimes foster care doesn't mean that they've completely healed their trauma. It just takes time. A lot of times they're not ready to take advantage of supportive services because they're still working through their trauma. So it's really important to be available when they are ready or when they need anything that we can guide or assist them with.

”

GINA GIACONE

Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer
Los Angeles County Probation Department



Partnership with the STAR Court and Specialized Advocates

Since jointly applying for, and receiving, grant funding in 2011, Probation and the delinquency court have worked in close collaboration to structure the CTU and the STAR Court to ensure that they are truly working together to meet the needs of the youth. In the beginning, they jointly brainstormed who would be involved in the multi-disciplinary team meetings, how often the meetings would be held, and how recommendations would be documented and communicated with the court. They also realized early on that, because relationships were the cornerstone of what they wanted to do, they would need to increase the frequency in which they engaged with the youth – for the court, this meant scheduling more frequent court hearings, and for Probation, this meant requiring DPOs to meet with youth more often. As a result, youth were able to really get to know their team and develop meaningful relationships – with not only their DPO and advocate, but also their Judge, attorney, and even the courtroom bailiff.



Small things, like bringing a cupcake to court on a youth's birthday, sometimes mean more than the big things. Birthday cupcakes have come to be a tradition in STAR Court over the years (and an expectation from the youth!)

"The bailiff is really cool, my PO now texts me all the time. The PO really worked hard and put her true feelings into helping me. I appreciate them."

-STAR Court youth

“

The collaborative court is a great model, particularly because of the team approach and how it incorporates the youth's voice. It's also beneficial that Judge Pratt sees youth more often. I think from the youth's perspective, they feel like they have a voice, and that's empowering to feel like their voice is being heard.

”

TERRIKA WOOLFOLK

Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer,
Los Angeles County Probation Department

As the partnership between Probation and the STAR Court evolved, they soon recognized the importance of having individuals outside of public agencies in the courtroom to support these youth. They worked together to bring specialized advocates and civil legal attorneys into the courtroom, who supported youth's myriad needs that fell outside of their juvenile probation case. Having these outside agencies actually stationed in the courtroom meant that when an issue arose during the course of a youth's hearing, there was someone physically present to help -- to immediately talk with the youth, conduct an intake if necessary, and begin supporting them. The collaboration between Probation, STAR Court, and specialized advocates has been crucial for supporting youth both inside and out of the courtroom.

Initially, the CTU only supervised youth that were in the STAR Court, which is located in Compton -- an area known for high rates of exploitation and where the majority of youth were identified initially. As the number of youth identified as having experienced CSE grew, and the areas in which they were located diversified, the CTU decided to expand its supervision to youth outside of the STAR Court, as well. Today, the CTU provides supervision to any Probation youth identified as having experienced CSE, without regard to the court they are in.



“
When we first started, I frankly did not think that this level of teamwork would be possible.
”

HONORABLE JUDGE CATHERINE J. PRATT

STAR Court, on working with CTU

Assessment

Not all youth under Probation jurisdiction who are identified as having experienced commercial sexual exploitation are transferred to the CTU. There are several factors taken into account when determining whether a case is transferred, including the youth's age, service needs, mental health needs, gang involvement, and relationship with current Deputy Probation Officer. Given the high number of youth being identified and referred to the Unit, in 2019 the CTU developed a formal assessment process to determine whether a case would be transferred.

Within 72 hours after a case is referred to the Unit, a specialized Assessment DPO meets with the youth to determine their need and desire for services and supervision. The CTU Assessment includes a natural, organic conversation with the youth – one that is not prescriptive – but rather focused on sharing information about services. Then, based on a number of factors (some noted above), a discussion with the CTU's Supervisor and Director if need be, and input from the CSEC MDT, a decision is made on whether the case is appropriate for transfer. If the case is not transferred, the CTU may provide consultation or secondary support; these cases remain on the CSEC MDT calendar and the team reviews the case again in 90 days to reassess the youth's needs and possible transfer.

Factors considered when determining if a youth's case is referred to the CTU:

- Youth's age
- Service needs
- Mental health needs
- Gang involvement
- Relationship with current Deputy Probation Officer

“
I love working with the Child Trafficking Unit. We wouldn't be able to do our job without them. And I feel like a lot of them feel the same way about us.
”

J A S M I N E

Senior Lead Case Manager/FRP
Coordinator, Saving Innocence

“During the training, two of the youth on my caseload came to mind. This training really opened my eyes to what is probably going on with them at home and when they leave home for weeks at a time. Thanks for bringing this information to the department – everyone needs to hear it and become more informed.”

- A juvenile supervision Deputy Probation Officer

SB 794 Training

In 2015, California codified the requirements of the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (H.R. 4980) in Senate Bill 794, which required DPOs to proactively identify, document, and determine appropriate services for all youth who they reasonably believed to be a victim or at risk of becoming a victim of CSE. SB 794 also mandated that, for any youth or non-minor dependent (NMD) who is missing or runs away from care, DPOs must work to expeditiously locate the youth and upon locating the youth, conduct a debrief to gather information about their experiences while they were absent.

In order to ensure that DPOs across the Department were familiar with the new requirements pursuant to SB 794, the CTU developed policy and launched a department-wide training. The training, which includes basic information on the dynamics and prevalence of CSE as well as the new requirements of SB 794, was launched on January 14, 2019.

Since the training began, the CTU has received 28 referrals from individuals across the Department that had attended the training. When we know better we do better, and as individuals in Probation are learning more, they are making sure that youth who might be impacted by CSE are connected with the services and supports they need. The CTU aims to have all juvenile operations trained by August 2020.



“
**We don't have a unit —
we have a family.**
”

JOAN PERA

Director of Community Relations,
Los Angeles County Probation Department (former CTU Supervisor)

A journey of a
Thousand Miles
Must Begin with
a single step!!




CTU's Internal Culture

Under CTU's leadership, CTU staff have also remained consistent, with minimal turnover. CTU staff maintain strong relationships with one another and rely on each other often for support. Moreover, the leadership within CTU has also helped to ensure staff have the support they need to serve youth, such as weekly supervision and training to address vicarious trauma or triggers from the work. This continuity has enabled CTU staff to develop a deep understanding of the issue and how to effectively serve and support youth who have experienced exploitation. The low turnover is also critical to ensuring consistent relationships between CTU staff and the youth they serve.

“ We all have different strengths, for sure...we aren't all the same when it comes to what our talents are, but when it comes to our care, we are really cut from the same cloth that way. The heart of the Unit — it's Michelle's heart. She's just so dedicated. I've never had an experience like this before. It's really pleasant to all be together, we have trainings together, we're just happy to be together. ”

GINA GIACONE

Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer,
Los Angeles County Probation Department,



“We work well together because we step up where we know we're strong, and where we're weak, we ask [each other] questions—we're not afraid to ask for help.”

**- Kamilah Dennis-Campbell
Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer,
Los Angeles County Probation Department**

STAR COURT

THE SUCCEEDING THROUGH ACHIEVEMENT AND RESILIENCE (STAR) COURT

"[STAR Court] is an exemplary program that has demonstrated the effective application of a restorative justice approach in the commercial sexual exploitation of children, by addressing the needs of victims as survivors, not as criminals...STAR Court operates out of the Compton Courthouse, and is led by the vision, compassion, and energy of its founder, LA County Superior Court Judge Catherine J. Pratt."

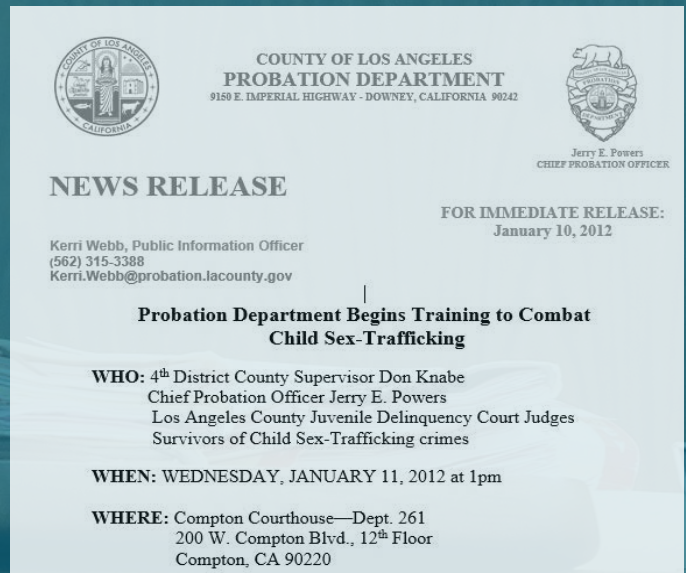
- Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, when presenting the Second District's Human Relations Award to STAR Court, October 25, 2016

Star Court

Founding of STAR Court

In 2011, Honorable Catherine J. Pratt – a Los Angeles County delinquency court judge – started noting poor outcomes for youth who had experienced CSE compared with other youth who she saw in her courtroom. It was becoming clear that current intervention strategies to serve this population were not working. In response, Judge Pratt collaborated with Probation to secure grant funding to create a collaborative court for probation-involved youth who had experienced CSE.

As a result of these efforts, the Succeeding Through Achievement and Resilience Court was established in 2012 with the goal of addressing the needs of CSE youth through a collaborative, non-adversarial approach. When STAR Court was established, prior to the change in California law through Senate Bill 1322, children and youth who were being exploited were still being arrested and charged with prostitution-related offenses. STAR Court was founded on the principle that youth arrested for involvement in prostitution are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and in order to break the cycles of abuse and system involvement, a non-traditional approach was necessary. STAR Court is located in Compton, California, where a majority of early arrests for prostitution-related offenses were happening.



“

I wanted to see better outcomes. I wanted to see kids who at the end of probation had made progress in school and in reconnecting with their community because I hadn't been seeing that – we were just aging them out.

HONORABLE CATHERINE J. PRATT”

The Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, STAR Court

Once STAR Court, along with the CTU, officially launched, Judge Pratt and Probation officials soon learned that earlier interventions had been ineffective because of a failure to recognize and address the frequency and magnitude of violence and trauma that these youth had experienced both prior to, and during, their exploitation. In developing the court, Judge Pratt recognized that CSE youth often experience childhood sexual, physical, and/or emotional abuse that has not been addressed, which is compounded by their exploitation and juvenile justice system involvement. Further, Judge Pratt acknowledged that this unhealed trauma makes it more difficult for youth to stay in school, to fully engage in services, to develop meaningful healthy relationships, and to successfully "complete" their terms of probation. As a result, these kids were cycling in and out of her courtroom, aging out of the system without supports in place. Rather than criminalizing youth for their victimization and continuing this cycle, STAR Court offers an alternative approach, one that offers a range of comprehensive services and supports and focuses on youths' strengths and individual needs.

"Judge Pratt asked me what would work for me, and not what would work for them. She wanted me to do whatever would work for me. She always kept her word. I did everything I was supposed to do, we trusted each other. She came down from the bench and hugged me, she's always willing to see me and talk to me. She's a good, little Judge."

- STAR Court youth

CHAMPION



Honorable Catherine J. Pratt

The Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, STAR Court

Los Angeles Judge Catherine Pratt has handled juvenile delinquency cases in Compton, CA since 2007.

In 2011, in conjunction with efforts by the LA County Probation Department, she created and implemented STAR Court, a collaborative court to work with commercially sexually exploited children. Since then, she has worked with over 570 CSEC/Y on probation. Preliminary data shows that these youth are spending less time in custody, have higher graduation rates and the vast majority have not been re-arrested for prostitution, either as a juvenile or an adult.

Pratt now provides training for judges and other professionals throughout the country on how to work with CSE children. In 2015 and 2016, she consulted with the Obama administration and the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention on creating trauma and gender informed court environments.



STAR court dedication with Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen, Judge Pratt, and Michelle Guymon.

Once STAR Court started, it became clear that they had significantly under-estimated the number of girls in the juvenile justice system who were being commercially sexually exploited, including youth who were on probation for other, non-prostitution related charges. As a result, STAR Court expanded its program to support any youth who experienced CSE, regardless of the charge that brought them to court.

STAR Court helps to address underlying individual, interpersonal, family, or community issues that a youth may be experiencing – issues that likely made the youth vulnerable to exploitation in the first place. The court aims to empower youth and equip them with the tools and skills necessary to thrive once they are no longer under court or probation supervision. STAR Court also works to promote the safety of youth, to reduce recidivism, and to disrupt the pattern leading to increasing criminal activity.

Components of STAR Court

STAR Court includes a specialized CSEC/Y docket and a dedicated judge—Judge Pratt—who handles all CSEC/Y-related cases to maintain consistency. Each youth is assessed and supported by a team of dedicated and specially trained professionals who make up the Probation CSEC Multi-Disciplinary Team. The MDT includes probation officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, specialized advocates, school personnel, a mental health clinician, a public health nurse, and child welfare staff. The MDT assesses the youth's needs and goals, and then makes recommendations regarding placement and services to help the youth achieve their goals. The Court considers these recommendations when issuing orders and closely monitors the youth's progress.



Sharonda

Deputy Public Defender III, Deputy in Charge of the Compton Branch (former Deputy Public Defender in STAR Court)

Sharonda spent three and a half years representing youth in STAR Court.

“My clients were so resilient that the thought of me not getting up and sticking with them just never crossed my mind. If any of them could go through what they went through and still see hope and future, then I definitely could.”

“

STAR Court is a great example of what happens when all of the agencies put aside their differences, and their really narrow goals, and work together. The MDT process was just absolutely amazing.

”

S H A R O N D A

Deputy Public Defender III, Deputy in Charge of the Compton Branch (former Deputy Public Defender in STAR Court)

Similar to CTU, not all youth under Probation jurisdiction who are identified as having experienced commercial sexual exploitation are referred to STAR Court. Rather, referrals to the court are determined on a case-by-case basis by the Probation MDT. The Probation MDT considers several factors when determining whether to refer a youth to STAR Court, including the youth's age, service needs, which court the youth's case is currently in, proximity to the specialized court, and the youth's preference. Ultimately, the decision is up to the youth's attorney and Judge.

Once a youth comes under the aegis of the STAR Court, the youth will be scheduled to appear in court approximately every four to six weeks, depending on the circumstances of the case and the youth's progress. STAR Court includes more frequent court visits compared to review hearings once or twice a year for other youth on probation. The probation officers, defense attorneys, and advocates assigned to each youth see them, at a minimum, twice each month, but typically much more often than that. Many youth communicate with members of their team on a daily basis through a combination of face-to-face, telephonic, and social media contacts.

The STAR Court team aims to ensure that each youth involved in the Court:

- has safe and stable housing, including when Court jurisdiction ends;
- is enrolled in an appropriate school program, receiving the necessary educational supports;
- has at least one healthy relationship with an adult that will last beyond their court case;
- has trauma-informed, strengths-based mental health counseling;
- is receiving appropriate medical care, including dental care;
- is informed about any legal proceedings that involve them and is prepared to meaningfully participate in those proceedings; and
- upon turning 18 or transitioning out of the system, has copies of or access to all essential documentation, including: birth certificate, social security card, state identification card, immunization records, school transcripts and records, and any pertinent legal records.



STAR Court members and partners attend the United State of Women Summit in Washington, D.C. in June 2016

CHAMPION



Allison Newcombe

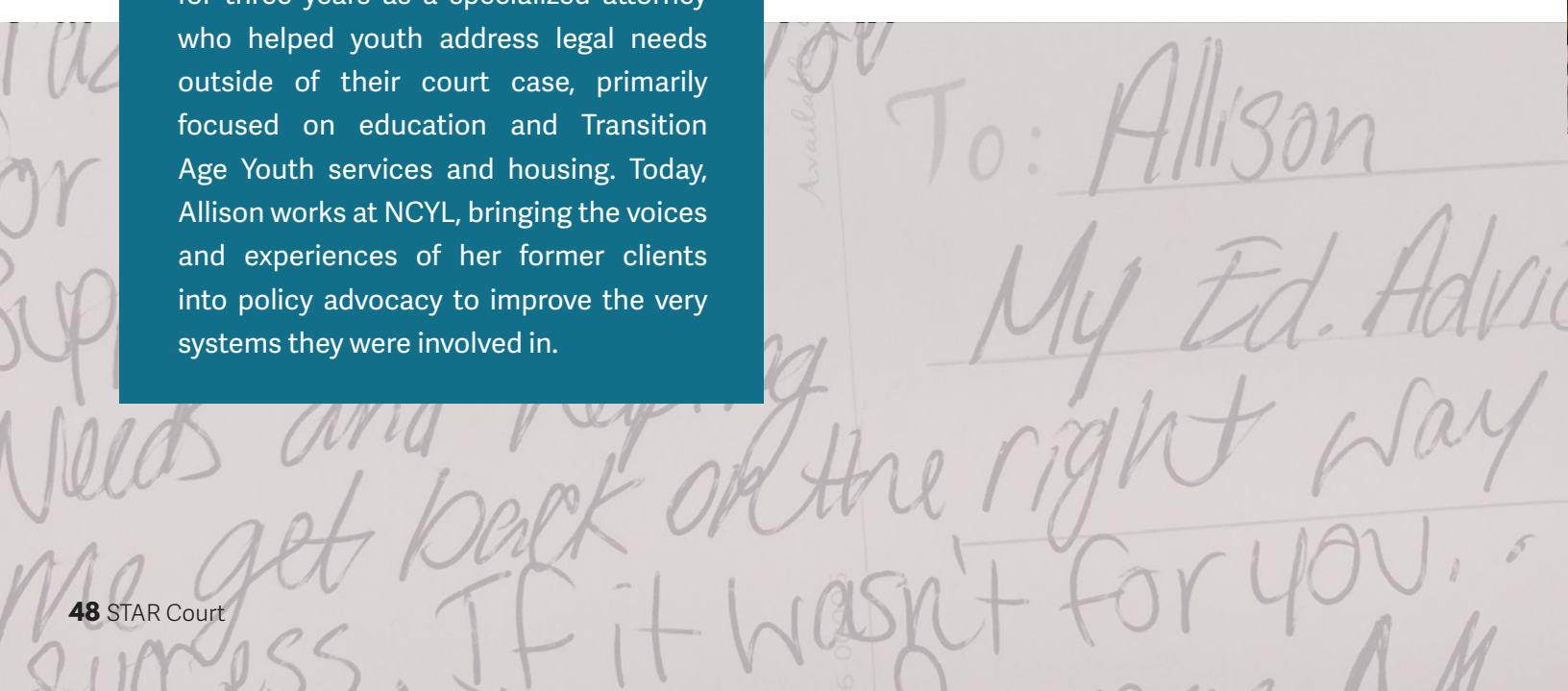
Associate Director, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) (former attorney with the Alliance for Children's Rights, stationed in the STAR Court)

Allison was stationed in the STAR Court for three years as a specialized attorney who helped youth address legal needs outside of their court case, primarily focused on education and Transition Age Youth services and housing. Today, Allison works at NCYL, bringing the voices and experiences of her former clients into policy advocacy to improve the very systems they were involved in.



Former Supervisor Knabe speaks at the STAR Court dedication in 2012.

Judge Pratt and the STAR Court team has learned, based upon their experiences working with these youth, that each youth needs an individualized intervention plan. But one consistent element to each plan is a focus on building strong relationships with the youth, with team members often going beyond the institutions, courtrooms, or probation officers in which they traditionally work. These relationships are strengthened by monthly social and community activities (such as bowling, horseback riding, painting, and community service projects), as well as birthday and graduation celebrations.



