



Volunteers for Youth Justice

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A significant milestone was achieved this year with the launch of The Harbor, our resource center providing a comprehensive care system utilizing a collaborative effort of multiple partners and non-profit agencies. The Harbor addresses critical issues of homelessness, domestic violence, crisis intervention, mental health, legal assistance, food security, child advocacy services, conflict resolution, truancy, and literacy tutoring. We forged strategic partnerships with several non-profit organizations, leveraging our collective expertise, resources, and networks to maximize our impact. These partnerships enabled us to tackle multifaceted challenges more effectively and efficiently.

In conjunction with the opening of The Harbor, VYJ has expanded its reach with the addition of two programs, My Community Cares and the School-based Resource Centers.

- The **My Community Cares** program expands our commitment to reach into the at-risk community locations providing care groups and resources to strengthen families and support communities in their local neighborhoods. This program empowers community members to be architects of their own future, fostering ownership, resilience, and sustainable change from within. In 2023, we were able to connect 81 families to resources for housing, utilities, educational needs, and legal assistance.
- Our **School-based Resource Center** extends our direct services onto school campuses, offering a spectrum of VYJ's support services to schools. From on-site TBRI® Facilitators and Calming Studios, school attendance officers, conflict resolution classes, leadership classes, and student mentoring, we are committed to creating a positive and supportive school environment. This program is currently serving University Elementary, Atkins Elementary, Caddo Heights Elementary, Turner Elementary & Middle School, and Donnie Bickham.

This past year has been a year dedicated to amplifying our impact by reaching more people, addressing larger issues, and implementing more comprehensive solutions through a network of collaborative partners. There are so many great organizations doing effective work to solve issues facing our community. We believe that our individual impacts can be intensified by forging intentional partnerships. Today, the following organizations are providing services at The Harbor:

- VYJ
- Project Celebration
- Melanie Massey Physical Therapy
- Faith & Fostering
- Center for Children & Families
- Brighter Futures
- AOL (Literacy Skills)
- CHOICES
- NAMI
- Alateen
- CPSB child well-being team
- NWLA Food Bank

We look forward to what the future brings and we remain committed to our organization's mission of providing a community caring for children, youth, and families in crisis.

Best regards,
Kelli Todd - Executive Director

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



JUVENILE COURT



CADDO PARISH DISTRICT ATTORNEY

W. ROSS FOOTE, LLC



8,786



Volunteers for Youth Justice

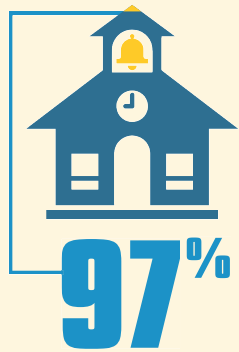
With the help of our volunteers, VYJ was able to carry out our mission of providing a community caring for 8,786 children, youth, and families in crisis.

CASA advocates volunteered **4,366** hours of their personal time and drove **36,891** miles to advocate for children to reach permanency through adoption, placement with a relative, and/or reunification with parents.



36,891

The **Teen Court** program saw a 50% increase in volunteer hours utilizing 50 volunteers who completed **636** volunteer hours. Teens completed 504 hours and adults completed 132 hours.

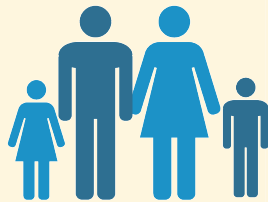


1,431 referrals were received by the **TASC program** and **97%** were resolved without the need to escalate the case and involve the court. 155 students were provided uniforms and school supplies to set them up for success in school.

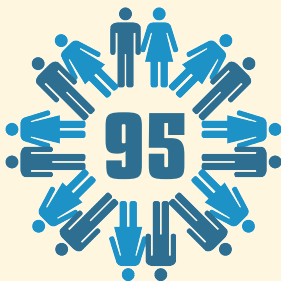


The **School-Based Resource Center** team served **420** students across 5 schools in Caddo Parish. Services provided include TBRI® regulation and crisis intervention, improved school engagement, and building healthy relationships between teachers and their students.

VYJ's **FINS/Tuancy program** expanded into DeSoto Parish. FINS officers worked with over **705** families to secure appropriate services.



The **Conflict Resolution** program served **1,769** students. 943 participated in a 6 week preventative curriculum. After an incident at school, 826 students participated in a one day class that allowed them to return to school equipped with tools to settle their interpersonal issues without violence.



In its first year, the **MCC team** was able to make **95** connections between families living in at-risk neighborhoods and vital resources while hosting and/or attending 114 community events.

921

The **Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®)** program trained **921** people in the 24 hour TBRI® Caregiver Curriculum. 222 of these were caregivers referred through Juvenile Court, 292 were inmates housed at the Caddo Correctional Center, and 407 included elementary school staff and teachers.



2023 By The Numbers

Administrative Costs



4%

Administrative costs make up only 4% of organizational expenditures.



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES...

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates):

Contact - patricia.alicea@vyjla.org

CASA trains volunteers to serve as officers of the court and “friends” to children in need. These volunteer advocates are assigned by judges to speak on behalf of children who have been placed in foster care due to abuse or neglect. Their primary objective is to ensure that each child is placed in a safe, permanent home.

