

# A Message from the Executive Director



**Kelli Todd**  
Executive Director

## A Year of Impact and Hope

In **2025**, Volunteers for Youth Justice experienced one of the most impactful years in our organization’s history. Through the dedication of our volunteers, the commitment of our staff, the generosity of our donors, and the collaboration of our community partners, we proudly provided services to more than **12,000** families across Northwest Louisiana.

This milestone reflects more than growth; it represents strengthened partnerships and expanded access to resources. Through intentional collaboration with fellow nonprofit organizations, **VYJ** has helped build a comprehensive wrap-around network of support for families in our region. Services that once existed as gaps and barriers to stability are now accessible through a coordinated system of providers at The Harbor.

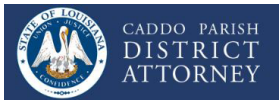
The Harbor continues to serve as a centralized hub where families can access critical resources in one welcoming location. By removing logistical and systemic obstacles, we are replacing uncertainty with opportunity and hopelessness with support.

Above all, **2025** was a year defined by HOPE. Together, we empowered children, youth, and families to overcome adversity, find stability, and move toward a brighter tomorrow. Each success story reflects the collective investment of a community committed to ensuring that every family has the opportunity to thrive.

We are deeply grateful to all who make this work possible. Your partnership is transforming lives and strengthening Northwest Louisiana one family at a time.

- Kelli

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS



# 2025

## BY THE NUMBERS



CASA Advocates spent

**5,132**  
hours

Administrative costs continue to make up only **4%** of organizational expenditures.



& traveled **29,470** miles to be the voice for **617** children.



**350+** volunteers supported the mission of VYJ by providing advocacy, intervention, & mentoring services.

VYJ served over **12,000** children & families.

Conflict Resolution provided services to **698** youth.

The FRC provided **\$61,575** in concrete support services for families.

The Harbor case managers served

**698**  
individuals

by connecting them to life-changing resources.

**406** individual parents were trained in the TBRI® curriculum through

**120**  
sessions

as part of their plan to reunify with their children.

The FRC team engaged with **7,600** individuals

by hosting or attending **493** community events/meetings throughout NWLA.

TASC early intervention and support services allowed

**98%** of families

to avoid court intervention while

**480** students

were assisted with uniforms/school supplies.

The Harbor Food Bank served

**703**  
clients

by distributing

**36,452**  
pounds of food

to

**848**

family members.

**207** expelled students completed the Vaping class and returned back to school.

SRC schools saw an average of an **18%** reduction in chronic absenteeism attributed to on-site TASC officers.

FINS provided services to **867** families

in **4**

parishes in NWLA.

Teen Court volunteers completed

**583**  
hours

of community service.



Suspension incidents were down at all SRC schools thanks to TBRI® support through

**566**

trainings & lessons

for students and teachers and the creation of calming corners in all classrooms.



# PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

## CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates):

Contact: [patricia.alicea@vyjla.org](mailto: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](mailto: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.

## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CENTER:

Contact: [jacob.mccarty@vyjla.org](mailto:jacob.mccarty@vyjla.org)

The Youth Empowerment 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](mailto: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 that provides 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 program 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](mailto: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: [diana.coleman@vyjla.org](mailto:diana.coleman@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.

## FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER:

Contact: [kreesha.bennett@vyjla.org](mailto:kreesha.bennett@vyjla.org)

The FRC provides essential services to families in 10 parishes in NWLA. These services include parenting education, kinship navigation, and community based services offering targeted resources and support for families residing in at risk locations.

## SCHOOL-BASED RESOURCE CENTER:

Contact: [shannon.wyche@vyjla.org](mailto:shannon.wyche@vyjla.org)

This program 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, Riverside Elementary, Cherokee Park Elementary, and Caddo Heights Elementary schools.

## 2024-2025 Financial Report

### SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Individual and Corporate Contributions	\$314,415	5%
Grants	\$3,273,968	55%
Program Support	\$1,712,826	29%
Fundraising	\$163,320	3%
In-Kind Rent	\$172,761	3%
Unrealized Gains	\$31,068	1%
Miscellaneous	\$289,278	5%
<b>Total Support and Revenues</b>	<b>\$5,957,672</b>	

### EXPENSE

Program Expense	\$5,281,623	96%
Administrative Expense	\$223,508	4%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$5,505,131</b>	
Change in Net Assets	\$452,541	
Net assets, beginning of year	\$1,918,125	
Net assets, end of year	\$2,370,666	

# GUMBO GLADIATORS

2025 was a great year for Gumbo Gladiators!

34 teams participated, making 44 pots of gumbo for over 6,000 attendees. That's over 300 gallons of GUMBO!



Join us on **March 7th** for the **Battle of the Gumbo Gladiators** beginning at **Noon** at **Festival Plaza**.



## FROM THE COMMUNITY:



# MISSION:

to provide a community caring for children, youth, and families in crisis

## 2025 Board of Directors

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Vice President – Betty Henderson

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Executive Director – Kelli Todd

## Contact

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[www.vyjla.org](http://www.vyjla.org)