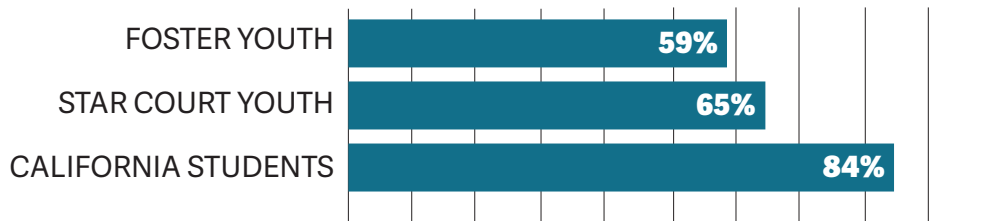
Impact of STAR Court

As of today, over 570 children and youth have been referred to the STAR Court. While quantifying the “success” of STAR Court is difficult, the Court is proud of the support it has been able to offer youth who have experienced CSE. Because of the profound trauma these youth have suffered, youth experience frequent progress and setbacks, so the STAR Court celebrates each incremental success along the way, prioritizing consistency of relationships and youth’s self-defined goals.

STAR Court is proud of the lasting relationships it has fostered with youth who have participated in the program – relationships that often extend beyond the close of the youth’s case.

GRADUATION RATES

Given the complex trauma that youth who have experienced CSE have faced, coupled with high rates of school instability, the STAR Court team is proud that 65% of youth in STAR Court eligible to graduate high school graduated, compared to 59% of foster youth statewide.





“

It's hard to let people see the rough draft of our lives. We want people to see the pretty picture in the end and the glamour when it's all finished. The reality is there will always be a continuous rough draft that we are all working on to becoming more of who we are and achieving our great goals. And today represents one of those great accomplishments. We have graduated high school. And I am really proud.

”

CHELSEA
Survivor

"Everybody in the courtroom... you feel like a family."
-Survivor⁵



FOR MORE INFORMATION

VISIT <https://www.courts.ca.gov/27693.htm>



SERVING YOUTH IN DETENTION

"I remember there were a few of us at Central Juvenile Hall working with the girls for about 10 weeks on what we were learning about trafficking. And then Jessica (a Survivor Advocate) came in, and within 10 to 20 minutes, she had done everything we had been trying to do in those 10 weeks. I knew right then how powerful it is to have survivors come in to work with our youth, to give them hope and to empower them."

**- Markese Freeman, Senior Detention Services Officer, Central Juvenile Hall
Los Angeles County Probation Department**

Juvenile Hall

In 2011, after attending the County's first CSEC training with Nola Brantley, the CTU and staff from Central Juvenile Hall (CJH) met to discuss what next steps they should take to better identify and serve youth under their care who had been commercially sexually exploited. One of these individuals was Markese Freeman, a senior detention services officer over the girls' unit in CJH. From that moment on, Freeman became a champion for this issue, creating services and programming within juvenile hall and rallying staff in his unit to take steps to support youth who have experienced CSE. And these efforts were supported by other leaders in Probation, like Elizabeth Garcia.

One of Freeman's first initiatives was to change the culture, and perceptions, around the issue. This included the way staff – as well as other youth – viewed youth who were arrested for prostitution-related offenses and brought into the hall. To do so, it was necessary to change language: rather than referring to these youth as "child prostitutes," individuals in the hall needed to acknowledge these youth were victims of CSE. He hoped increasing understanding of the issue would foster more empathy, which would then create an environment where youth felt comfortable sharing their lived experiences without feeling shame.

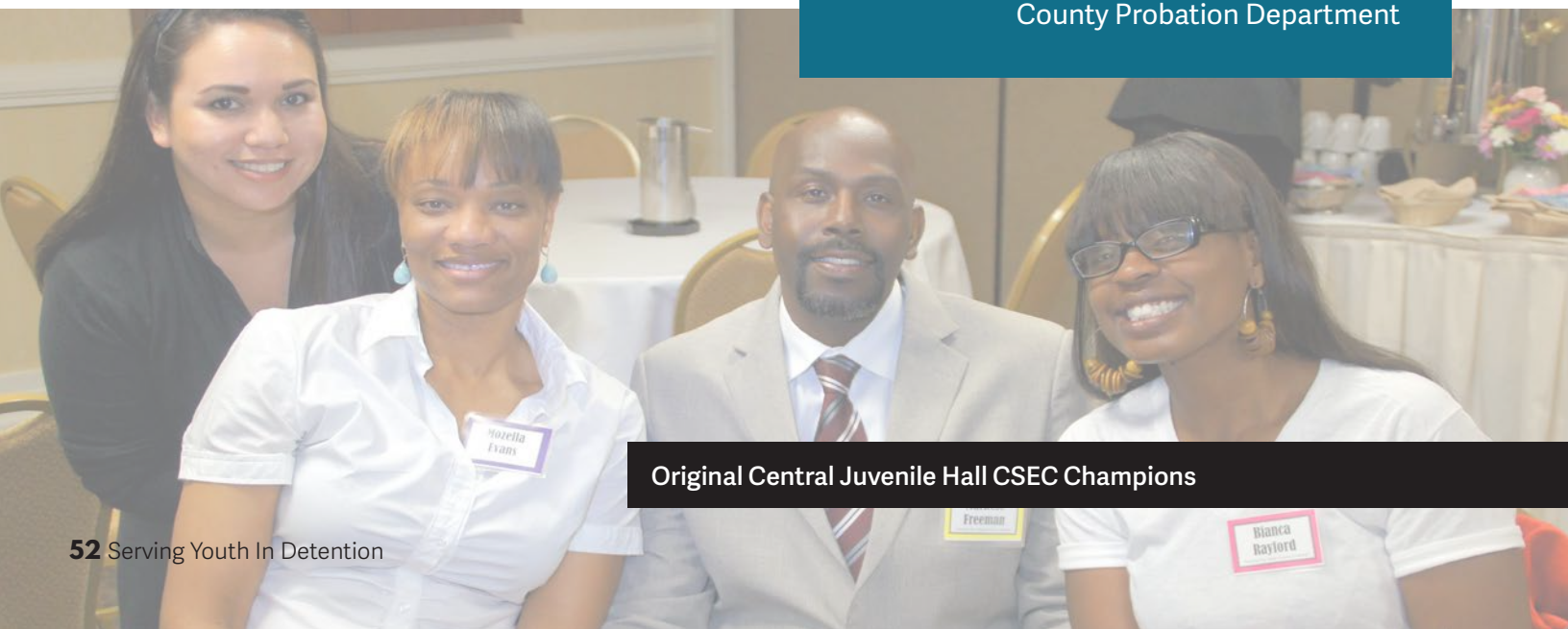
CHAMPION

Elizabeth Garcia

Retired Bureau Chief, Residential Treatment Services, Los Angeles County Probation Department (former Bureau Chief, Detention Services Bureau)

"A lot of the youth that we were working with were in juvenile hall, because at that time we were still arresting youth for prostitution-related offenses. Lisa wanted to help change that. She was also very supportive of having staff trained and engaged in the work."

- Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen,
Senior Probation Director, Los Angeles
County Probation Department



Original Central Juvenile Hall CSEC Champions

CHAMPION



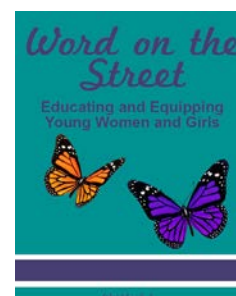
Markese Freeman

***Supervising Detention Services Officer,
Central Juvenile Hall, Los Angeles
County Probation Department***

When Markese first learned about this issue, he was a senior detention services officer over the girls' unit at Central Juvenile Hall -- a position he held from 2009 to 2018. Through Markese's initiative, compassion, and commitment to this issue, he has created lasting change in the programming available, which has impacted the lives of countless young people.

Freeman also created CSEC Coordinators, whose role is to serve as the pointpeople within the halls for youth who have been identified as CSE, provide additional, individualized support to CSE youth, help address the unique issues that these youth may be facing, and coordinate efforts with the CTU, specialized advocates, and other juvenile hall staff. He believed that youth who had experienced CSE would feel more comfortable – and safe – working with staff who were well-trained on the issue and who could devote more one-on-one time with them.

In addition, juvenile hall staff and survivor advocates began co-facilitating a comprehensive CSEC prevention curriculum in the hall, "Word on the Street: Educating and Empowering Young Women and Girls." Advocates - both survivor advocates and specialized advocates - also began coming into the hall two to three times a week to meet one-on-one with youth.



Additional programming, aimed at both prevention and intervention, included: discussions on inner and outer beauty; visits from lawyers, who would educate youth on their rights; yoga classes; domestic violence education; Lamaze classes and counseling for pregnant girls; art therapy; acting classes; and more.

These efforts helped facilitate discussions about the issue of CSE in the community, eventually leading to disclosures from youth who had been brought into the hall for charges other than prostitution-related offenses. These disclosures eventually led to the development and implementation of the "Los Angeles County Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children and Youth."

CHAMPION



Shamece Small

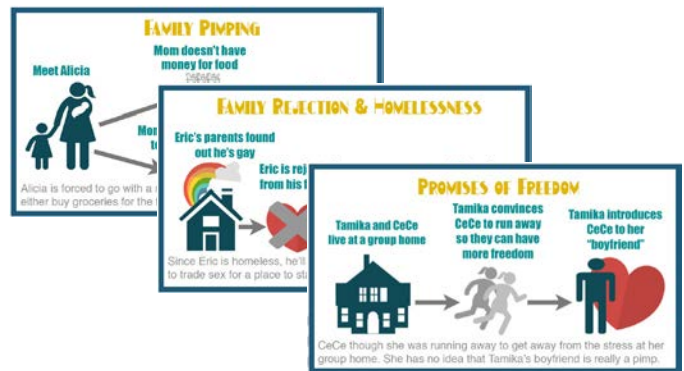
Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer (former CSEC Coordinator), Los Angeles County Probation Department

Since Shamece learned about this issue, she has been committed to serving this population of youth. Starting off as a CSEC Coordinator in juvenile hall, she told Probation leadership that her goal was to join the CTU as a DPO. To do so, she earned her bachelor's degree and became a DPO I, working as a CSEC Coordinator at Dorothy Kirby Center. Two years later, she was promoted to DPO II. And as soon as she was eligible, she applied for a position in the CTU. Now five years later, Shamece is passionate about serving this population as a CTU DPO.

"Once I found out what CSEC was, I had mixed emotions. I was upset, saddened, and scared to say the least, but I knew I couldn't just sit back and do nothing. I felt the need to help fight and be someone I know these kids never had. I know I can't save everyone, but I want to make sure each individual encountered knows this doesn't define who they really are."

"The group today taught me a lot. I'm really glad that the staff are teaching us about what girls go through. I'm excited for the group on Friday because the staff say that a survivor is coming to teach with them. I know that some of the girls in the hall are doing that stuff. Hopefully they can get help."

- Youth



“It was important that we created not a juvenile hall, but a community that supported youth who had issues. The focus was not their behavior, but the issues that led to their behavior. If we could determine what their issues were, then we could begin to understand why they were behaving the way they were.”

MARKESE FREEMAN

Supervising Detention Services Officer,
Central Juvenile Hall, Los Angeles County
Probation Department

CHAMPION



Tomás Vallejo

*Supervising Deputy Probation Officer,
Intake Detention and Control, Los Angeles
County Probation Department*

"As the issue of sex trafficking of juveniles comes to the forefront of our community's attention, the Probation staff of Intake Detention and Control (IDC) are dedicated to identifying and providing minors who have experienced CSE with the appropriate medical, mental health and other crucial services they merit. IDC officers are also particularly vigilant regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of LGBTQ youth and strive to provide all help possible at the time of admission."

“

I grew up in the halls, with multiple foster families, and care facilities, and it feels really good to re-enter these places in a different role, without my hands behind my back. I get to empower and encourage these girls and tell them about where I was, and where I am now. It is so enlightening when I explain my experiences, and it helps them to be able to dream about the future and see their future in a more positive way to get out of 'the life.' When youth start to ask me about my story, I give a brief background about myself, how I know what it's like to sit in the cells, and what it is like to be on the streets, and they are able to ask me how I got out. I just tell them it is a constant struggle of battling where you want to be, and where you are. I remind them that there is support within the walls, and encourage them to utilize the support.

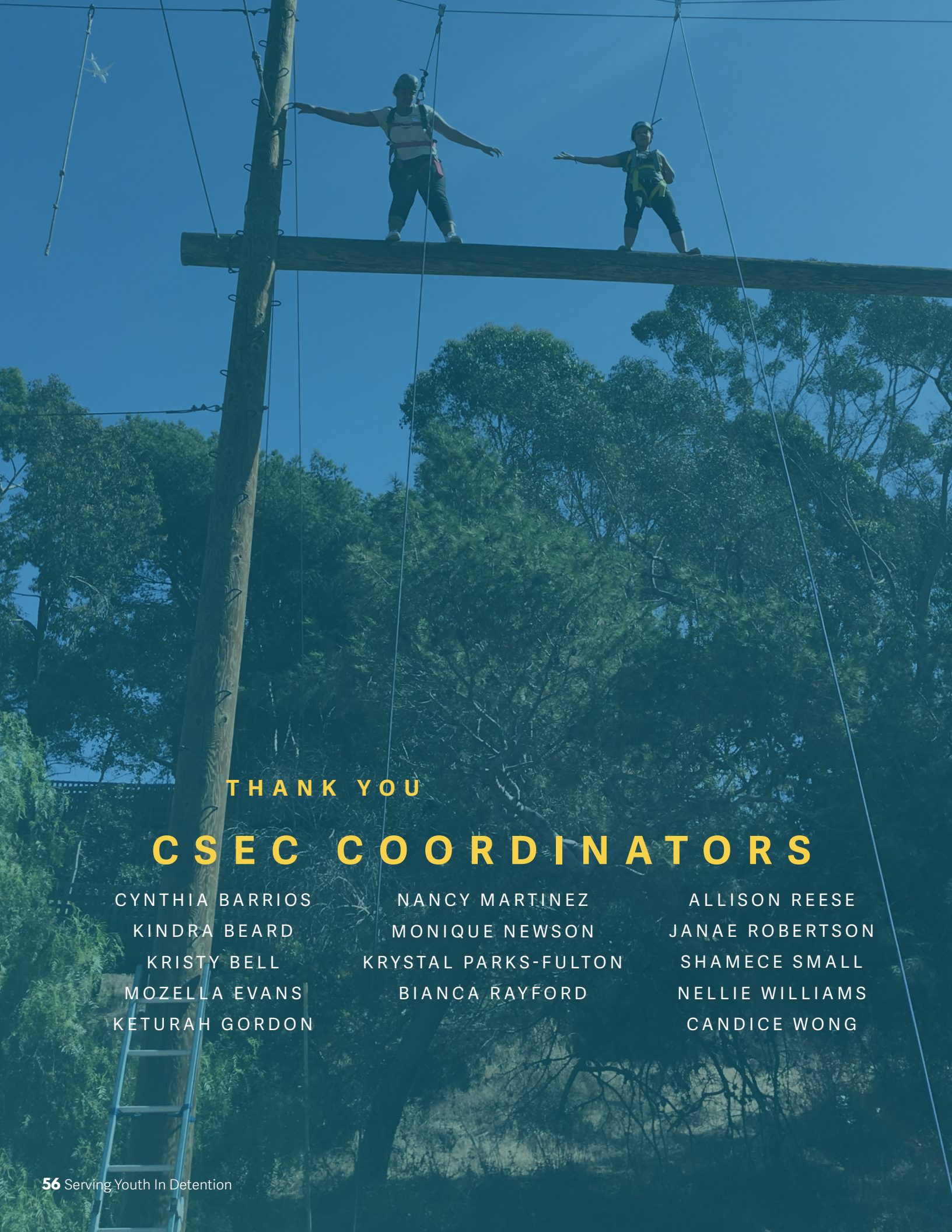
”

DA'ONNA

Survivor Leader, Saving Innocence,
on her experience working with youth
in detention facilities

"I didn't want to come to the group today because I had a friend who died because she was on the street. I didn't know she was a victim. I wish I would have known so that I could have helped her and been a better friend."

- Youth



THANK YOU

CSEC COORDINATORS

CYNTHIA BARRIOS
KINDRA BEARD
KRISTY BELL
MOZELLA EVANS
KETURAH GORDON

NANCY MARTINEZ
MONIQUE NEWSON
KRYSTAL PARKS-FULTON
BIANCA RAYFORD

ALLISON REESE
JANAE ROBERTSON
SHAMECE SMALL
NELLIE WILLIAMS
CANDICE WONG

Dorothy Kirby Center

When efforts to better identify and serve CSE youth began in juvenile hall, a group of dedicated staff at Dorothy Kirby Center (DKC), a therapeutic, residential treatment center, were also moved to take action. One of these individuals, Sadiyyah Abdul, who was also at the County's first CSEC training with Nola Brantley, wanted to increase efforts to train staff on the issue of CSE and create programming to support youth at DKC who experience CSE. Abdul recognized that training staff on the issue of CSE was essential, because increased awareness and understanding would inform how staff approached the treatment and services they provided to youth.

While youth in juvenile hall stay for an average of 15 to 19 days, youth at DKC stay for longer periods of time, often six to nine months. Because of this difference in duration of stay, programming needed to look different at DKC. DKC staff recognized that while youth were safe and stable for an extended period of time at DKC, it was important to provide supports and services throughout their stay that could help in their treatment and healing. It was important, too, that these services not only address the trauma and abuse that these youth experience during their exploitation, but the trauma and abuse they often experience prior to their exploitation, as well.

CHAMPION



Sadiyyah Abdul

**Supervisor, Child Trafficking Unit
(former Supervising Deputy Probation
Officer, Dorothy Kirby Center),
Los Angeles County Probation
Department**

"This issue matters because it could happen to my nieces or cousins, to any little girls or little boys. It matters because it could happen to anyone. For too long we, as a society, shut our eyes to the reality of CSE; but now, we know better. And we must do everything we can to support our youth through prevention and intervention."

there? There's one in
mom was telling me about. How about
me, "How about me, you, and my mom all go
out to eat there and have fun and talk
about what I learned while I was in DKC?"
and school and that why you could
meet my mom for the first time
It's just a thought. Then

In contrast to the 90-minute CSEC prevention curriculum created for youth in juvenile hall, at DKC, a six-week CSEC prevention curriculum was created and implemented. Like in juvenile hall, this prevention curriculum is co-facilitated by survivor advocates, who also meet with youth one-on-one. Because youth at DKC recognize that survivor advocates, in addition to specialized advocates, are not part of the “system,” youth often have an easier time opening up and sharing their experiences with advocates. And like in juvenile hall, this has led to more disclosures by youth who have not yet been identified as CSE.

“

I have learned that the victims/survivors just want to be heard. They have experienced severe trauma and don't believe that anyone has their best interest. Getting to know the survivors means getting to know the actual person from what their favorite color is, favorite school subject and as simple as what their hobbies are.