TBRI® (Trust Based Relational Intervention):

Contact - lucinda.miles@vyjla.org

TBRI® is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBRI® uses Empowering Principles to address physical needs, Connection Principles for attachment needs, and Correcting Principles to disarm fear-based behaviors.

MISDEMEANOR REFERRAL CENTER:

Contact - tim.mcdearmont@vyjla.org

The Misdemeanor Referral Center assists law enforcement officers in dealing with juveniles charged for delinquent offenses. Offenders are brought to the referral center by law enforcement officers where they receive a comprehensive assessment and are referred to community based resources for needed services and kept out of the Juvenile Detention Center.

YOUTH PROGRAMS:

Contact - shonda.houston@vyjla.org

JumpStart (Power of Choice & Stamp Out Shoplifting) –

A diversion program providing educational workshops in a support group setting with volunteer facilitators trained to address the needs of at-risk youth.

Teen Court – A program designed to offer non-violent, first-time juvenile offenders the opportunity to be judged by a jury of their peers, accept responsibility for their actions, and make restitution for their offenses.

GEMS & GENTS Mentoring – A program that brings together young people with trained facilitators and adult mentors who assist with their educational, relational, and emotional development through group sessions, recreational activities, community service, and one-on-one mentoring.

Leadership Academy – A program of GEMS & GENTS, to provide a safe and supportive environment, whereby students are encouraged to improve their academic achievement, develop life skills, and embrace the servant leadership model for giving back to their school and community. Students are paired with one-on-one mentors who serve as leadership role models.

Conflict Resolution – A collaborative effort between VYJ and the Caddo Parish School Board, designed to address the dynamics that lead to violent behavior, with the goal of preventing future school fight violations.

FINS (Families in Need of Services):

Contact - jacob.mccarty@vyjla.org

FINS provides programs for families on the verge of crisis due to the ungovernable behavior of a child. The primary goal of FINS is to secure appropriate services to remedy the underlying causes that lead to the family’s concerns.

TASC (Truancy Assessment Service Center):

Contact - shannon.wyche@vyjla.org

The purpose of TASC is to provide early identification and assessment of truant children in grades K-5 and the prompt delivery of coordinated interventions to prevent continued unexcused school absences.

MY COMMUNITY CARES:

Contact: kreasha.bennett@vyjla.org

The MCC expands our commitment to reach into the at-risk community locations to strengthen families and support local neighborhoods. This program empowers community members to be architects of their own futures, fostering ownership, resilience, and sustainable change from within.

SCHOOL-BASED RESOURCE CENTER:

Contact: melissa.enis@vyjla.org

The SRC extends our direct services onto school campuses, offering a spectrum of VYJ’s support services to schools. This program is committed to creating a positive and supportive school environment while building healthy relationships throughout school campuses.

2022-2023 Financial Report

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Individual and Corporate Contributions	164,421	4%
Grants	2,065,244	51%
Program Support	1,363,466	34%
Fundraising	150,148	4%
In-Kind Rent	173,046	4%
Unrealized Gains	18,244	0%
Miscellaneous	132,605	3%
Total Support and Revenues	4,067,174	

EXPENSE

Program Expense	3,809,061	96%
Administrative Expense	169,962	4%
Total Expenses	3,979,023	
Change in Net Assets	88,151	
Net assets, beginning of year	1,311,719	
Net assets, end of year	1,399,870	



Volunteers for Youth Justice

MISSION

The mission of Volunteers for Youth Justice is to provide a community caring for children, youth, and families in crisis.

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Felicia Hamilton, President
Angie White, Vice President
Laurie McGehee, Secretary
Joel Fair, Treasurer
Laura Baxter
Drew Burnham
Brian Crawford
Patrick Greer
Senae Hall
Betty Henderson
Laurie Lyons
Nathaniel Manning
Pamela McPherson
Kathy Mitton
Andy Scoggins
Laura Seabaugh
Clifton Tate
Erin Woods
Kelli Todd - Executive Director

GUMBO GLADIATORS



Over 6,000 people enjoyed the Battle of the Gumbo Gladiators in 2023. The 2024 battle begins at 12pm on March 9th. See you at Festival Plaza!



THINK YOU MAKE THE BEST JAMBALAYA IN NW LOUISIANA?
Join us on November 2nd for the next Jambalaya Cook-off and find out!

GET INVOLVED

• VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Become a CASA volunteer – advocate for children in the foster care system

Become a TBRI® Advocate – educate caregivers in relational trauma intervention

Become a Mentor – provide support and guidance to youth in our community

Guest Speaker – present life skills to youth in our court diversion classes

Board of Directors – serve as a volunteer Board member to help guide our organization

Battle of the Gumbo Gladiators – join the planning committee or volunteer the day of the event

• **DONATE** – VYJ will use these funds to support and expand our programs and services.

• **ADVOCATE** – Supporting VYJ's mission is as simple as encouraging others to donate or volunteer and shopping through the Kroger Community Rewards program.

• **FIND US -**



@volunteersforyouthjustice



CONTACT INFORMATION: 318-425-4413 www.vyjla.org