

2009 Annual Report of the Center for Youth Development through Law

This past year, October 2008 through September 2009, we provided our summer program of employment and educational activities to disadvantaged East Bay high school students, and we mentored past summer program graduates. We invested in our youth participants by helping them develop knowledge, skills and relationships that will make it possible for them to achieve academically, pursue productive careers, and live meaningful lives.

2009 Summer Legal Fellowship Program

PARTICIPANTS

Twenty-three young people participated in our year 2009 Summer Legal Fellowship Program. They all came from low income families in Oakland, Berkeley, and Richmond and had an interest in learning about law. Here is some demographic information about our participants:

- 56% entered our program after completing their sophomore year of high school, 35% had just completed their junior year, and 10% had just graduated from high school.
- 56% were female, 44% were male.
- 48% identified themselves as Latino, 39% as African-American, 9% as Asian-American and 4% as multi-racial.
- 38% of our participants live with only one, or neither, of their parents. Of those who live with both of their parents, no English or very limited English is spoken in 75% of their households. 70% of the students who live with only one parent have no contact with their other parent.
- One-third of our participants do not know the education level attained by either of their parents. Of the students who do know their parents' education level, 43% have at least one parent who did not graduate from high school, 29% have at least one who did not attend high school, and 14% have two parents who did not attend high school.
- At least 14% have a parent who has been, or is currently, incarcerated.
- During the two-month period of the summer program, two participants had teenaged relatives of theirs die as a result of gun violence.

SUMMER PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The Summer Legal Fellowship Program provided two months of full-time activities consisting of:

Classes on the Legal System: On the U.C. Berkeley campus, students learned about law and government while enhancing their academic skills. They analyzed Supreme Court cases, conducted mock judicial hearings and discussed current legal and political issues.

Life Skills Curriculum: Also on the Berkeley campus, students participated in 16 hours of small-group, interactive lessons that developed their capacity to communicate and interact with others effectively, manage conflicts, understand their own emotions and values and those of others, stay motivated in the face of challenges, and make well-thought-out decisions. In addition to acquiring tools for their own lives, students learned techniques for mediating conflicts among other people.

Educational and Career Development: Students learned about different careers, the value of pursuing higher education, different higher education options, paying for college, the connection between school success and the work world, professional workplace behavior, and techniques for finding employment (including resumes, effective interviewing, and networking).

Professional Internships: After preparatory activities, each participant worked for seven weeks, four full days per week in an internship with a law firm, nonprofit organization or government agency. (A list of internship host agencies can be found below, on page 3.) Interns participated in such activities as observing court proceedings, research, clerical tasks, community outreach activities, translating, and assisting with client intake. Staff visited the interns at their work sites to help them recognize their strengths and improve where needed.

Mock Trials: Students developed their analytical skills and public speaking abilities through participation in two mock trials. The Honorable Brenda Harbin-Forte and The Honorable Jon Tigar of the Alameda County Superior Court presided over the trials, and talked with students afterwards.

Stipends: Each student received a \$1400 stipend.

Individual Mentoring: Staff worked with each participant to help them recognize their individual strengths, address their particular academic and personal challenges, and develop educational and career goals and a plan for achieving them.

Graduation Ceremony: The summer culminated in a graduation ceremony and reception at the U.C. Berkeley School of Law, which featured a keynote speech by Maya Harris, Vice President of the Ford Foundation's Peace and Social Justice Program. Participants' families, internship supervisors, and mentors attended. A highlight of the ceremony was hearing the students express pride in their accomplishments and in the positive transformations they had experienced.

Mentors for the 2009-2010 School Year: We matched the summer program graduates with mentors who will provide guidance and encouragement over the course of the 2009-2010 school year, helping the young people pursue their educational and career goals.

Internship Host Agencies:

Alameda County District Attorney
Bay Area Legal Aid
Berkeley City Council Member Kriss Worthington
California Attorney General
California State Bar Association
Centro Legal De La Raza
East Bay Community Law Center
Family Violence Law Center

Farella Braun & Martel
Mason Tillman Associates
New American Media
Oakland City Council Member Jean Quan
Oakland Police Department
Seeds Community Resolution Center
U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee
U.S. District Court

SUMMER PROGRAM EVALUATION

Post-Program Questionnaires Assessing the Impact of the Overall Program

At the end of the summer, students completed a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions about their experiences in the program and their plans for the future. All of the participants stated that the program had influenced them in a positive way. Here are some of the other results:

Question: "What do you plan to do after you graduate from high school?"

Responses: All but one student expressed a clear intention to attend higher education. The one student who did not mention higher education stated that he plans to become a veterinarian.

Question: "What are some things you learned or achieved in the program this summer?"

Responses: The most common response was different variations on "I learned how to be responsible." Almost all of the students mentioned more than one thing they had learned, and their responses varied. 90% of the responses not relating to learning how to be responsible fell into four general categories: 1) how to be successful at work (e.g. being professional, getting along with people in the workplace, specific job skills), 2) skills for obtaining employment (e.g. how to network, "how to get a job"), 3) knowledge about the legal system (e.g. Due Process, the Constitution, mediation), and 4) interpersonal effectiveness (e.g. how to communicate, how to present my opinions, how to get along with people, how to resolve conflicts). Other noteworthy responses were "I learned more about going to college," and "I learned about financial aid."

Question: "Can you describe any ways that you have changed over the course of the summer?"

Responses: 100% of the students stated one or more positive ways they had changed. More than half stated they felt more confident in themselves. Additional responses varied widely and included "I'm more responsible," "I feel smarter," "I am more able to speak my mind and share my ideas."