While working with the population I have learned to think differently. I have assisted in helping them with gaining a network of support, such as youth programs, mentorship, and community-based organizations that can assist them when in the community.

”

ELIZABETH MUNOZ-RAISOLA

CSEC Coordinator, Dorothy Kirby Center,
Los Angeles County Department of Probation



Elizabeth Munoz-Raisola

*CSEC Coordinator,
Dorothy Kirby Center, Los Angeles
County Department of Probation*

Munoz-Raisola, a CSEC Coordinator at DKC, facilitates intakes for all youth identified as CSE, connecting them with appropriate intervention and advocacy services. She works closely with specialized advocates to ensure they are involved in the treatment of each youth. With a deep understanding of the issues that make youth vulnerable to exploitation, she provides crucial support to youth at DKC who have experienced CSE.

Detention Protocol

Beginning in 2015, a small group of champions including Probation, Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS), and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) at one detention facility in Los Angeles, Central Juvenile Hall, in collaboration with the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL), began to discuss how to better identify and serve CSE youth who were still ending up in county detention facilities despite early efforts in the County to avoid criminalization of these youth. They committed to further expanding understanding and awareness of the issue in detention facilities by proactively training their fellow staff members to identify the red flags associated with CSE, and to discuss it with youth in thoughtful, non-judgmental ways. In addition to more training, the survivor- and advocate-led prevention workshops and support groups at Central Juvenile Hall helped educate youth about CSE, encourage discussions, and

create environments where more youth understood what exploitation was and felt comfortable coming forward if they had experienced it. Soon, other agencies – the Department of Public Health (DPH), DCFS, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) – joined the efforts, and other detention facilities in Los Angeles followed Central Juvenile Hall’s lead.

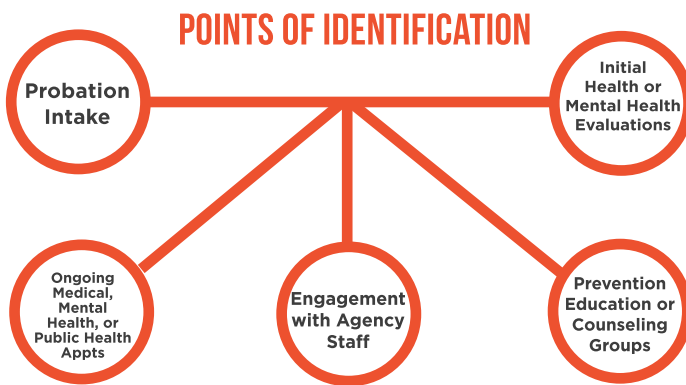
As a result of these champions’ efforts, the Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children and Youth (“Detention Protocol”) was born. Launched in March 2019, the Detention Protocol defines responsibilities for the agencies to actively identify children in detention, ensure they have the necessary supports while in detention, and effectively plan for and support their transition back to the community.



The Detention Protocol was the brainchild of this small group of champions: Marya Monares (JCHS), Kate Walker Brown (NCYL), Michelle Guymon (Probation), Myla Lampkin (DMH), Markese Freeman (Probation), and Fiza Quraishi (NCYL; not pictured).



1 CALL TO CHILD PROTECTION HOTLINE
to report abuse



2 NOTIFICATION TO CTU AND CSEC COORDINATOR
to assess and coordinate with agency partners

3 NOTIFICATION TO MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH STAFF
to assess and address immediate needs

4 MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM MEETINGS
to ensure ongoing needs and goals are met

5 CONNECTION TO RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY



CHAMPION



Dr. Marya Monares

Pediatrician, Juvenile Court Health Services

“When I first started working with youth who trusted me enough to disclose exploitation, I was often faced with barriers while trying to help them. We did not yet know how to respond to CSE, and resources weren’t readily accessible. With persistent searching for guidance, I crossed paths with some pretty spectacular people from Probation and the Department of Mental Health. We started talking more and figuring out ways that we could coordinate care of our suspected and identified exploited youth. The kids at Central started seeking us out for help. And they started to heal.”

And, as a result of these collective efforts, youth who had experienced CSE began disclosing their exploitation to staff in detention facilities across Los Angeles. **Between 2013 and 2019, over 600 children in three juvenile halls disclosed that they had been, or were being, exploited.** But for the commitment of dedicated staff taking proactive steps to increase awareness and sensitivity in their respective units and agencies, these children may never have been identified.

In addition to being implemented in the three juvenile halls in Los Angeles, Probation and its partners have begun plans to slightly adapt the Detention Protocol to address the needs of young people in Dorothy Kirby Center, and residential treatment centers, which are longer-term detention facilities.

DISCLOSURES IN JUVENILE HALL

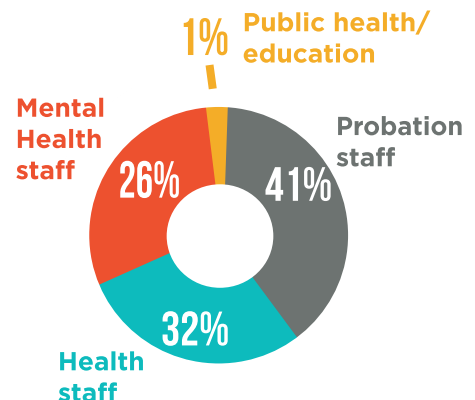
EXPLOITATION AFFECTS ALL YOUTH



477 37 12
FEMALE MALE TRANS
 (91%) (7%) (2%)

RELATIONSHIPS ARE EVERYTHING

Youth disclose exploitation to well-trained staff across all agencies



CHAMPION



Myla Lampkin

*Mental Health Clinical Supervisor,
Department of Mental Health*

“As a mental health provider working with youth who demonstrate signs and symptoms of complex trauma as a result of being trafficked and sexually exploited, it is crucial that we communicate amongst team members who can help support and further assist these kids.

Having the interagency protocol in place ensures that these vulnerable youth are not being missed and will receive needed services and resources to minimize the impact of trauma while promoting their well-being and resiliency.”

“

This protocol recognizes that when these youth do come into our custody and care, it is our responsibility and duty to identify that they have been exploited, report the exploitation as child abuse, build trusting relationships with the young person, and work collaboratively across multiple agencies to support them in meeting their myriad needs while also building on their strengths and cultivating their goals and aspirations.

”

MARKESE FREEMAN

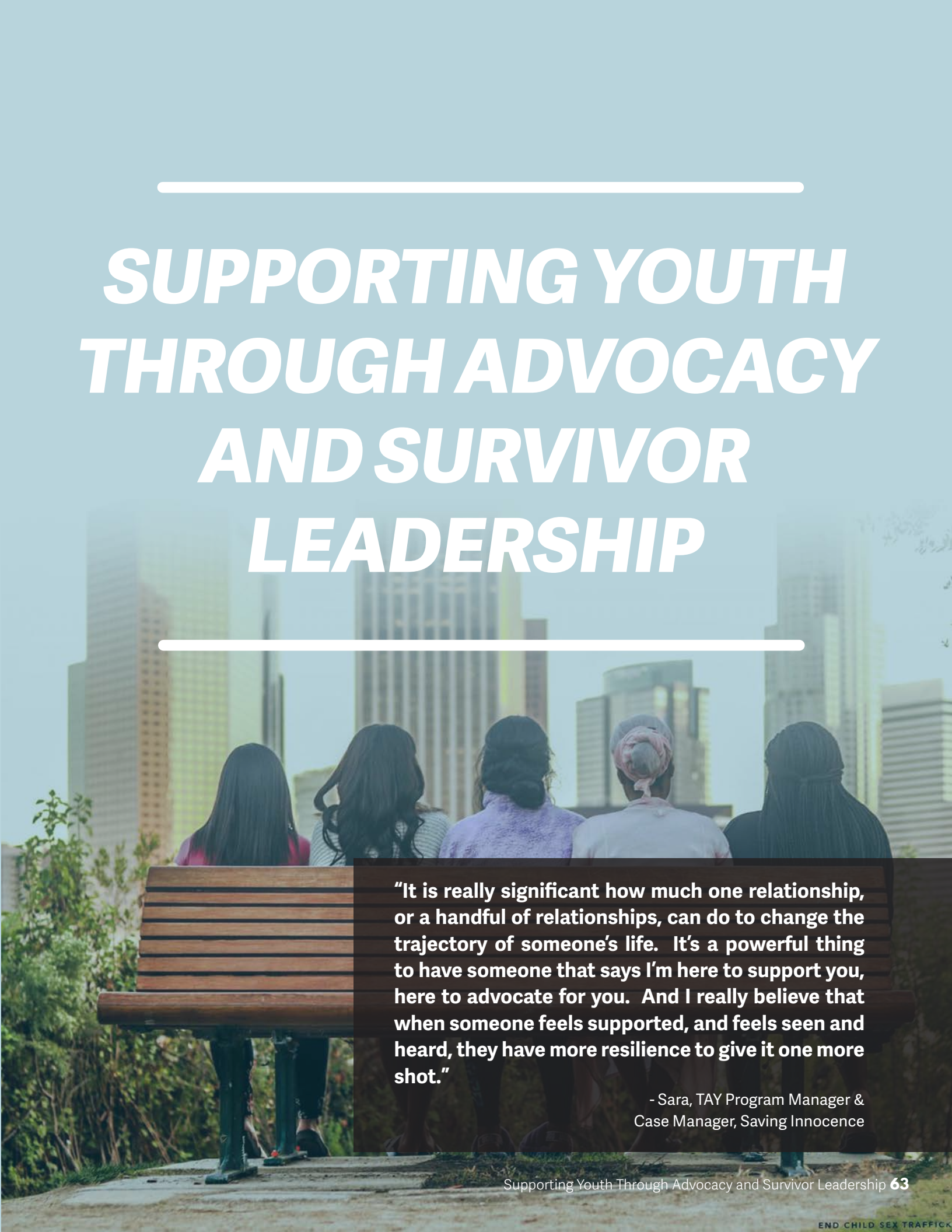
Supervising Detention Services Officer,
Central Juvenile Hall, Los Angeles County
Probation Department



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
VIEW DETENTION
PROTOCOL AT**

<https://probation.lacounty.gov/child-trafficking-unit>

SUPPORTING YOUTH THROUGH ADVOCACY AND SURVIVOR LEADERSHIP

A photograph of five young women sitting on a wooden bench, viewed from behind. They are looking out over a city skyline with several tall buildings under a clear sky. The women are dressed in casual attire, including a purple sweater and a white top with a pink headscarf. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the women in the foreground.

“It is really significant how much one relationship, or a handful of relationships, can do to change the trajectory of someone’s life. It’s a powerful thing to have someone that says I’m here to support you, here to advocate for you. And I really believe that when someone feels supported, and feels seen and heard, they have more resilience to give it one more shot.”

**- Sara, TAY Program Manager &
Case Manager, Saving Innocence**

Advocates

Probation recognized early on how important it would be for youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation to have a trusting relationship with an adult outside of Probation, and outside of public agencies generally. Many of these youth have had prior negative experiences with public agencies – whether probation, law enforcement, or child welfare – and as a result, may find it challenging to trust individuals in these agencies, at least initially. To foster these trusting relationships with adults outside of public agencies, the County began contracting with community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide specially trained advocates for all CSE-identified youth.

In 2012, Saving Innocence became the first CBO to be contracted by LA County, the LA County Superior Court, the LA County Probation Department, and the LA County District Attorney's Office to provide a continuum of care for youth who have experienced CSE. Since then, their advocacy on behalf of these youth, and their partnership and collaboration with Probation to support each youth, has been essential.

"They are a positive role model and are like a big sister"

- Survivor⁶,
on her community-based
advocate

Saving Innocence's team of specialized advocates ("case managers") respond alongside law enforcement 24 hours a day to support children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited. In addition to crisis response, Saving Innocence provides long-term case management for children and youth. Their approach is strengths-based and trauma-informed, and they work closely with youth and families to ensure that each youth's myriad of needs are met.



“

We work with our advocates as a team. We're a team because there are times when the kids don't feel comfortable telling us everything because we're the probation officer. And when they don't feel comfortable, they go to their advocates. We are very close as far as how we communicate and work with these kids. And when we work as a team, the kids become more comfortable. They don't hide anything. They're very transparent and they let us know exactly what's going on with everything instead of hiding it from one or the other.

”

LIZET BARBOZA

CTU Deputy Probation Officer, Los Angeles County Probation Department

“

Having a non-governmental agency like Saving Innocence is really critical because the kids are very sensitive to being in the system – feeling like a number – and do not trust the system all the time. To have a third party that can advocate on behalf of our law enforcement partners and advocate on behalf of our collaborative team members and child welfare or probation is really helpful so that each child can rest in knowing they’re safe with all of these folks – that we are all wearing very distinct hats to help that child succeed to the best of our ability.

”

K I M B I D D L E

*Founder and Chief Executive Officer,
Saving Innocence*



CHAMPION



Kim Biddle

*Founder and Chief Executive Officer,
Saving Innocence*

Kim Biddle founded Saving Innocence in 2010, with a passion to support children who, at that time, were being arrested and not recognized for their victimization.

“I think the greatest motivation is the individual success stories. Every time I hear a child say, wow, this is the first time I’ve ever experienced unconditional love; this is the first time I’ve ever felt totally safe; this is the first time I’ve ever had someone give me a birthday cake to blow out candles and even think about a wish to make. Those individual moments with kids where you see their childhood being restored and a little bit of life and light come back in their heart and they begin to dream. They begin to have vision for their life in a new way or have the audacity to believe that they are truly lovable. That’s everything. It’s each child having that hope relit in their heart – in small ways and big ways. That’s what makes it truly worth it.”

CHAMPION



Jasmine

Senior Lead Case Manager/FRP Coordinator, Saving Innocence

Jasmine joined Saving Innocence as a Case Manager in May 2014. Today, she is a Senior Lead Case Manager and FRP Coordinator, working closely with law enforcement and County partners in the implementation of the LA County First Responder Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children. Her passion for supporting youth identified as having been commercially sexually exploited has made a tremendous difference in the lives of countless youth.

"Jasmine is an energetic powerhouse. She remains positive in the most challenging situations, and has the ability to engage all ages of youth. She is both a strong woman, and a woman of strength who builds strong relationships, and always gives her best to the kids."

- Amber, Senior Director of Clinical Programs, Saving Innocence



"Sometimes our kids face problems that ice cream can solve, creating opportunities to talk about the rest." - Saving Innocence

“

We integrate the phrase ‘Can you believe we get to do this?’ into our work, to remind ourselves that it is a privilege to be invited into the moments of crisis and to support not only the youth, but also our social workers, probation officers, and law enforcement partners.

”

SAVING INNOCENCE

Saving Innocence’s team has built a strong relationship with the CTU over the years, allowing for frequent and consistent communication to address the needs of youth, including both crisis management and long-term planning. Specialized advocates work closely with CTU DPOs, who are primary points of contact for the youth, and participate in weekly CTU multi-disciplinary team meetings. Saving Innocence also maintains a strong relationship with the specialized trafficking unit within DCFS, communicating frequently with LA County Social Workers and participating in weekly DCFS multi-disciplinary team meetings.

In addition to its case managers, Saving Innocence has survivor advocates, who provide critical support to youth who have experienced CSE. In addition to facilitating prevention and intervention workshops in detention facilities, survivor advocates meet with youth one-on-one to offer support and mentorship. Survivor advocates also provide support to youth testifying against their traffickers in court. It often helps youth to have an individual who can truly understand and relate to the experiences they’ve been through.

From 2014 to 2019, Saving Innocence responded to over 500 crisis calls to support youth when recovered by law enforcement partners through Los Angeles County’s Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC. Their advocates have provided crisis intervention and long-term case management services to nearly 1,200 youth and provided Prevention and Intervention Workshops to over 700 youth. Today, Saving Innocence has capacity to respond to 200 crisis calls to minors and provide case management services to 400 clients, annually.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Crisis Calls	33	118	113	130	143
Case Management	109	173	216	350	385
Intervention and Prevention Groups	18	76	74	159	452

*As of December 31, 2019

CHAMPION



Amber

***Senior Director of Clinical Programs,
Saving Innocence***

Amber joined Saving Innocence in October 2014, and today serves as Senior Director of Clinical Services. She participates in many countywide initiatives to better identify and support youth who have been commercially sexually exploited, including the First Responder Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children and the annual Empowerment Conferences. She also provides critical support and supervision to the team of Saving Innocence case managers who are responding to youth in the field 24/7. In every space that she is in, Amber is always focused on ensuring that survivors' experiences inform countywide responses to this issue.

Saving Innocence also connects children and youth who have been CSE with empowerment services for years following their identification, helping them go from victims to survivors to leaders in their communities. In 2018, Saving Innocence launched the Survivor Leadership Academy for Youth (SLAY) program, which is a character, leadership, and professional development course for survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, ages 18-22. SLAY helps youth acquire some of the practical and soft skills that can be difficult to develop when growing up in the foster care system. Topics covered in the course include healthy relationships, conflict management, emotional regulation, budgeting, professional development, and leadership skills. Youth are also partnered with career opportunities in the County, as well as leaders in the community, who provide them with career guidance.

“Advocates can help survivors learn to trust again. Survivors may have been trained by their traffickers not to trust law enforcement, or social workers, but traffickers are not warning them about advocates. I think it’s helpful for these kids to have that extra person who understands what they’ve been through, who makes sure they have their needs met, and who can provide them with emotional support to help guide and coach them through the healing process.”

- Amber, Senior Director of Clinical Programs,
Saving Innocence

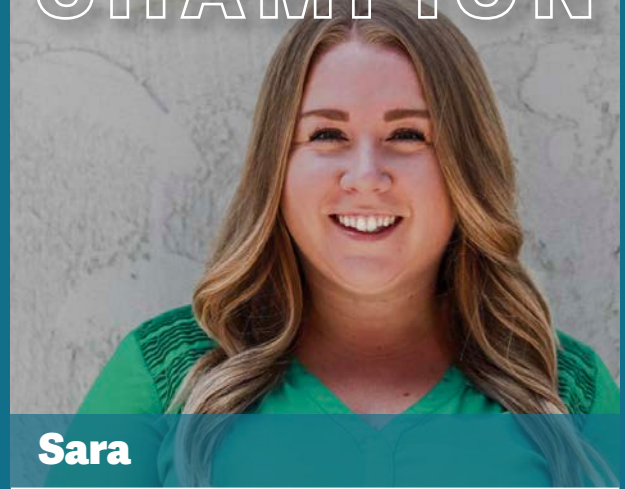
By providing support and care to youth who have experienced, or are at risk of, CSE, and empowering survivors to become leaders in their own communities, Saving Innocence has been an essential partner in the work since the very beginning.

“**Saving Innocence is valuable because we have people here that are dedicated to the children no matter what time of day or night. When I was growing up, and I went through my exploitation and the abuse and everything, I could only wish and hope and dream that there would have been a program around like Saving Innocence because I could have gotten the help and the attention that I needed a lot earlier.**”

JESSICA

Survivor Advocate, Saving Innocence

CHAMPION



Sara

TAY Program Manager & Case Manager, Saving Innocence

Sara joined Saving Innocence as a case manager in July 2013. In her 6 years at Saving Innocence, she has provided youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation with essential advocacy, supporting them with consistent love, compassion, and mentorship. She both created and leads the SLAY program.

“At its core, this crime takes away a youth’s belief in their inherent value as a human being...I just don’t know if there’s anything more worth fighting for than a human being to know their value and to know their worth.”



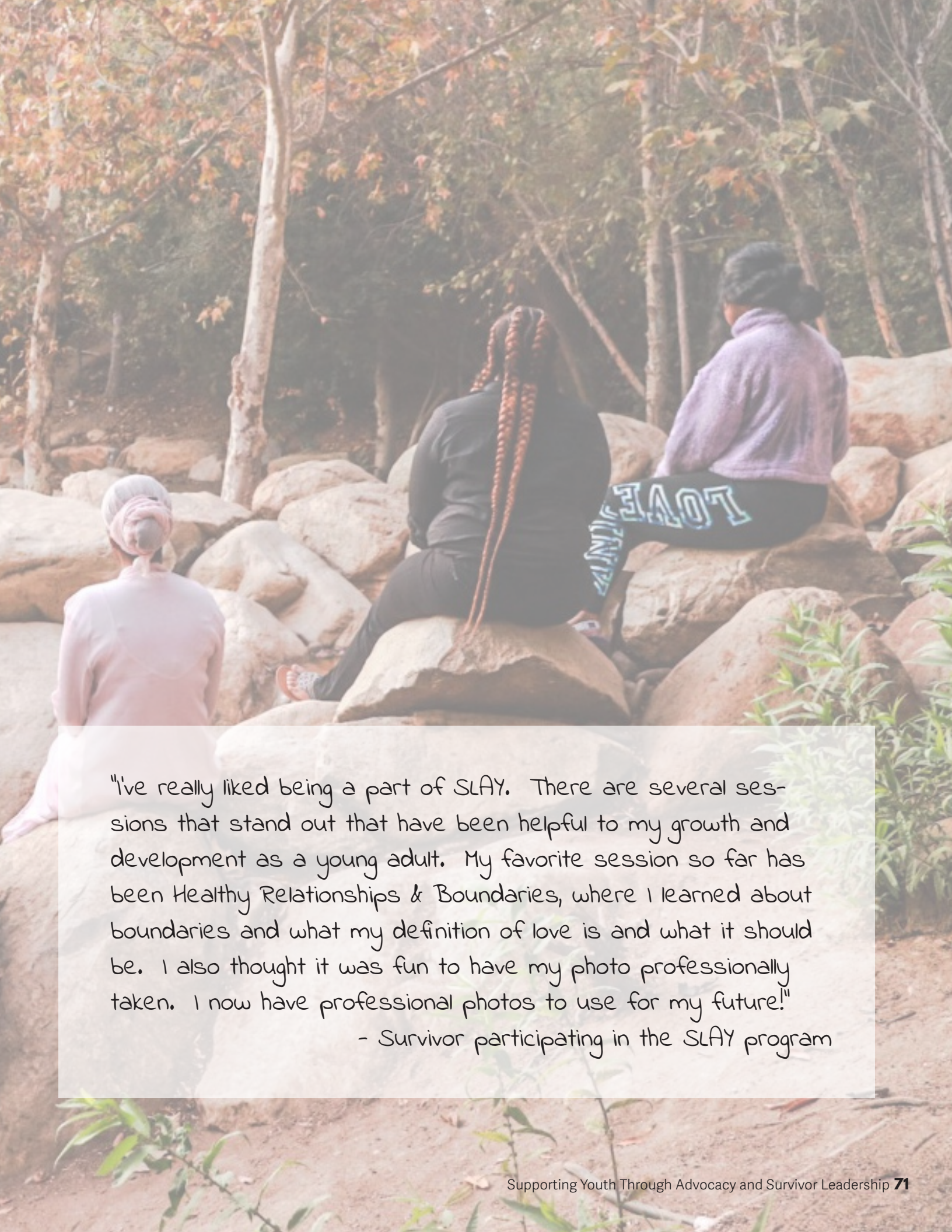
“

The SLAY program helps survivors learn how to be leaders in their communities – because we really believe that they will be the leaders of our communities one day.

”

SARA

TAY Program Manager & Case Manager,
Saving Innocence



"I've really liked being a part of SLAY. There are several sessions that stand out that have been helpful to my growth and development as a young adult. My favorite session so far has been Healthy Relationships & Boundaries, where I learned about boundaries and what my definition of love is and what it should be. I also thought it was fun to have my photo professionally taken. I now have professional photos to use for my future!"

- Survivor participating in the SLAY program

Survivor Leadership

Partnering with survivors in the work has been critical. Survivor advocates provide support to youth on a deeply personal level, often fostering an instant connection with youth who feel no judgment and who can relate to similar lived experiences. Survivor advocates work with youth at halls and camps, empowerment events, and more. In partnership with Probation, these committed advocates conduct trainings and groups focused on prevention, in addition to working with youth who have already been exposed to exploitation. While case managers offer meaningful support to youth, survivor advocates can connect with youth in a different way by being someone who has lived through similar experiences and gone on to lead a healthy, productive life. And in doing so, survivor advocates empower youth with hope for a future without exploitation and abuse, and one in which they can help others, serve their communities, and achieve their own potential.

Survivors also inform local and state policies and practices around CSE. For example, survivor advocates with Saving Innocence inform the specialized services provided to youth who have experienced CSE in LA County. Youth survivor leaders provide critical insight into how Probation and our system partners can better serve youth by speaking on panels, participating in focus groups, contributing to the County's research and strategies to improve housing options for CSE youth, and helping to brainstorm innovative approaches. Having gone through it themselves, youth and survivor leaders know best what worked and what could have been done differently. For these reasons, survivors from LA County and around the state also serve on the CSEC Action Team and its Survivor Advisory Board, informing statewide policies and practices.

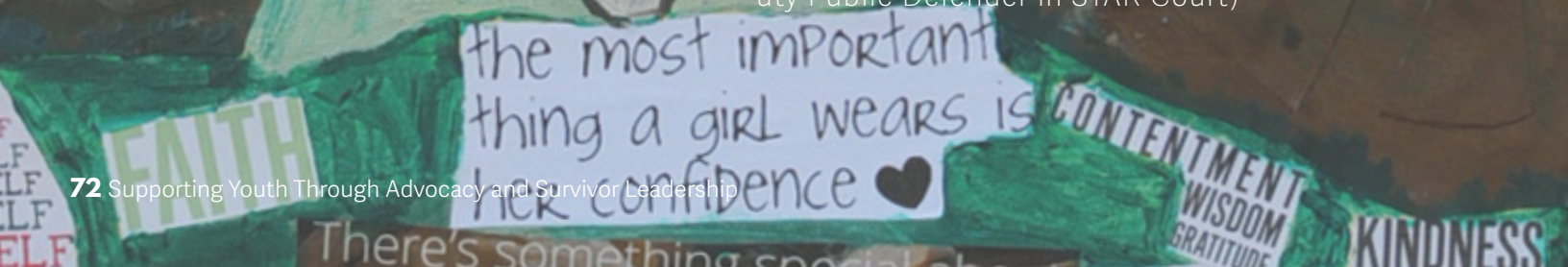
“

These youth demonstrate so much strength every day, just by getting up and moving forward with their lives.

”

S H A R O N D A

Sharonda, Deputy Public Defender III, Deputy in Charge of the Compton Branch (former Deputy Public Defender in STAR Court)



“

It's important to partner with survivors because they can provide a unique lens through their own lived experience. It's also important to partner with not just one survivor, but several survivors, because every survivor has different lived experiences.

”

NOLA BRANTLEY

Nola Brantley Speaks

“

Survivor advocates give another perspective...We're able to shine light on things that most people wouldn't think of - kind of an 'out of the box brain' - in finding solutions, as well as looking deeper into the problem.

”

- Tika, Crisis Response Case Manager and Survivor Advocate, Journey Out

Survivors are the reason why we do the work. Every day, Probation is inspired by the resilience, strength, and courage of survivors. And, because there is no substitute for lived experience, Probation recognizes that all efforts to respond to CSE must center survivors' voices and be informed by survivors' lived experiences.

“

Mentorship is extremely important for our CSE youth. Youth can look to a survivor advocate as a role model – as someone who has been where they've been and overcome the odds.

”

SADIYYAH ABDUL

Supervisor, Child Trafficking Unit
(former Supervising Deputy Probation Officer, Dorothy Kirby Center) Los Angeles County Probation Department

CHAMPION



Oree Freeman

Survivor Advocate, Saving Innocence

Oree is a Survivor Advocate with Saving Innocence, a student, and a proud mother to her daughter. After enduring sexual abuse and trauma as a young child, she was trafficked at 11 years old. At age 15, with support from a staff member at her group home, she was finally able to leave the life. For Oree, her CTU DPO, Terrika Woolfolk, provided her with consistent support and encouragement as she continued her journey to heal. “Ms. Woolfolk changed my life. She was more than just a Probation Officer. She taught me accountability and she treated me with respect. And she’s still in my life today -- I can talk to her about anything.” With courage, resilience, and compassion, Oree now provides invaluable support and mentorship to other youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Her warmth and positive energy is contagious, lighting up every room she enters. Her leadership inspires and empowers the youth she works with one-on-one, as well as the youth she engages with through workshops and empowerment events.

“I go into the juvenile halls – the same juvenile halls I used to be at – and I get to work with the kids on prevention work. It’s just this amazing feeling that I get to go back into the very places where I found hope at and work with kids. I get to be that person that I didn’t have when I was a kid. I’m not just this victim of sex trafficking. It’s only a part of my story, that’s all.”

CHAMPION



Graynisha

Business Owner, KDS Nails

Graynisha owns her own business, KDS Nails, is a Licensed Nail Tech, and is a graduate of Palace Beauty College and Chaparral High School. She is currently working to grow her own nail brand. Graynisha attended the Empowerment Conference seven years in a row, engaging with youth through her roles as a participant, Youth Ambassador, Youth Leader, and an MC. While Graynisha was on Probation, she met Rachel Thomas, a survivor leader who facilitated small groups in her group home. Thomas encouraged Graynisha to open up about what she was experiencing, and she began to do that and found the process to help in her healing. While still in high school, Graynisha traveled to Sacramento and presented to the California Child Welfare Council to share a piece of her story and to highlight the challenges that foster and probation youth face related to school instability. As Graynisha continued on her journey to heal, she decided to pursue her true passion and open her own nail business. Graynisha's team of support from the CTU, Nola Brantley and Saving Innocence got behind her in this endeavor and helped her to earn her license and set up her business. The tables have turned, and while Graynisha continues to see the DPOs from the Child Trafficking Unit on a regular basis, it is now because they are visiting her for their weekly nail appointments. By sharing her experiences with other youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation, Graynisha empowers them to heal, to dream, and to achieve.

“Empowerment means no matter what you have been through or what you get labeled, that’s not what makes you. YOU are a survivor and NEVER feel discouraged about anything you want to do. Always be yourself that is what makes you UNIQUE!”

CHAMPION



Da'Onna

Survivor Leader, Saving Innocence

Da'Onna is a Survivor Leader with Saving Innocence. After entering Probation at age 15, she was referred to the CTU. Her CTU DPO, Terrika Woolfolk, provided her with support and encouragement. "[Ms. Woolfolk] always had my best interests at heart, no matter what it was. She knows the type of person I am and that I needed some type of structure, so she gave that to me...She's just always been a very good person and has given me good advice." Today, Da'Onna provides that same essential support and encouragement to other youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. "I feel like my life is meant to be a life of service, like this is what I was made to do. To give back and tell my story and share my experience to help someone going through the same thing as me." Sharing her own personal experience helps her connect with youth, empowering them to dream about a future without abuse and exploitation. And eventually, Da'Onna hopes to open her own group homes.

"I want to be able to provide that [home feeling] for some of the girls coming out of this and I want to be able to provide a safe haven for them."

CHAMPION



Setrean

Survivor Advocate, Saving Innocence

Setrean is a Survivor Advocate with Saving Innocence and a proud mother. In February 2020, she will be completing her bachelor's degree, and then in the fall, she plans to enroll in a master's program for psychology. After enduring physical and emotional abuse as a child, she was trafficked and arrested for prostitution at age 15. While in juvenile hall, she felt encouraged by some staff at Sylmar Juvenile Hall who ensured she always felt supported and loved. When Setrean had her daughter, she became determined to provide her with the love and support that she didn't have when she was growing up. "I started to do better so that this little girl who was innocent like me didn't have to go through what I went through." After hearing a female pastor speak at church about her own experience in the life, Setrean felt encouraged to seek services and supports for her exploitation. "When [the pastor] exposed her past and everybody clapped and encouraged her, that made me feel more comfortable to seek help for how I felt about being trafficked." And now, she is determined to share her story with other youth who are experiencing commercial sexual exploitation. Through her leadership and advocacy, she empowers the youth she engages with.

"The best part of the work is sharing my knowledge to help others see that this situation does not make you any less of a person than someone who hasn't experienced trafficking."

CHAMPION

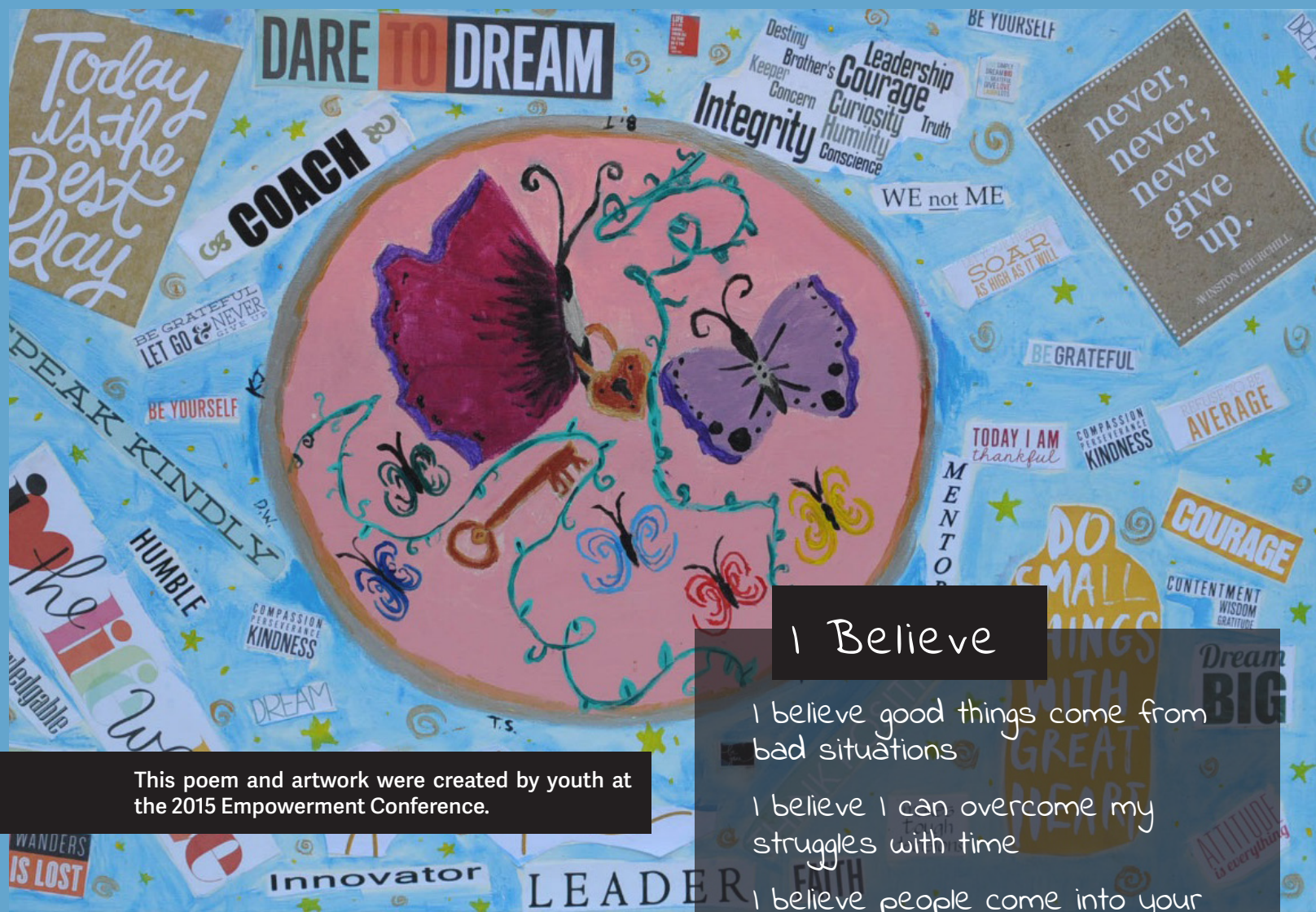


Tika

Crisis Response Case Manager & Survivor Advocate, Journey Out

Tika is a Crisis Response Case Manager & Survivor Advocate with Journey Out, a mentor, and an entrepreneur. For Tika, it was a hospital nurse who helped her begin her journey to heal. "She stayed with me everyday - even when she was off work, she still came to visit me. And she just sat there, and when I wanted to speak, she was there to listen - she didn't judge me or anything like that. And that was a huge turning point in my life because she was the first person that I felt comfortable enough [with] to tell my story from beginning to end. That part - just someone to listen to what I had to say, without interrupting or interjecting, or showing any judgment in body language - it meant the world to me." Tika also felt supported by individuals in Probation, including one DPO at Sylmar Juvenile Hall. "Ms. Johnson always made me feel like there was more to life than what was going on." With a deep understanding of generational trauma, Tika is passionate about sharing her own experiences to help other individuals overcome their own trauma and begin to heal. "When you have people with certain kinds of trauma who aren't treated, it goes down generations. And we need to stop the hurting of the people affected by this." By sharing her own experiences, Tika both empowers young adult and adult women that she works with and influences County responses to this issue.

"I'm just trying to turn my pain into purpose as much as I possibly can."



This poem and artwork were created by youth at the 2015 Empowerment Conference.

I Believe

I believe good things come from bad situations

I believe I can overcome my struggles with time

I believe people come into your life as blessings or lessons and in due time we figure that out

I believe what doesn't kill you makes you stronger

I believe being a survivor doesn't define me

I believe I was beautifully made with a purpose to succeed

we believe we have help

we believe we are loved, strong and gifted

But most importantly we believe WE GOT THIS!!!!

2015

The painting we worked on symbolizes us. The bigger butterflies are our survivor leaders guiding us in our journey by empowering us to become the women we want to be. They give us words, represented outside the circle that lift us up to get there. The lock and key represent that we hold the power to give our heart to the people who deserve it like the survivor leaders and them to us. The smaller butterflies represent girls like us trying to increase our leadership by harnessing our own power.

EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

"I can honestly say that for the first time in my life I now know what love feels like. When I was little my parents used to tell me they loved me, but they also hurt me... so I was confused by that. When I was with my 'pimp' he used to tell me he loved me, but he also hurt me and it never felt like love. The past two days being around people who care, who give you a hug when you need one, and say they are here to support me, without conditions or wanting something in return – it feels good. It feels what love should feel like. So thank you for that."

- Survivor, speaking about the 1st annual Empowerment Conference

*"It feels what
love should
feel like."*

Empowerment Conference

In June 2012, Probation hosted the first annual CSEC Youth Empowerment Conference: Inspiring Hope through Survivor Leadership. The Empowerment Conference is uniquely structured as a three-day retreat where youth/TAY who have been commercially sexually exploited come together in a safe space to learn from other survivors, socialize with friends and allies, realize and build on their strengths, spend time in nature, and work through their own trauma with the support of trusted adults and peers. The goal of this event is not only to empower youth who have been commercially sexually exploited, but to show them that they are not alone, that they have a tremendous amount of internal strength, and that they have people who care about them and will walk alongside them on their journey to heal.



“

For many young women who are either still in the commercial sex industry struggling to get out, or who have gotten out and are now trying to work their different programs or placements, [the Empowerment Conference is] their first exposure to other women who have gotten out of the commercial sex industry and have went on to thrive in their lives in different ways and who are willing to talk about it in a way that's empowered and not full of shame -- and that's even sometimes with laughter. Many of them have never had that experience.

”

NOLA BRANTLEY

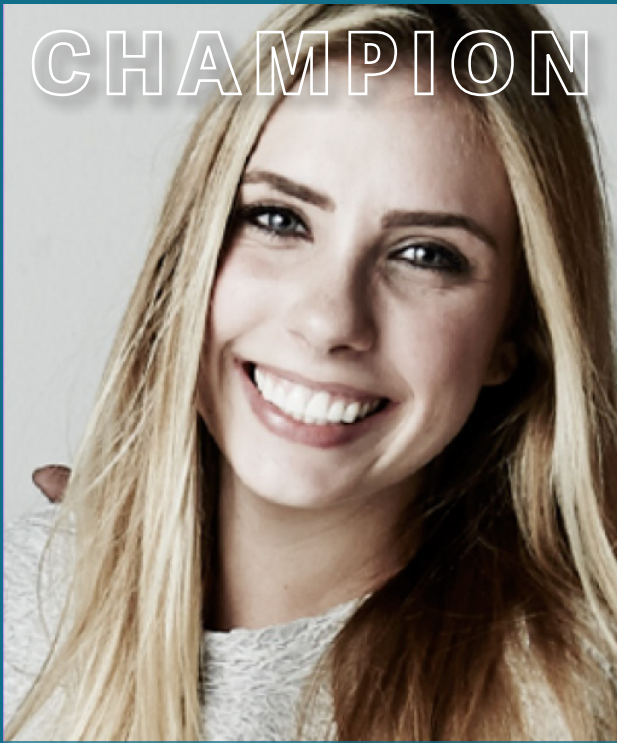
Nola Brantley Speaks



In the first eight years of the conference, over 250 youth participants have attended along with over 40 adult survivor leaders from across the country. Past facilitators include a number of nationally recognized subject matter experts, including Rachel Lloyd (GEMS, New York, NY); Nola Brantley (Nola Brantley Speaks, Los Angeles, CA; formerly MISSEY, Oakland, CA); Rights4Girls (Washington, DC); Withelma "T" Ortiz-Macey (2011 Glamour Magazine "Woman of the Year"); Carissa Phelps (Attorney/Advocate); Audrey Morrissey (My Life My

Choice); Leah Jonet Albright-Byrd (Professional Speaker & Curriculum Consultant; formerly Bridget's Dream); Harmony Dust-Grillo (Treasures); Rachel Thomas (Sowers Education Group); Kristina Fitz, Josie Feemster and more. Many organizations have partnered with Probation to support the Empowerment Conference, including DCFS, foster care providers, the Children's Law Center (CLC), Nola Brantley Speaks, Saving Innocence, Court Personnel (Judge Pratt), and the National Center for Youth Law.

CHAMPION



Kelsi Yeakel

Clinical Intake Coordinator, Aviva Family and Children's Services

"It makes me emotional to reminisce on the past 8 years of being a part of the annual Empowerment Conference. It has truly been an honor to be apart of the conference and to walk beside the young ladies who attend. The young women who attend are truly the most inspirational, resilient, strong, brave, and beautiful people you will ever meet. I will never take for granted what these young women have taught and shown me. It has been an absolute privilege to have a small part in the conference and something I will carry with me for life."

The conference includes survivor panel discussions, keynote speeches, survivor-led breakout sessions, and creative workshops. Throughout the conference, youth ambassadors - youth survivors who have shown leadership and growth in their programming - assist in the facilitation of the workshops and panels, and are given the opportunity to cultivate new leadership skills. While adults - survivors and allies - largely facilitate the first two days of activities, on the final day, the youth run the show. Through creative performances of spoken word, dance, and visual artwork, both the adults and the youths' peers are offered a glimpse into youths' talents and passions. The youth decide what to share and how to express it - sometimes the young people share about their exploitation and their personal struggles, while others share their hopes and aspirations for the future. Given the impact of this conference, several jurisdictions across the country have reached out to Probation for guidance, expressing a desire to replicate the model.





“

The annual Empowerment Conference is a special place where a community of women come together each year to uplift and empower young girls who need that extra support, love and encouragement. These young girls also meet and connect with survivor leaders who share their stories and guidance. It is also a wonderful and unique opportunity for the girls to network with professionals in the field who truly want to help them succeed in life.

”

JENNY CHEUNG MARINO

Firm Director, Children's Law Center



Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen, Probation Department, Rachel Lloyd, GEMS, and Michelle Guymon, Probation Department at the 2012 Empowerment Conference.



Dear Michelle and Hania,

Just want to thank you for inviting me to participate in the empowerment conference this week. I came away feeling inspired and humbled and definitely empowered! It was such a moving experience and honestly the most respectful experience I've had at any conference as a survivor leader. Thank you for that and for ensuring that survivor leadership really meant just that. More importantly it was clear how incredibly meaningful it was for the girls. It was such an honor meeting them and I've been thinking of them all this week.

It was also a real pleasure to meet so many folks who are clearly so dedicated and committed to the girls. Y'all have some great people out here and there was a lot of love in the room which the girls obviously felt. I keep thinking about [youth] saying she thought it was going to be every Monday and Tuesday!!! It was both a little heartbreaking and such a testament to how important this conference was for the girls. I'm looking forward in supporting in any way I can this ongoing work and continuing the incredible momentum.

Congratulations on all your hard work and making the vision come to life. I hope you're both recovering from the exhaustion and intensity and feeling very proud!!! It was really special and I'm so glad I was able to be a small part of it. Thank you again!

Warmly,
Rachel

"The annual Empowerment Conference is really important to young girls like me. I was a victim of abuse as a child at the age of 13. I was manipulated into the world of child sexual exploitation. I was trafficked to San Francisco, Las Vegas and many other places. But most of my exploitation was here on Figueroa and western, Long Beach Boulevard and all across the County. Finally I was able to escape. For my safety I spent nine months in the state of Iowa building a new life. I will graduate from high school in June and plan to attend [college] in the fall to study cosmetology and business. I hope to open my own business someday. I have attended all three Empowerment Conferences, twice as a youth ambassador. It is a chance for young women like me to understand our past doesn't define our future. Going back to that life is not an option. On behalf of our other youth ambassadors and all the young women who attended this weekend, I want to thank everyone who created and supported the Empowerment Conference. It is an inspiring and motivating event which helps survivors to face forward, set high expectations for ourselves and move on to a path of achieving the dreams that we desire."

- Survivor, to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
on November 12, 2014



Spoken Word Creative Workshop

CHAMPION



Gina Loring

For the past six years, Gina has facilitated the spoken word creative workshop at the Empowerment Conference. Her creativity and passion inspires youth to express themselves through poetry, singing, and spoken word.



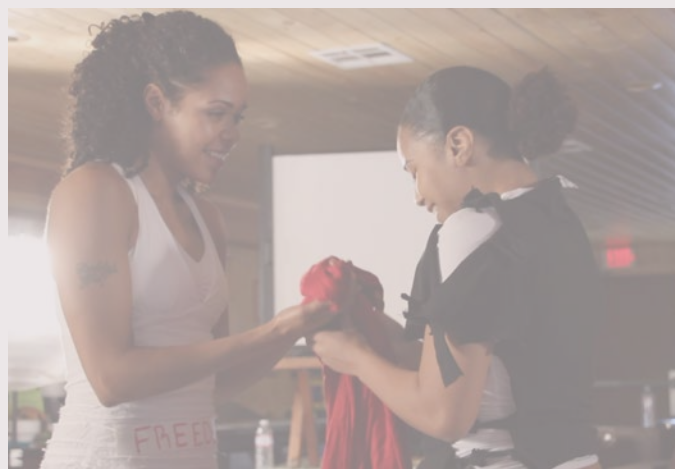
Dance Creative Workshop

CHAMPION



Dineytra Perez

Since the very first Empowerment Conference, Dineytra has lead the dance creative workshops. Her talent and energy encourages youth to challenge themselves to learn new choreography and to enjoy the challenge, which culminates an incredible performance each year.



Art Creative Workshop

CHAMPION



Dana Wyss

Dana has led the art creative workshops at the Empowerment Conference for the past six years. Her compassion, enthusiasm, and creativity empowers youth to express themselves through various art forms, including painting, drawing, and collages.



I am a strong warrior
I've been through a lot of
battles fighting for my
life
And now I am here
just trying to live right

At the age of seven, my whole life changed
I got taken from my family, and introduced to
pain

At the age of eight
I got put in a foster home, and I was
filled with hate

At the age of eleven, I got in the game
And nothing seemed to look the same
After all I'm still strong I AM A STRONG
Standing up to the wrong WARRIOR



“

The honesty, raw emotion and talent shown through the youths' performances left us speechless. Yet perhaps the most meaningful moments were the small, seemingly insignificant ones that we shared with youth. Sitting on a picnic table near the creek, taking a bike ride, dancing around the bonfire and making s'mores. These are the moments that remind us that despite what they have experienced and underneath their oftentimes tough exteriors, they are just kids—our kids. These moments are what inspire us to keep working for a world where others recognize them as such – and for a world where they feel safe every day of the year, not just for three days in the mountains.

”

ALLISON NEWCOMBE

Attorney, Associate Director, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, National Center for Youth Law (*a reflection from the 5th Annual Empowerment Conference, 2016*)



Monthly Empowerment Activities

Soon after the Empowerment Conference began annually, many youth expressed interest in more frequent empowerment events, where they could continue to connect and engage with other survivors and adult allies who attended the conference. In response, Probation created monthly empowerment events, which include a variety of activities, including ropes courses, painting, self-defense classes, beach outings, bowling, and more. These monthly events offer the opportunity for survivors to gain new experiences in healthy environments and to reconnect with other survivors and adult allies who attended the conference. Together, the annual Empowerment Conference and monthly empowerment events have created a strong community of survivors and adult allies.



JULY 30TH, 2016

EMPOWERMENT
EVENT

Saturday, July 30th 1pm-4m

WORKSHOP FOCUS:
EMPOWERING
SELF-DEFENSE
AND FITNESS
SKILLS

DRESS
COMFORTABLY AND
PLEASE WEAR
SOCKS OR
PARTICIPATE
BAREFOOT

ALL GIRLS ATTENDING
WILL ALSO RECEIVE A
SET OF BACK TO
SCHOOL SUPPLIES

LOCATION:
Clube Martial Arts
3260 N Gardner St.
Los Angeles, CA
90040

Training

When Probation was beginning its efforts to address CSE in 2011, it determined that training should be the foundation for all other efforts to build on. Because by spreading awareness, agencies and individuals across the County could be empowered to inform what policy changes were made, and what protocols and practices were put into place, based on what they were seeing on the ground. Probation partnered with Nola Brantley, a nationally-recognized trainer on trauma and CSEC, to facilitate trainings not only for Probation, but also for agencies and individuals across the County, breaking down silos and spreading awareness that CSE is a countywide issue deserving of a countywide response. Probation also partnered with Falilah Bilal (National Black Women’s Justice Institute) and Leah Jonet Albright-Byrd (Activist, Author, and Artist) to facilitate additional trainings.



Nola Brantley

CEO, Nola Brantley Speaks

“When I first got into this work, we began with direct services to support youth who had experienced CSE. However, the issue we ran into immediately was that we could not do it alone -- if the community couldn’t identify these youth, then it wouldn’t be easy to respond to them. While as an organization we could provide support to a few of these youth, we needed to have the whole community, especially our systems and institutions, involved and working together cohesively. And that’s something that happened once we started to provide training.”

- Nola Brantley, *Nola Brantley Speaks*, on the importance of training around this issue


As a result, since 2011, one of the major LA County CSEC initiatives has been the implementation of a wide array of CSEC trainings that have been provided to Deputy Probation Officers, Children's Social Workers, various County Departments, foster care providers, law enforcement agencies, schools, advocates, community-based organizations and community residents. As of December 2019, 19 different types of trainings have been offered, 256 trainings have been completed, and over 26,000 people have been trained.

By training so many public employees and others who interact with youth experiencing CSE, LA County has fundamentally shifted its collective mindset and approach to this issue. CSEC trainings have been key in raising awareness that CSEC is a form of child abuse, that it is prevalent in our community, and that it must be eliminated. By providing widespread CSEC trainings, the County has made great progress in dismantling negative stereotypes about youth experiencing CSE, cultivating compassion for victims, and increasing services to help survivors heal from their trauma. As a result, staff working with at-risk youth and those who have been exploited are better equipped to identify youth who have experienced exploitation, intervene or prevent exploitation, and provide support services that are evidence-based, trauma-informed, and victim-centered.

"LA County's commitment to the ongoing education of its staff and community partners is vital and immensely impactful. As someone who has had the privilege of developing and facilitating training workshops to equip attendees to provide the highest level of care to CSEC, I am continually impressed by LA County's obvious devotion to supporting this vulnerable population. I have the advantage of a historical perspective of the evolution of services provided on a state and national level for victims of human trafficking and as someone with lived experience I remember the severe lack of support this population once had. LA County has developed systems of care for CSEC that have my utmost respect and are being modeled across the nation. The vast array of trainings offered are a significant part of the profound impact being made. LA County is a force and I'm honored to be included in such a powerful community-transforming endeavor!"

- Leah Jonet Albright-Byrd,
Activist, Author, and Artist





Initially, CSEC trainings were provided only to employees whose positions were directly relevant to CSEC, such as social workers, probation officers, public health, mental health and children’s attorneys. Soon, champions within these departments—many of whom were themselves powerfully transformed by CSEC trainings—worked to expand these trainings to reach others who work with youth at risk of CSE. On March 25, 2014, upon a motion by the Board of Supervisors, DCFS and Probation began the process of developing and implementing mandatory annual trainings on the subject of CSEC for all foster family agencies, group homes, and state-licensed foster parents. They engaged Nola Brantley to develop the training curriculum.

While agencies, group homes, and foster parents were already receiving annual training on other topics related to fostering youth, the issue of CSEC had never been one of them. The resulting 3-day trainings—“CSEC 101 and 102”—were designed to give professionals and parents the tools to identify youth who are or had been victims of CSE, recognize their common patterns of behavior, understand their unique needs, and how to address those behaviors and needs with trauma-informed care and other emergent best practices. As of June 2014, all foster family agencies, group homes, and state-licensed foster parents caring for children and youth in Los Angeles County are now required to receive this comprehensive training each year.

“

Children in foster care and group homes are specifically targeted by pimps and gang members because the circumstances that caused them to be removed from their homes (i.e., parental abuse and/or neglect) often makes them especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation. . . . Given that children touched by the foster care and juvenile justice systems are being sexually exploited, the adults responsible for their safety and welfare are in the best position to help prevent exploitation, or at a minimum, to notify DCFS and law enforcement of any concerns related to possible or actual sexual exploitation. Training these providers to identify signs of sexual exploitation will help them to partner with DCFS and law enforcement to save children before they are sexually exploited or help exploited children receive the necessary services to prevent further exploitation.

”

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS & DON KNABE

BOS Motion 3/25/14: Strengthening Safeguards for At-Risk Children in Foster Care and Group Homes to Prevent Sexual Exploitation by Human Traffickers

“

This training (The Healing Begins With You) was very different than any other training I've been to. The trainer did a great job at educating us on how we can be the best support we can be and reminding us that it's all about them – not about us.

”

FOSTER CARE PROVIDER



VIEW TRAINING
SUMMARY AT

<https://probation.lacounty.gov/child-trafficking-unit>

Online Training Module

In a further effort to identify youth who have experienced CSE in the County as early as possible, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion on November 14, 2017 to require that all LA County public employees—even those who are not employed by agencies that typically interact with youth—be trained with basic awareness and skills to identify and respond to youth who have experienced CSE, if needed. As of December 3, 2019, 68% of all current County employees—approximately 71,337 individuals—completed the CSEC Online Training Module, which was created by the CSEC Integrated Leadership Team in collaboration with Nola Brantley. Additionally, CSEC training was added as a required component of the County’s onboarding process for all new employees.

As a result, employees from many different public agencies have shifted their mindsets about CSE and trauma, recognizing that there is “No Such Thing as a Child Prostitute”, and have begun to identify and report youth being commercially sexually exploited in the County. For example, one Public Works employee, while fixing a broken streetlight near an area known for exploitation, noticed an underage girl loitering and called the Child Protection Hotline (CPH) to ensure that the youth could be connected to services, if necessary.



**VIEW COUNTY
ON-LINE TRAINING MODULE AT**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_szuZ1Z-UdQ&t=153s

AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

November 14, 2017

In order to protect youth from ongoing trauma and abuse and to improve the effectiveness of our intervention strategies, Los Angeles County (County) must develop processes to identify Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) as early as possible. Identification can occur in several different ways. For example, one youth may disclose to their probation officer or social worker with whom they have developed a relationship, while another may be identified by a health care provider when warning signs are revealed through a routine

“ **It is truly heart-breaking that we live in a day and age where these kind of actions goes on exploiting the innocence of youth. I will make it my duty to be ever vigilant, to look for the clues, and report my suspicion of human sex trafficking. Thank you for the course.**

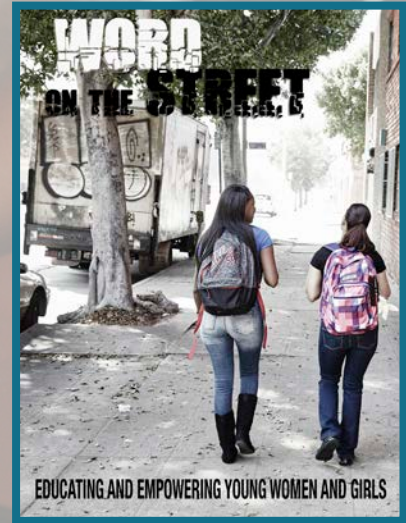
FIRE DEPARTMENT

“ **The training was wonderfully done and fascinating!!! It was engaging, and just very real... so it made me sad. But I’m totally glad I watched it, I learned a lot from it, and I think everyone should see it! Very nicely done!! Definitely one of the best trainings I’ve ever taken!!!!**

LA COUNTY OFFICE OF CHILD PROTECTION

Prevention Curriculum (“Word on the Street”)

In 2015, upon examining data from the preceding three years, staff of Probation’s CTU were alarmed by the sheer number of young women who had been arrested for prostitution-related offenses. Feeling as though providing intervention services to every youth under Probation jurisdiction experiencing CSE was like running a marathon in water--difficult and slow--the CTU decided to also dedicate resources towards prevention efforts, recognizing that large numbers of youth supervised by Probation were at risk of exploitation. In an attempt to prevent exploitation before it occurred, the CTU, in collaboration with several partners, designed a comprehensive CSEC prevention curriculum, “Word on the Street: Educating and Empowering Young Women and Girls” (WOTS). The curriculum was authored by Nicole Klasey, and additional contributors included: Probation, Nola Brantley Speaks, DCFS, Saving Innocence, Alliance for Children’s Rights, Crittenton Services for Children and Families, David and Margaret Youth and Family Services, Maryvale, and Jessica Midkiff.



Answer the questions below

Do you have access to the Internet? **Yes - No**
 Do you have a social media account? **Yes - No**
 Do you ever feel misunderstood by your caregiver(s)? **Yes - No**
 Have you ever run away from home or AWOL'd from placement? **Yes - No**
 Do you want to be in a romantic relationship? **Yes - No**
 Do you ever skip school? **Yes - No**
 Do you drink alcohol and/or do drugs? **Yes - No**
 Do you live in an unsafe neighborhood? **Yes - No**
 Do you sometimes not have enough money to get food or other basic resources? **Yes - No**
 Have you lived in multiple places? **Yes - No**
 Do you sometimes feel like your caregiver doesn't care about you? **Yes - No**
 Do you like fashion and want to buy the latest clothes? **Yes - No**
 Do you ever walk to school, store, mall, etc. all by yourself? **Yes - No**
 Do you want more independence? **Yes - No**
 Do you ever go to house parties? **Yes - No**
 Do you ever feel insecure? **Yes - No**
 Is there a history of domestic violence in your family? **Yes - No**
 Do you ever take risks? **Yes - No**
 Do you have a history of sexual abuse? **Yes - No**
 Do you have friends that ask you to go places with them? **Yes - No**

Page 3

Things That Make You Go Hmmm...

Read the statements below and check one of the colored boxes. Check the if the statement seems normal and doesn't raise any concerns. Check the if the statement feels off or you start to go hmmm... Check the if you hear a statement that causes you alarm and it doesn't feel right.

You just met a guy/girl and he/she says he/she likes you a lot. He/she takes you shopping and wants to be intimate right away. He/she wants to be your "man"/"woman" almost immediately.

A guy/girl invites you to go to the movies with him/her on Friday night.

A guy/girl says he/she loves you after dating you for two weeks.

A man/woman twice your age shows interest in you.

A guy/girl wants to spend too much time with you and gets mad at you when you want to go home.

A guy/girl pushes you and calls you a "bitch" because you guys were arguing.

A guy/girl says you can live with him/her, but you barely know him/her.

Page 5



Specifically aimed at girls ages 13 to 18, the purpose of the “Word on the Street” curriculum is to educate, equip, and empower youth, and provide them with tools and opportunities for discussion to prevent them from becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation. The curriculum provides an overview of CSEC, which includes definitions, examples of CSEC, the CSEC “business” model, and an overview of the objectification and sexualization of women and girls in society. The curriculum also discusses risk factors for involvement in CSEC, strategies to safely use the Internet and social media, and the differences between a healthy relationship and the relationship with an exploiter. Additionally, the curriculum discusses different types of exploiters and recruiters, their tactics, and modes of recruitment. In addition to providing information to the girls about these topics generally, each session also includes information about safety and community resources the youth can access, should they find themselves in an unsafe situation. When facilitated in detention facilities, the curriculum is often co-facilitated by survivor advocates.

Wanting to make the curriculum available to as many youth as possible, and mindful that youth in different settings have different capacities regarding the amount of time they’re able to invest in such a program, Probation and Nola Brantley designed four formats by which facilitators may present the curriculum:

- a six-week group series;
- a one-day conference presentation;
- a brief ninety-minute workshop; and
- a set of four interactive, engaging workbooks that a youth can review monthly with a dedicated professional in a one-on-one setting (such as a probation officer or social worker).



"I learned a lot from the workshop today especially about how music can be a big influence on us. On the way to the workshop we were all listening to the music we always listen to.. the beat, singing the lyrics and after the workshop on the way back to the group home we told the staff that maybe we should listen to something different. I'll be paying more attention to what I listen to - I just wished that the music I like didn't talk so negative about us."

- Youth

It has also been translated into Spanish. The flexible nature of the curriculum and its four formats means that the information can reach youth through any number of settings -- via the youths' community advocates, probation officers, and social workers; in classrooms, places of worship, shelters, juvenile halls, and group homes; and more. **To advance these efforts, Probation and Nola Brantley Speaks have trained over five hundred facilitators across Los Angeles County, the state of California, and the nation.** Thousands of young girls have now received this prevention curriculum in some form to date and are now armed to spot exploiter behaviors, think critically about their relationships, and get help if they should ever need it.

"I have friends at my school that I think are victims. When I watched the video at the end of the group today it made me sad and I didn't know that Jessica was a survivor of trafficking until I saw the video. I would like her to come to my school and talk to my class because my friends need to know what's really going on."

- Youth

“

The training on the Word on the Street CSEC prevention curriculum came at a critical time for Plymouth County, Massachusetts. We were facing a growing number of referrals for children at risk of being exploited and had very limited options for prevention. Now, thanks to WOTS groups being run throughout the county, we have great psychoeducational options for the children we serve.

The WOTS curriculum is very accessible to a variety of our multidisciplinary team members including clinicians, law enforcement, medical providers and more. I cannot wait to see how this incredibly valuable curriculum benefits the children of our county over the years to come as the Train the Trainer model allows for more and more professionals to be trained to run groups.

Michelle and her team developed a phenomenal curriculum and their willingness to share materials so freely after the training is greatly appreciated. We will forever be thankful for the WOTS curriculum in our county.

”

- Hillary M. Kozloski-Smith, Forensic Interviewer, Education & Outreach Coordinator, Plymouth County District Attorney's Office & Children's Advocacy Center

Intervention Curriculum (“Becoming Me”)

In addition to developing a prevention curriculum, Probation wanted to focus attention on creating an intervention curriculum to support youth who have already experienced commercial sexual exploitation. As a result, “Becoming Me” was developed.

“Becoming Me” is a survivor-influenced trauma-informed intervention curriculum for youth and young adults who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Designed for individual or group use with the oversight of a trained professional, each dimension of this six-volume curriculum provides interactive activities, videos, and psycho-education tools to support participants as they traverse the journey towards healing and establishing identity. Each section of “Becoming Me” has a strengths-based focus and highlights a specific healing quest that corresponds with the objective of each section.



Volume One prompts youth to develop self-awareness through the exploration of their unique strengths, needs, and values, while helping them examine vulnerability and the events that preceded their victimization. It lays a foundation that will be built upon in the following sections.

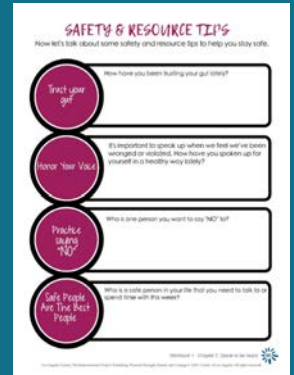
Volume Two prompts self-compassion as participants examine who they have become as a result of their victimization. The ultimate objective of this section is to help them understand the influences of culture, the continuum of abuse, manipulation and the process of exploitation traffickers employ, as well as the psychological impact.

Volume Three inspires participants to examine the process of change, to understand what they will face as they start to change, to be aware of the obstacles associated with change and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Volume Four seeks to help participants embrace a new beginning by helping them to understand the role of trust, boundaries, and handling triggers. This section also includes a discussion about healthy relationships and healthy communication.

Volume Five expounds on the previous section by engaging youth in a discussion about living loved, strategies for coping with trauma, developing new routines, and identifying healthy role models.

Lastly, Volume Six goes beyond healing to explore the role of economic empowerment, discovering purpose, and fosters hope and expectation for a future without exploitation.



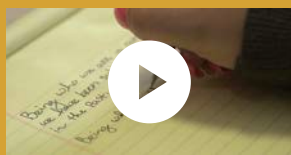
Each section of the curriculum can be used independently and/or selected to correspond with the stage of change that most accurately reflects where the youth/young adult currently is in their healing process. Facilitator trainings will be provided and should be attended prior to utilizing the curriculum.



Leah Jonet Albright-Byrd

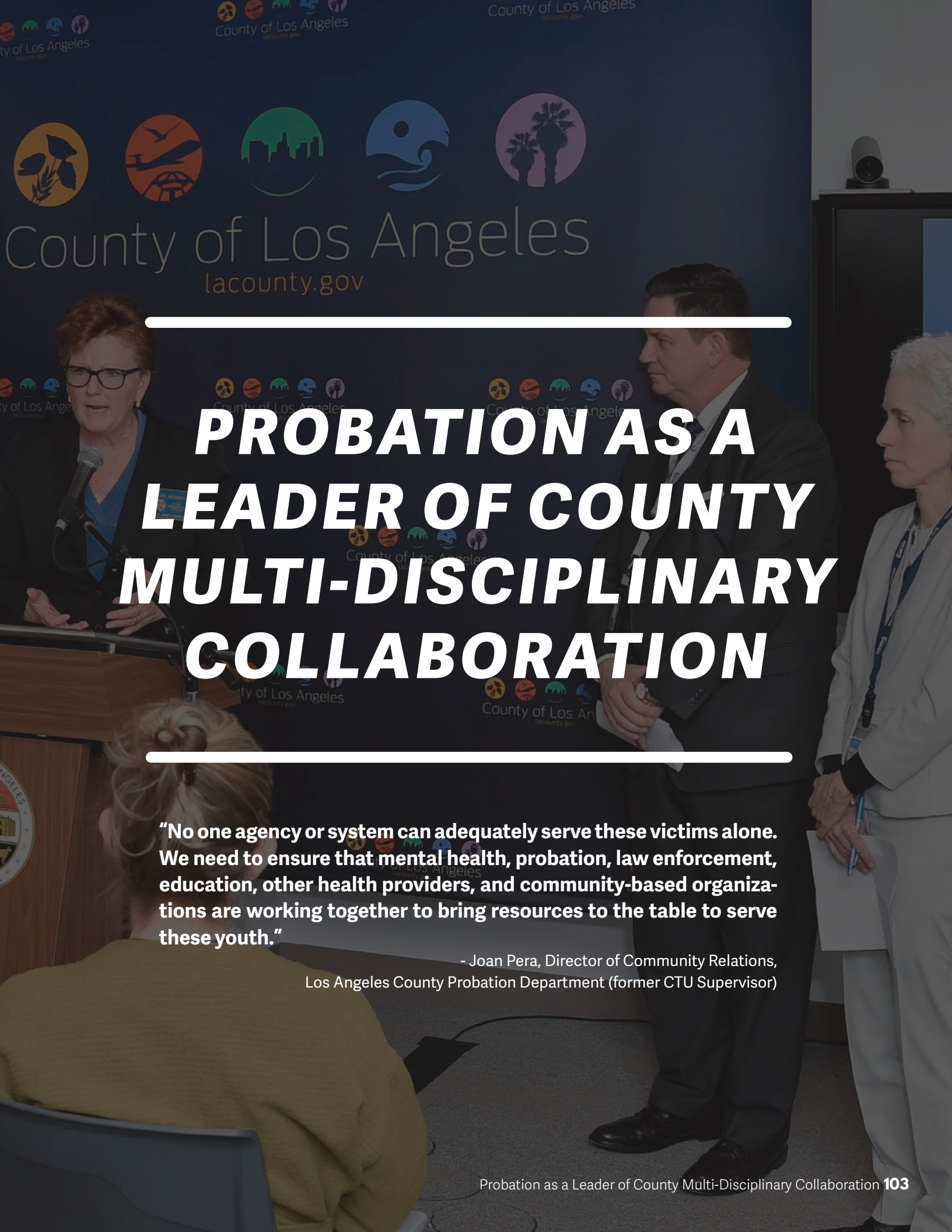
Activist, Author, and Artist

“Becoming Me” is a power packed intervention curriculum that will provide significant needed support to CSEC (ages 13-21) in LA County who are at various stages of healing and change. This curriculum is designed to be utilized one-on-one or in a group setting and facilitated by a trained professional. It is a survivor-influenced curriculum and those of us who have contributed both our expertise and experience see this as an incredible legacy project and opportunity for future participants to have access to the years of wisdom and life experience we have gained on our individual healing journeys. Through ‘Becoming Me’ participants will be empowered and equipped with insight and tools for healing through survivor video segments, psycho-education, and various activities designed to enhance their healing journey and cultivate a greater level of resilience.”



WATCH VIDEO ON SURVIVOR EMPOWERMENT, FEATURED IN “BECOMING ME”

<https://probation.lacounty.gov/child-trafficking-unit>



PROBATION AS A LEADER OF COUNTY MULTI-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

“No one agency or system can adequately serve these victims alone. We need to ensure that mental health, probation, law enforcement, education, other health providers, and community-based organizations are working together to bring resources to the table to serve these youth.”

**- Joan Pera, Director of Community Relations,
Los Angeles County Probation Department (former CTU Supervisor)**

County Partnership

Since Probation began this work, collaboration with County agencies has been essential. Probation continues to work closely with the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Mental Health, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), Los Angeles County Office of Education, Department of Health Services (DHS), Department of Public Health, Children's Attorneys, District Attorney, Law Enforcement, and many more in their efforts to better identify and serve youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. From responding to middle-of-the-night crisis calls, to participating in weekly multidisciplinary meetings, to developing and implementing new countywide collaborative protocols, Probation has only been able to move this work forward because of the willingness and eagerness from individuals across these agencies.



CHAMPION



Adela Estrada

***CSA III, CSEC Program Administrator,
Los Angeles County Department of
Children and Family Services***

"Responding to the needs of youth impacted by commercial sexual exploitation truly requires teaming and collaboration across disciplines. I have been grateful to have the Probation Department as a committed, passionate partner that powers through our journey with purpose, perseverance and strength so that, ultimately, our youth are empowered to live their best lives."



“

LA County has been on the forefront of recognizing trafficked youth as victims. From the Board of Supervisors, to the Courts, to Law Enforcement, DCFS, Probation, and other county agencies and NGO's, LA County has made systemic changes that have resulted in a timely, collaborative, strength based, trauma informed approach to working with these youth with the goal of healing their trauma and providing them with tools and opportunities that allow them to lead healthy productive lives.

”

MARIA GRIGLIO

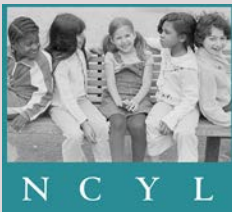
Los Angeles County Counsel

National Center for Youth Law

Early on in Probation's work to better understand and address the commercial sexual exploitation of youth, Probation connected with Kate Walker Brown, an attorney at National Center for Youth Law (NCYL). Brown had recently released a [report](#) on the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth across the state, which highlighted the need for multi-system collaboration. Probation recognized that they couldn't face this issue alone, and that collaboration with other County agencies and community-based organizations would be key to making an impact for youth, so they brought in NCYL to help in those efforts.

NCYL, as an outside partner with expertise in the issue of CSEC and systems-change work more broadly, worked closely with Probation to bring together diverse partners from across the County to brainstorm how to work together -- in one of the largest counties in the country -- to better support youth who were experiencing commercial sexual exploitation. NCYL has played a unique role in the County, helping to conceptualize innovative practices that build off of the most promising practices in the state and the country, and then assisting in bringing those ideas to life. This process is often messy and complicated, and involves:

- Sitting down with agencies to better understand their individual needs, mandates, and existing roles;
- Working together with individuals across agencies to develop one shared approach that fulfills a collective goal of supporting youth;
- Developing creative solutions to a diverse set of problems facing youth;
- Listening to survivors to hear what their experiences have been and ensuring that their voices are reflected in new policies and practices;
- Synthesizing information and creating tangible, written protocols and policies to reflect multi-disciplinary agreements and spelling out roles and responsibilities; and
- Supporting implementation of new policies, including creation of training materials and roll-out strategies.



National Center for Youth Law is a social justice organization that has worked for over four decades to improve the lives of disadvantaged children and youth. NCYL's Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative (CRCSE) works to bring together public agencies and community partners to change perceptions, build trust, develop and implement policy, and transform systems and community responses to commercial sexual exploitation of children.

“ I am so thankful to NCYL for their expertise, passion and continued guidance as we improve services for youth in our care who have experienced CSE. Our partners at NCYL have pushed the County to break down silos and to think expansively about the universe of support we can provide kids, working with us side-by-side as we build and implement new innovative approaches for identifying and supporting youth.

”
- Michelle Guymon, Director,
Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles County
Probation Department



Kate Walker Brown, Allison Newcombe, Mae Ackerman-Brimberg, attorneys at the National Center for Youth Law, with Michelle Guymon, Director of the CTU, and retired Chief Probation Officer Terri L. McDonald at the launch of the Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for CSE Children and Youth.

Over the past nearly decade, the partnership between Probation and NCYL has evolved into a truly symbiotic relationship, allowing for collective learning, problem-solving and innovation. NCYL has played a key role on several Probation-led initiatives in the County, including:

- Authoring the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC;
- Assisting in the launch of the No Such Thing campaign;
- Authoring the Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for CSE Children and Youth;
- Leading cutting-edge research to answer the question of what housing and services can best support youth who have experienced CSE; and
- Providing ongoing support to CTU leadership to expand and refine the CTU’s and the County’s service provision model.

“
Los Angeles County Probation has been a tremendous partner over the years. I previously worked in direct service, alongside many of the CTU DPOs. From Probation leadership to the champions on the ground, I have seen such a deep commitment to young people and a willingness to think creatively about how to best support them. Probation leadership also recognizes the importance of listening to the people on the ground to ensure that policy translates into good practice. Our team is eager to advance this work together as thought partners and to continue to build innovative policies and protocols that improve the experiences of young people.

”
- Allison Newcombe, Associate Director, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, NCYL

NCYL's research and knowledge of this work at the state and national level has helped to inform the work on the ground in Los Angeles. Additionally, as the work in Los Angeles has forged ahead, NCYL has shared the County's innovative approaches with other communities across the state and through national coalitions and conferences, in an effort to push the field forward.

NCYL's Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative team includes: Kate Walker Brown, Allison Newcombe, Mae Ackerman-Brimberg, Maria Contreras, and Erin French.

“

Our nearly decade-long partnership with Los Angeles County Probation has been exciting and dynamic, encouraging us to challenge our thinking about how we can best support and serve children, not just in Los Angeles County but across the state and nation. We are grateful for the forward-thinking champions within Probation who have continually prioritized the leadership, feedback and insight of survivors. We are incredibly proud of the collective impact we have made and the lasting partnerships and friendships forged.

”

- Kate Walker Brown, Director,
Collaborative Responses to Commercial
Sexual Exploitation Initiative, NCYL

CHAMPION

Remembering Fiza Quraishi

Fiza was a fearless child advocate, brilliant and creative lawyer, and a true believer in the power of collaboration - that by working together and breaking down silos, we can do better for and with the families and youth we serve. She could walk into a tense room full of diverse partners and have everyone laughing within five minutes, and diving into the work within ten.

Fiza was there from the start of NCYL's work in Los Angeles. She played an instrumental role in the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol and the Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol. Fiza is missed immensely. This work is dedicated to her and the many youth whose lives she impacted and will continue to impact through the legacy of her work.

Probation as a Leader of Countywide Initiatives

Probation has been a leader in a number of countywide, collaborative CSEC initiatives. This includes taking on leadership roles in CSEC-related task forces; helping to develop and implement the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC; convening CSEC Foster Care Provider Roundtable workgroups; and exploring housing options for youth who have experienced CSE. This also includes assisting in the development of the Safe Youth Zone Program; creating a CSEC Child Abuse Poster; and developing the Victim Witness Testimony Protocol. Through its leadership and collaboration with agencies across the County, Probation has helped ensure the right policies and practices are in place to best serve youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.

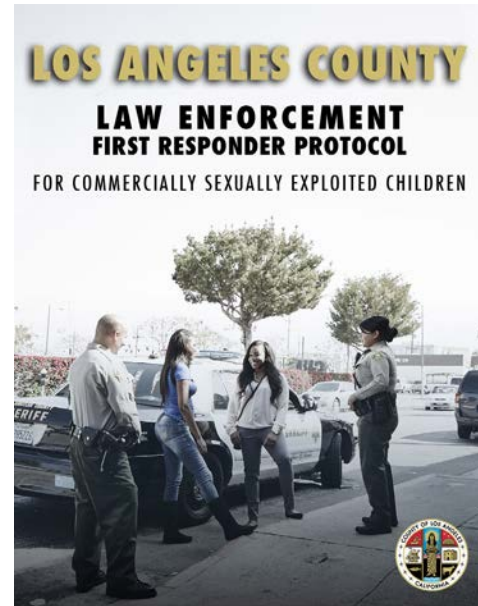
Task Forces

Probation has consistently taken on leadership roles in CSEC-related task forces formed in LA County over the last several years. The first CSEC Task Force in LA County, created on November 27, 2012 by the Board of Supervisors, was co-chaired by Probation and DCFS. The purpose of the CSEC Task Force was to examine the needs of youth who have experienced CSE and to make recommendations for how the County could better serve these youth and, ultimately, eliminate CSEC in Los Angeles. On June 30, 2015, the Board of Supervisors voted to create the CSEC Integrated Leadership Team, led by Probation, DCFS, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) along with members from DMH, the Departments of Public Social Services (DPSS), Public Health, and Health Services, the District Attorney, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, and panel attorneys. The ILT's responsibilities include: establishing and maintaining a CSEC research database; creating a website with CSEC resources for County agencies, service providers, and the public; identifying funding opportunities and overseeing resource allocation; partnering with community-based organizations and other taskforces; and more. The ILT is still the main body overseeing the County's initiatives regarding CSEC today, meeting on a monthly basis and updating the Board of Supervisors and their children's deputies regularly on the progress of the County's efforts to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Los Angeles.



Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol

In 2013, the Board of Supervisors charged the CSEC Task Force, led by Probation and DCFS, with developing a multi-agency response to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth that avoided arresting and detaining victims in juvenile halls. This led to the development and implementation of the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC, the first of its kind, in collaboration with the National Center for Youth Law. The goal of the Protocol is to ensure that when an exploited or at-risk youth is identified, rather than arresting them, law enforcement and County agencies provide a quick, coordinated, service-based response. The Protocol outlines the roles and responsibilities of the partner agencies, focusing on both meeting the immediate, short-term needs of the youth, and supporting them to achieve long-term safety and stability through youth-centered, strengths-based, and trauma-informed services provided by a team of professionals connected to the youth.



VIEW
FIRST RESPONDER
PROTOCOL AT

<https://probation.lacounty.gov/child-trafficking-unit>



“

The First Responder Protocol has served as the foundation for our evolving policies and practices when dealing with commercially sexually exploited youth. It established a starting point for our ongoing collaboration with DCFS, the Probation Department and a team of dedicated service providers. Together, we share the priority of identifying and caring for CSEC youth, while holding their exploiters accountable, and the FRP is the product of our combined effort.

”

HUMAN TRAFFICKING BUREAU

LA Regional Human Trafficking Task Force
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

In 2014, the First Responder Protocol was implemented in a pilot area, consisting of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Compton and Century Stations, and the Long Beach Police Department. In late 2015, implementation of the Protocol was expanded to the Los Angeles Police Department's 77th and Southeast Divisions. To facilitate continuous problem solving, oversight, and improvement after implementation of the

Protocol, the County agencies, the providers implementing the Protocol, and the National Center for Youth Law, formed the Multi-Agency Review Committee (MARC). The MARC meets once a month to analyze data, discuss challenges and ongoing needs, amend the Protocol as necessary, assess the sufficiency of resources, and report to the Board of Supervisors about the progress of Protocol and its implementation.



CHAMPION



Kate Walker Brown

Director, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, NCYL

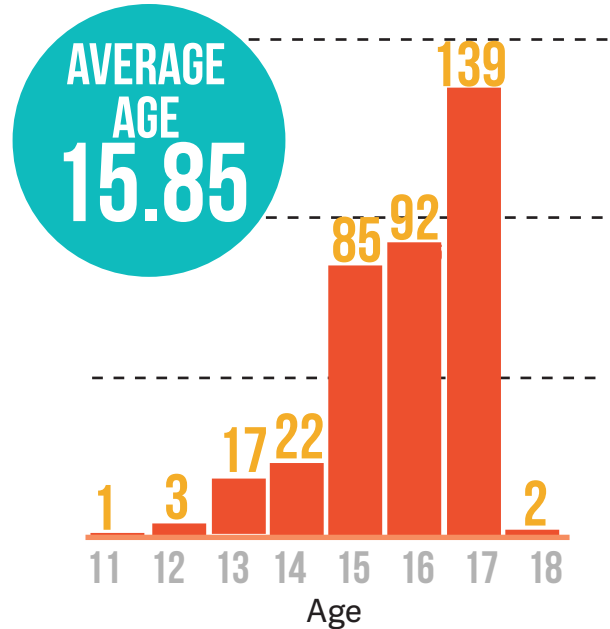
Kate was one of the initial champions that came together to conceptualize the FRP. She, along with her late colleague Fiza Quraishi, worked closely with County partners and advocates to understand existing roles, think through what changes could be made, and eventually to write the formal Protocol, clearly delineating roles and responsibilities. Kate has supported implementation of the protocol since the initial launch in 2014 and continues to participate in the monthly MARC meetings, helping to ensure that the Protocol achieves its desired goals.



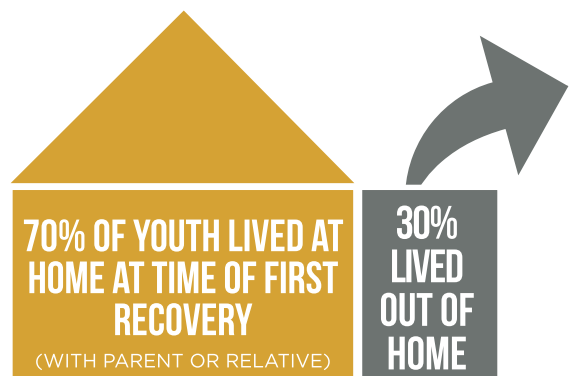
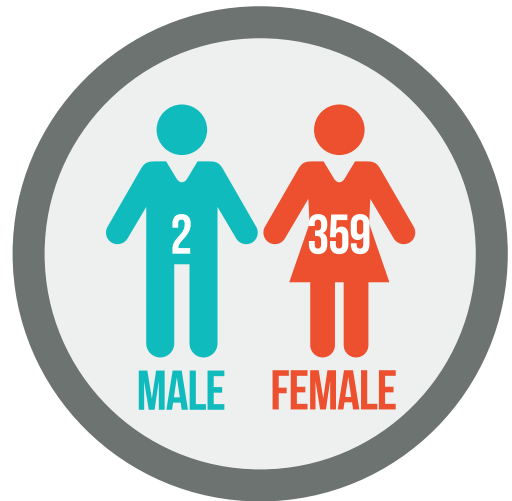
VIEW WHAT WE'VE LEARNED: A FOUR YEAR LOOK AT

<https://probation.lacounty.gov/child-trafficking-unit>

AGE AT FIRST RECOVERY



AN ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD CHILD WAS RECOVERED

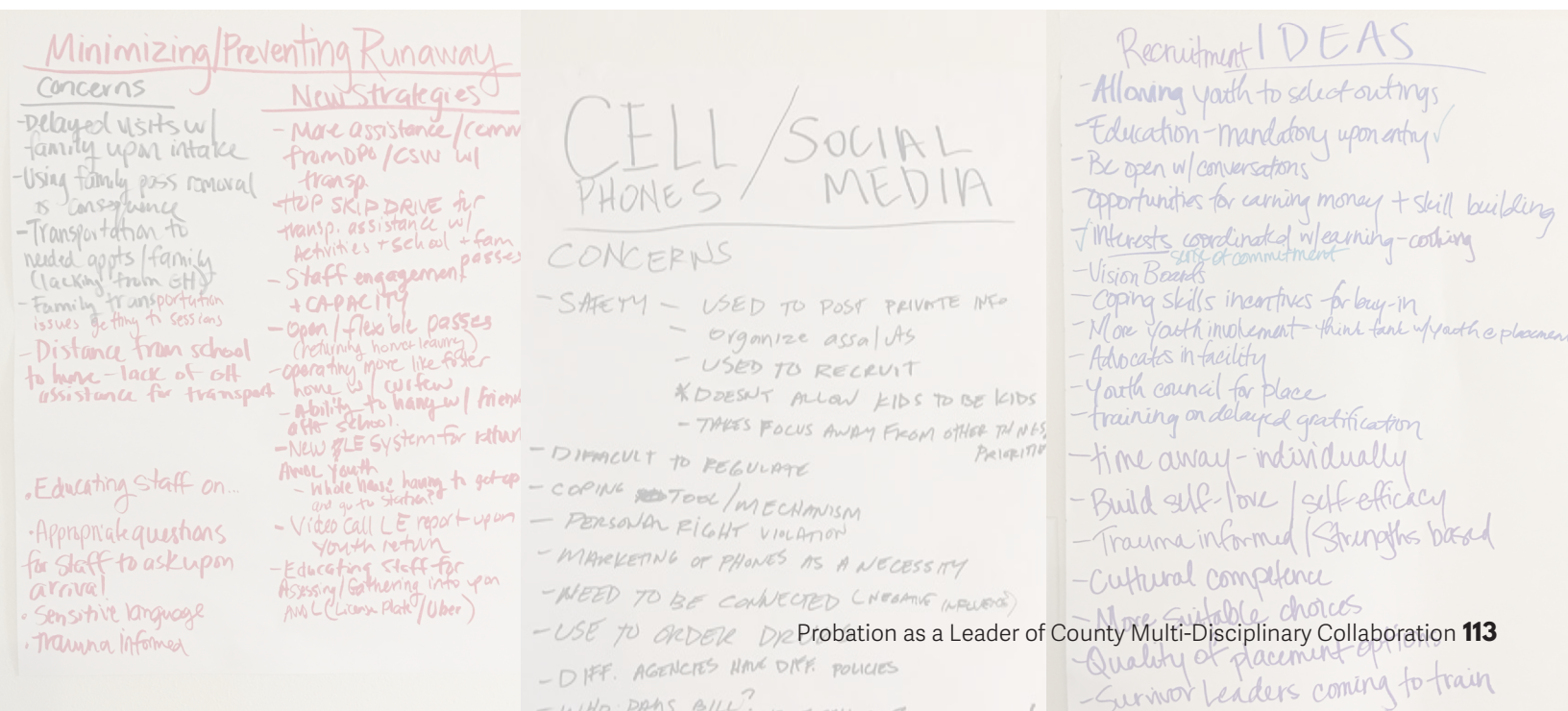


Provider Roundtable

Because many youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation have histories of child welfare and probation involvement, and many will receive services and be placed in out of home care, Los Angeles County has devoted significant resources to educating and supporting out of home care providers. Resources and training for providers has been focused on identification, engagement strategies, how to prevent exploitation and, for those working with youth who have been exploited, how to minimize the risk of revictimization. In 2015, to further the County's efforts to support foster care providers, the County began convening a CSEC Foster Care Provider Roundtable workgroup. These convenings are designed to foster communication and collaboration among foster care providers, community care licensing, and County representatives, including the Probation Department, DCFS, and Community Care Licensing (CCL). The goal is to build capacity for foster care providers to better serve this population, including improving acceptance and retention rates, as well as general engagement and support of youth in their programs who have experienced CSE.

The CSEC Provider Roundtable participants have discussed a range of topics relevant to the provision of placements and services to youth who have experienced or are experiencing CSE in the County. In addition, the Provider Roundtable has served as a forum for participants to share information concerning staff support, safety planning, and professional development that providers need to effectively serve youth who have experienced CSE.

Since establishing the Provider Roundtable, the group of participating providers has grown from four in 2015 to over forty providers in 2018-19. While the group went on hiatus in 2017, it reconvened in January 2018 and has since been meeting on a monthly basis. Moving forward, the CSEC Provider Roundtable will continue to convene quarterly, depending on need and interest of the participants. As the County continues to develop its capacity to provide services and out of home placements to youth who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing CSE, the CSEC Provider Roundtable will serve as an important space for support, collective problem solving, and collaboration.



Housing

The availability of safe, stable housing is of critical importance for both preventing the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth, and supporting this population to live full lives outside of exploitation. Unsurprisingly, without stable housing, already vulnerable youth are more susceptible to exploitation by a trafficker who is coercing or forcing them to sell sex, or more likely to be in a position where they have to trade sex to meet their basic needs. However, there is no consensus among experts, practitioners, or survivors that a single solution can address the complex and unique housing needs of youth who have experienced CSE.

On May 12, 2015, the Board of Supervisors directed Probation, DCFS, DHS, DMH, DPSS, the Public Defender and the Alternate Public Defender to report back on the feasibility of developing placement options for children and youth who have experienced exploitation. In 2016, in response to the Board's directive, Probation conducted an initial review of placement options, which included focus groups with 40 youth being served through Probation regarding their placement preferences, including size and location of the placement. While these focus groups represented a starting point for evaluating placement options for children and youth who have experienced CSE, there was not yet a comprehensive evaluation of placement options and services for this population in LA County.

“
It was very exciting to conduct this study: not only does it have the potential to impact youth in Los Angeles in terms of identifying safe and stable housing and expanding services, the robust data and the mixed method approach, which truly elevated the youth voice, means the work also has implications for better serving youth across the nation who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.
”

CARLY D. DIERKHISING

PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Criminal Justice and Criminalistics, California State University, Los Angeles



**VIEW HOUSING
REPORT AT**

<https://probation.lacounty.gov/child-trafficking-unit>

CHAMPION



Mae Ackerman-Brimberg

Attorney, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, National Center for Youth Law

"We were so proud to partner in this research to help build the knowledge base about what works for kids who have experienced CSE. As we're getting better about identifying CSE, there's a desire to be able to provide the best services, supports, and housing options to the youth we identify. Our research showed that the County's specialized services are working - youth feel more supported and cared for when they have coordinated teams of trusted, well-trained adults around them. It also highlighted areas of opportunity where the County can continue to innovate. We're excited to keep working with LA to develop an array of housing options and services that meet the diverse needs of CSE youth."

Then, in 2018, the County, in collaboration with California State University of Los Angeles and the National Center for Youth Law, released a groundbreaking report detailing the results of a first-of-its-kind study exploring the impact of specialized services and placement type on young people who have been CSE in Los Angeles County. The study examined administrative data from Probation and DCFS, along with insights from youth in their own words through surveys and interviews. Among many findings, the study highlighted the profiles of youth most vulnerable to exploitation and the extent of trauma experienced by many youth both before and as a result of exploitation; the impact of different placement types and specialized services on placement stability; youth's overwhelmingly positive responses to the innovative specialized services that Los Angeles County spearheaded; the critical importance of fostering and maintaining healthy, consistent relationships with nonjudgmental staff, peers and families; and the impact of creating spaces for youth to share their perspectives and experiences.

The recommendations of the research report served as the basis for an interdisciplinary gathering, the Research to Action Summit, in November 2019, and will inform an Action Plan to support the County in addressing the housing needs of CSE youth.



Safe Youth Zone

For commercially sexually exploited youth who attempt to seek help or leave their exploitative situation, it can be difficult to identify an appropriate safe place to go and challenging to communicate their experience and needs. These barriers only further compound the control a trafficker holds over a youth, and can result in more harm to the youth if they unsuccessfully try to escape or seek help. On May 10, 2016 former Supervisor Don Knabe of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors introduced a motion to rebrand and expand the existing Safe House Program to meet the needs of these children and youth. As a result of this motion, on November 2, 2016 Los Angeles County launched the Safe Youth Zone Program to a pilot zone. Full county-wide implementation of the program is expected by Summer 2020.

RESOURCE TIPS
Know your options.
CONTACT YOUR SAFE PEOPLE.
GET TO A SAFE PLACE.
Call 211.

Once fully implemented, the Safe Youth Zone Program will create a county-wide network of safe spaces for victims of child sex trafficking to seek refuge -- including law enforcement agencies, fire stations, hospitals, and more. Instead of waiting to be identified by law enforcement or having to navigate the streets of Los Angeles to find a place to hide, the Safe Youth Zone will allow youth the opportunity to proactively seek out a safe place to go and be connected with services. Once a youth seeks help at a designated Safe Youth Zone, agency personnel will assess for immediate needs (including medical care or other basic needs). For youth who are suspected victims of CSE, the First Responder Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children will be initiated. The FRP involves a collaborative, 90 minute response by DCFS and/or Probation and a specialized CSEC advocate. Youth will remain in the Safe Youth Zone until the FRP responders arrive.



Don Knabe @DonKnabe · Nov 2

ADVISORY: @CountyofLA program will create network of safe places for sex trafficking victims to seek help, services bit.ly/SYZLACounty

👤 LACounty Fire PIO, LACoFD, LASD Compton Station and 4 others



A SAFE PLACE FOR HELP
DIAL 211



Victim Witness Testimony Protocol

Youth who have been commercially sexually exploited are frequently called upon to testify as witnesses in court to aid in the criminal prosecution of their exploiters. The experience of appearing and testifying in court can be stress-inducing and traumatizing for many witnesses; it is made even more so when the witness is a child victim testifying against their exploiter. These risks, however, are avoidable. Providing sufficient support to victims and their families before, during and after their testimony can help support their safety and wellbeing -- both in the short and long terms. Ultimately, that support will also further the goal of eliciting useful information to assist in the criminal prosecution of exploiters and prevent future exploitation of other children and youth.

Aiming to decrease the risk of re-traumatization and harm to youth asked to testify in criminal proceedings against their exploiters, and support the goal of zealous prosecution of exploiters, on October 20, 2015, the Board of Supervisors created a multi-agency workgroup, led by Probation, to develop the Victim Witness Testimony Protocol. Scheduled for launch by summer of 2020, the Protocol defines the roles and responsibilities of all agencies and community partners that will interact with a youth before, during, and after their testimony against their exploiter, including DCFS, Probation, DMH, the District Attorney's Office, law enforcement, the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender, Children's Law Center, and specialized advocacy agencies. Each testifying youth will have an individualized Victim Witness Support Team led by a member of Probation or DCFS, depending on whether the youth is under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice or child welfare systems, to guide the youth and their caregivers throughout the entire process, from case filing through the day of testimony and beyond.

A portrait of Jane Creighton, a Black woman with short dark hair, wearing a black turtleneck and a dark jacket. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a solid blue color. The word "CHAMPION" is written in large, white, outlined capital letters across the top of the image.

CHAMPION

Jane Creighton

***Special Assistant Special Operations
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office***

"District Attorney Jackie Lacey knew that this was a real issue that needed to be addressed and she felt the best way to address this issue is to have specially trained prosecutors who can give it their full attention. And she put it under the sex crimes division because she understood that these crimes are rooted in people not realizing, not thinking, not caring, just one of their own needs filled. It has a sexual component, it has domestic violence component. So she knew it mattered. And for DA Lacey, the best way to do it is to have these cases vertically prosecuted and have some of the best of the best lawyers dealing with this issue. And she selected the lawyers carefully because she also needed them to have empathy for these victims and be able to communicate with them and treat them like human beings. She needed some people with passion to address this issue."

"My advocate is great - she's helped me in court, she lifted me up when I wasn't feeling the best, she is very great and I appreciate her! She comes and sees me every week and checks up on me and always available to call when I need someone to talk to."

- Youth



Dear Michelle and Judge Pratt,

I wanted to let you know about court yesterday. It was tough, but I have never been prouder to be part of a team.

Assisting my client yesterday in adult was a reminder of why our work is necessary and essential. My client suffered a panic attack on the witness stand and was unable to complete her testimony. We must return a third day for her to recount the facts of what she describes as torture that started two years ago, at age fourteen.

Yesterday, Transportation DPO Smith was great! She has established a strong rapport with [my client] and was instrumental in calming and comforting her. It wasn't just Smith. DPO Dawson suspected that yesterday would be a stressful day and asked CTU team for support. It was a thing of beauty.

[My client] was escorted from the rear, the judges' hallway, by two transportation officers and the baliff. Violet entered the courtroom flanked by Shantel, Terrika, Kamillah, Gina, Haley from Saving Innocence, the DA Victim Advocate, and me. The defendant's family that had been intimidating [my client] from the back of the courtroom were now outnumbered.

Yesterday was hard, but it was also very special. The entire courtroom staff was impressed and moved by the dedication of the team. As you go about your day, remember that the work of the team matters and is having an impact.

- Lori

CHAMPION



Jenny Cheung Marino

Firm Director, Children's Law Center

"A child victim's testimony could be crucial to the successful prosecution and conviction of her trafficker. What is of equal if not more importance, is that the process in which the child victim is subpoenaed to testify, the preparation for trial and de-brief after their testimony is trauma-informed and victim centered. The Victim Witness Testimony Protocol allows all agencies involved to work together to help support youth through a stressful and re-traumatizing process and help minimize the risks to their safety and well-being."

CSEC Child Abuse Poster

As with other forms of maltreatment defined in the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, mandated reporters are required to report any knowledge or reasonable suspicion of commercial sexual exploitation of children to the child protection agency (P.C. 11165.1(d)). Recognizing signs of possible abuse and reporting concerns gives DCFS the opportunity to offer services specialized to the needs of youth and families who have been impacted by CSE.

In 2019, Probation, with support from DCFS, DMH, DPH, and DHS, created a CSEC Child Abuse Poster in an effort to further educate and train County employees, foster care providers, and other contracted agencies. This poster highlights CSE as an issue of child abuse, and gives direction to contact 911 or the Child Abuse hotline if mandated reporters reasonably suspect a youth has experienced CSE. The CSEC Child Abuse poster has been finalized and is currently being implemented in all County agencies, foster care providers, and other contracted agencies who are mandated reporters.

The poster features a group of diverse young people standing in front of a brick wall. The wall is covered in graffiti that reads "PHYSICAL", "NEGLECT", "SEXUAL", and "EXPLOITATION". The text "OUR CHILDREN ARE NOT FOR SALE" is prominently displayed at the top in large, bold, yellow letters. Below this, a white box contains the text: "Buying or selling a child for sex is CHILD ABUSE. Turning a blind eye to this abuse is NEGLECT. If you suspect a child is being victimized, call 911 or the Los Angeles County CHILD PROTECTION HOTLINE 1-800-540-4000". At the bottom, the text "BE THE VOICE. REPORT ABUSE." is written in large, bold, yellow letters. A small logo is visible at the bottom center, and a URL is provided at the bottom right: "For more information on this issue please visit: https://www.lacounty.gov/human-trafficking".

OUR CHILDREN ARE NOT FOR SALE

Buying or selling a child for sex is **CHILD ABUSE**.
Turning a blind eye to this abuse is **NEGLECT**.

If you suspect a child is being victimized, call **911**
or the Los Angeles County **CHILD PROTECTION HOTLINE**
1-800-540-4000

BE THE VOICE. REPORT ABUSE.

For more information on this issue please visit:
<https://www.lacounty.gov/human-trafficking>

Funding

Probation recognizes that none of this work would be possible without the support of Probation's contracting and fiscal operations, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to create and monitor contracts with Probation's several partners across the County. These contracts ensure that training, advocacy, curriculum development, protocol development, technical assistance and much more can successfully materialize. As a result of the hard work and support of Probation's contracting and fiscal operations, along with the County Chief Executive Office (CEO), Probation has been able to fund numerous efforts in the County aimed at better identifying and serving youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.

Activities Funded:

- Prevention/Intervention Workshops
- Survivor Advocacy
- Community Advocacy
- Leadership Development/SLAY
- Training
- Parent Prevention/Intervention Workshops
- Consulting/Protocol Development
- First Responder Protocol
- Prevention/Intervention Curriculum Development



CHAMPIONS



LESSONS LEARNED

“What are the foundational elements to creating a successful response? Patience. This work will require a lot of patience because of all of the trauma the youth have experienced. What’s important to remember is that we plant seeds. We show up everyday and do our best to lift our youth up. Work together collaboratively with other agencies in helping these kids. Education and awareness on the issue is critical in building an informed community of care. Educate yourself and those around you. It’s also critical to listen to what the youth are saying – and to ensure that they have a voice and that their voice matters.”

- Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen, Senior Probation Director,
Los Angeles County Probation Department

Since Probation started this work, there has been a continuous need to respond to new issues as they arose, adapting policies and improving practices to address them. Through nearly a decade of experience, Probation has learned many lessons that may be useful for other jurisdictions engaging in this work.

1

Partnerships and Collaboration are Key

Of the many lessons that Probation has learned since they began their efforts to address CSE in 2011, one of the most important is that **no individual, no unit, no agency, can do this work alone.** Collaboration among diverse partners -- partners who may not traditionally work together -- has been necessary to support the multi-faceted needs of youth who have experienced CSE. Every agency and organization, and every individual within each, can contribute something unique to these efforts. And it takes everyone to provide the best care possible to these youth. Thanks to champions across the County who have stepped up and come together, better identifying and supporting youth who have experienced CSE has been possible. With this in mind, Probation continues to work closely with their many partners across the County to address this issue and serve youth holistically.

“Collaboration is everything. It’s important to really look not only at these kids with a strength-based approach, but to look at your colleagues in other agencies that you’re not as familiar with, or not as comfortable working with, with that same strength-based perspective. It’s important to recognize that we are all human beings who have come into this work because we care, to recognize that we all are bringing a different angle to really help solve all of the pieces that are difficult in that child’s life.”

- Kim Biddle,
Founder and Chief Executive Officer,
Saving Innocence

“

It takes a community. It doesn’t just take one individual, or one individual organization or agency, to help someone in the recovery phase. Like they say, it takes a village -- and I’m a true believer in that.

”

- Tika, Crisis Response Case
Manager & Survivor Advocate,
Journey Out

2

Start with Training - and Train Everyone

Probation has also learned that when addressing CSE, start with training - and train widely throughout the County. Efforts in Los Angeles County have been successful in large part due to training first, and then developing policies and practices second. Training helps spread awareness, and increase understanding of the issue, empowering agencies and individuals across the County to take action in whatever capacity they can -- whether law enforcement, medical providers, teachers, or hotel staff. Then, these individuals can inform the development of policy, by providing input as to what they are seeing in their day-to-day work.

“

Start with training -- and involve all agencies. Once people know enough, work on policy development. And then consider who you can partner with to work collaboratively across the county.

”

- Nola Brantley,
Nola Brantley Speaks

“

Everyone needs to be trained – from front desk staff to kitchen staff – because every individual at the facility has some interaction with youth. Training helps inform how staff treat youth during their interactions, no matter how big or small those interactions may be.

”

- Sadiyyah Abdul, Supervisor, Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles County Probation Department (former Supervising Deputy Probation Officer, Dorothy Kirby Center)

3

Focus on Building Strong Relationships with Youth

When it comes to supporting youth who are at risk or have experienced CSE, relationships are paramount. Having someone they can count on, someone who will listen and be empathetic, makes a tremendous difference in a youth's ability to heal and thrive. Throughout this work, Probation has met countless youth and adult survivors who can vividly recall the kindness or compassion of one individual, and many who have even attributed their ability to get out of "the life" to this person - whether a DPO, Social Worker, advocate, nurse, therapist, teacher, attorney, or anyone else. For many exploited youth, exploitation fills a gap or a need that family, community, and system providers have not met. To provide an alternative to these unhealthy relationships, it is important for individuals to foster healthy, consistent, non-judgmental relationships with youth. There is an opportunity for all individuals to make a difference in the lives of youth who have experienced CSE simply by being there.

“

I try to find out who the person is - not just what their issues are...Being more personal is a game changer.

”

- Tika, Crisis Response Case Manager & Survivor Advocate, Journey Out

“

Your team is everything. It wasn't a placement that saved my life; it wasn't a curriculum that saved my life. It was the people that saved my life.

”

- Oree Freeman, Survivor Advocate, Saving Innocence

“

Be a person first, and a professional second.

”

- Michelle Guymon, Director, Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles County Probation Department

4

Center Survivor Voice

Perhaps the most crucial lesson that Probation has learned is the value and importance of centering, and amplifying, survivors in this work. **There is simply no substitute for lived experience** - survivors are the experts and have unparalleled insights into how communities can best respond to this issue and support youth. As such, the state, counties, organizations, and individuals should maximize their efforts to support and center survivors' voices when doing this work. This means going beyond one-off speaking engagements or focus groups and creating true, permanent positions within agencies and organizations.

“

Be prepared to listen and realize that you don't have the answers. No matter what your experience and background is, the real experts in how to turn this around are the kids that are involved.

”

- Sharonda, Deputy Public Defender III, Deputy in Charge of the Compton Branch
(former Deputy Public Defender in STAR Court)

5

Be Patient

Probation has also learned to be patient -- patient to see the traditional markers of “success” for youth who have experienced CSE. Healing does not happen overnight - it is a continuous journey and often takes years. Probation, and individuals across the County, have learned to understand their role as “planting seeds” by supporting youth in any number of ways, such as with a consistent, supportive relationship.

“

Be patient. Don't take this on by yourself – work with other agencies, work with diverse partners. Train and be consistent. Be open to new ideas. And be willing to adapt and change your approach.

”

- Markese Freeman, Senior Detention Services Officer,
Central Juvenile Hall, Los Angeles County Probation Department

6

Address Vicarious Trauma and Encourage Self-Care

When first beginning this work, Probation leadership did not realize the impact that vicarious trauma can have on staff involved in this work, both professionally and personally. Yet over the years, they have learned that, because youth who have been CSE have experienced tremendous trauma and their staff are exposed to this every single day, it is important to be mindful of vicarious trauma, and the impact it may have on them. Probation has increased their efforts to address staff's vicarious trauma and prioritize self-care, such as by requiring training on vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue and by ensuring that supervisors are regularly checking in with staff on not just their cases but also on their own well-being. Focusing attention, and addressing, vicarious trauma helps ensure staff can provide the best care possible to youth and engage with this work long-term, without having negative consequences on their health and personal well-being.

While each staff is ultimately responsible for their own self-care, Probation has learned that it is just as important for managers to ensure their staff are taking care of themselves. By doing so, they can help create an environment where staff feel not only supported in their work and as a professional, but also as a person.

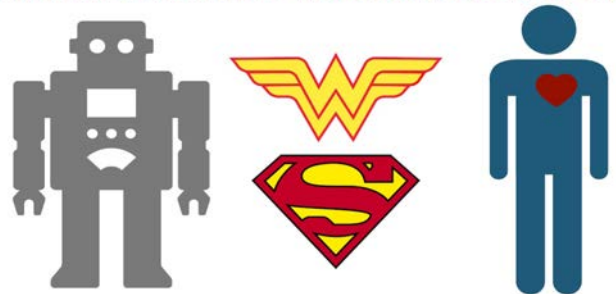
“

Burnout is rampant among those who work with human trafficking survivors. It is key to understand how we can care for ourselves so that we can care for others fully, as this training expressed.

”

AFTER HOURS MINISTRY

We have to acknowledge that we are neither robots nor superheroes. We are humans and will be impacted by our work.





NEXT STEPS

“While Probation has come a long way, there is much more work that needs to be done. This includes increasing programming to support Transition Age Youth and adult survivors, as well as other under-identified populations. Continuing our efforts to train widely across the County is also essential. And Probation plays an important role in identifying exploiters and buyers and holding them accountable through appropriate supervision levels. With these next steps in mind, Probation will continue moving forward in its efforts to better identify and support survivors, empowering them to go on to lead incredible lives beyond their exploitation.”

**- Reaver Bingham, Chief Deputy, Adult Services,
Los Angeles County Probation Department**



"I am so proud of the Child Trafficking Unit. I am inspired everyday by their commitment to supporting and empowering our youth. As we move forward to take our next steps to better identify and support youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation, I am humbled to walk alongside them. These champions have changed, and will continue to change, the lives of many. And I am so grateful."

- Michelle Guymon, Director,
Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Next Steps

While Probation has made tremendous progress over the past eight years to better identify and serve youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation, there is much more work to be done. In collaboration with partners across the County, Probation looks forward to their next steps in addressing this issue.

Programming for Transition Age Youth and Adult Survivors

Once a youth turns 18, their need for comprehensive supports and services does not end. Probation CTU hopes to expand programming for Transition Age Youth (ages 18-24) to ensure these young adults have the support they need to continue their healing process and successfully transition into adulthood and independence. To do so, Probation plans to dedicate more attention to helping youth build life skills and self-confidence, identifying and securing stable housing, and to supporting youth with meaningful workforce development. Probation hopes to engage and promote youth's personal interests and to help youth with case planning to achieve their goals, both big and small.

Probation also plans to prioritize helping youth build and maintain connections within their community, with the goal of promoting a larger support network for each youth outside of the system. In addition, Probation aims to be more intentional in providing support to youth who are pregnant and parenting.

Increasing Supports and Services for Under-Identified Populations

Over the past eight years, the specialized CSEC services developed by Probation, and throughout the County, have largely focused on supporting girls and young women. Probation has learned through their work that boys are being exploited, too. Additionally, they have learned that youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) face unique vulnerabilities and are disproportionately affected by CSE. Probation is taking steps to learn more about these two populations of youth. Once Probation deepens their understanding, appropriate services to support these populations can be developed and implemented. This includes efforts aimed at both prevention and intervention.

Holding Exploiters Accountable

Probation aims to increase their efforts to identify and supervise adult probationers identified as exploiters and buyers. They will continue to review current and incoming cases for human trafficking related offenses to ensure the level of supervision is appropriate, and will work to develop processes to better identify and supervise cases identified as exploiters and buyers.

Continued Training

While Probation has already facilitated CSEC training to over 26,000 County employees, they acknowledge that, due to the size of Los Angeles County, more training needs to be done. Probation will continue to encourage more trainings on the issue across the County, in hopes to inspire and encourage individuals in all agencies, and all capacities, to step up and ensure our children receive the supports they need.

Additionally, Probation plans to increase training regarding both adult victims of commercial sexual exploitation and exploiters. There will also be increased training in the general community, with the goal of expanding basic understanding around the issue. Whether or not an individual works directly with youth around this issue, it is important for all community members to be informed on what commercial sexual exploitation is and how it impacts individuals, families, and the neighborhood at large. By fostering a more informed community, Probation hopes to inspire individuals across the County to say something when they see something.



Index of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BOS: Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

CBO: Community-Based Organization

CCL: Community Care Licensing

CEO: Chief Executive Office

CJH: Central Juvenile Hall

CLC: Children’s Law Center

CPH: Child Protection Hotline

CRCSE: Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative (National Center for Youth Law)

CSE: Commercial Sexual Exploitation, or Commercially Sexually Exploited

CSEC/Y: Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children or Youth, or Commercially Sexually Exploited Child(ren) or Youth

CTU: Child Trafficking Unit, a division of the Probation Department

Detention Protocol: Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children and Youth

DCFS: Department of Children and Family Services

DHS: Department of Health Services

DKC: Dorothy Kirby Center, a residential mental health treatment facility run by the Probation Department

DMH: Department of Mental Health

DPH: Department of Public Health

DPO: Deputy Probation Officer

DPSS: Department of Public Social Services

EFC: Extended Foster Care

FRP: Los Angeles County Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children

HOP: Home on Probation

ICAN: Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect

ILP: Independent Living Program

ILT: CSEC Integrated Leadership Team

JCHS: Juvenile Court Health Services, a division of the Department of Health Services

LACOE: Los Angeles County Office of Education

LASD: Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department

LAUSD: Los Angeles Unified School District

LGBTQ: Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer or Questioning

NCYL: National Center for Youth Law

NMD: Non-Minor Dependent

MARC: Multi-Agency Review Committee

MDT: Multi-Disciplinary Team

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Probation: Los Angeles County Probation Department

SLAY: Survivor Leadership Academy for Youth

SPA: Service Planning Area

STAR Court: Succeeding Through Achievement and Resilience Court, a specialized court within the delinquency system for youth who are at risk of or are confirmed to have experienced CSE

TAY: Transition Age Youth

VWTP: Victim Witness Testimony Protocol

WOTS: “Word on the Street”

I Am Enough

I am worth seeing
I am worth believing
Because I am enough

I am bold
Because I am confident in myself
I am bold
Because I am ME

I am confident
I am confidence
Confident about my dreams, motivation, self-love, worth, etc.
Confident has so many meanings

I am energy
The positive atmosphere that walks with me
As I enter a room

I am faith
Because of my relationship with supportive people
which pushed me to change my ways
And be the best version of me

I am growth
Because I've changed into a better person
I'm no longer staying in the past

I am resilient
I stand up for myself
I don't need no one else to tell me that I am OK
I already had that struggle and I got over it

I am confident
I feel confident in my own skin

I am worth seeing
I am worth believing
Because I am enough

- The Empowerment Conference Art Creative workshop, December 2019

Endnotes

1 Walker, K. (2013). California Child Welfare Council, Ending The Commercial Sexual Exploitation Of Children: A Call for Multi-System Collaboration In California. Retrieved from https://youthlaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Ending-CSEC-A-Call-for-Multi-System_Collaboration-in-CA.pdf

2 Dierkhising, C. B., Walker Brown K., Ackerman-Brimberg, M., & Newcombe, A. (2018). *Commercially Sexually Exploited Girls and Young Women Involved in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice in Los Angeles County: An Exploration and Evaluation of Placement Experiences and Services Received*. National Center for Youth Law: California State University, Los Angeles.

3 *Id.*

4 *Id.*

5 *Id.*

6 *Id.*