Additional student comments are included below under "Youth Testimonials" on page 5.

Post-Program Questionnaires on Specific Competencies

Participants also filled out anonymous surveys asking them to indicate how the program affected them in specific competencies and attitudes. For each competency, they were asked to indicate "much

better," "somewhat better," "the same," or "I don't know" according to how they felt the program affected them. Results are displayed in the following table.

Competency	% of youth that felt they were "much better" or "somewhat better" in this competency as a result of the program
Understanding of how law works	100%
Skills for succeeding in the workplace	100%
Ability to communicate	100%
Likelihood of succeeding in school	100%
Commitment to pursuing higher education	94%
Ability to network	94%
Self-confidence	88%
Ability to work with others	82%
Academic skills	76%
Ability to handle conflicts with others	83%
Ability to understand and express my emotions	76%
Connected to more people who can help me achieve my educational and career goals	88%

Percentage of students that felt they improved in at least eight (67%) of the 12 competencies	100%
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Youth Surveys on Internship Experiences

The participants also completed questionnaires, containing both yes/no and open-ended questions, about the impact of their internships.

100% of participants responding gave an affirmative response to the question "Do you feel that your internship experience will help you be more successful in the future?" They were also asked to indicate whether they improved in any of seven specified competencies as a result of working in their internship. Results are shown in the following table.

Competency	% of youth that felt that their internship helped them improve in this competency
Computer skills	83%
Writing skills	55%
Speaking skills	67%
Ability to work well with others	72%
Feeling comfortable in a professional environment	89%
Networking	72%
Research skills	33%

Percentage of students who felt they improved in at least one of the seven competencies	100%
Percentage who felt they improved in at least four of the seven competencies	89%
Percentage who felt they improved in at least five of the seven competencies	78%

Youth Testimonials

Here are a just a few of many appreciative student comments from questionnaires, unsolicited thank you notes, and our graduation ceremony:

"This program gave me self-confidence to actually try to go to college and make something of myself. I am very thankful for this chance."

"This fellowship program...helped me prepare for the outside world. My life has changed a lot -- I have high expectations, I am informed and ready to follow my dream."

"This program gave me so much motivation! It made me want to do better in school this year, better in everything. It made me want to be a success."

"I've changed a lot this summer. I gained lots of confidence. I'm more responsible and I've seen what hard work looks like."

"I learned to stop and think about stuff before I react, and that is a tool I use in everyday life now."

"I learned to understand people better and have more patience, and the relationship with my parents improved."

"I learned how to be responsible, communicate with others, how to defend myself, and behave at work.... The program helped me gain confidence in myself and speak up and share my ideas."

"The program impacted my way of thinking and boosted up my self-confidence. Also it helped me develop skills that will help me for the rest of my life."

Mentoring and Tracking of Summer Program Graduates

Mentoring and Educational Support Activities

Throughout the past year, we facilitated individual mentoring of our 2008 summer program graduates. Typical mentor-mentee activities included help with college applications and advising on financial management.

We also offered follow-up services to all of our past summer program participants. This included contacting them periodically by phone to offer encouragement and guidance, as well as providing ongoing career and educational resources through a bulletin and e-mail notices. We also organized a group of graduates to attend Law Day events at the Alameda County Superior Courthouse.

Tracking Our Graduates' Educational Progress

355 young people have completed the Summer Legal Fellowship Program since it began in 1995. Since 1999 when the program came under the auspices of the Center for Youth Development through Law, 272 youth have graduated from the program, and we have remained in contact with almost 75% of them. As of August, 2009, none of these youth has dropped out of high school. Of the

graduates who have completed high school, approximately 90% have pursued higher education. Eleven that we know of have pursued graduate degrees, including eight that have gone to law school.

Graduates Pursuing Law Careers

Of the eight program graduates who have gone to law school, four are currently attending law school and four have earned law degrees. Two of them are now members of the California Bar and have practiced law in the Bay Area for more than a year.

Program Graduates' Contributions to Our Continuing Success

Our program graduates continue to give back to the program by giving talks to current participants, writing articles for our bulletin, working in our office, and helping with the graduation ceremony.

Film Documenting the Program's Impact

To bring the story of our successful work to a wider audience, we produced a 25-minute film that features glimpses of our 2008 program activities and participants speaking candidly about their lives and the transformations they experienced in the program. The film's name, *Change is Possible*, came from our students' own words. The film is available on our web site at www.youthlawworks.org/movie and in DVD format by request.

Expressions of Appreciation from Past Years' Program Graduates

We are gratified to receive expressions of appreciation from program graduates on an ongoing basis. Here are just a few, from students who completed our program more than three years ago:

"The program was the first step towards a new life for me.... I'm still working at the location I was placed in as an intern....Without the program I wouldn't be at this job and I probably wouldn't be going to school." [J.R., 2004 program graduate, currently working at Oakland City Hall and a student at Laney College]

"I just want to say thank you so much. I always wanted to go to law school, but I did not think I really could do it. I saw no possible way. Participating in your program changed my mind and fueled my determination to go to college and then law school. Now I am doing it all because of the program!" [Q.C., 2001 program graduate, who is currently a third year student at Hastings College of the Law, and who was an instructor in our 2008 program]

"The program gave me the strength to believe in myself. I feel really grateful for the opportunities I have had from the Summer Legal Fellowship Program, because coming from Richmond, there are not a lot of positive people to look up to. There are not a lot of people from my community who have gone to college.... This program has prepared me to continue my education even if the road is bumpy, because 'I can.' " [J.C., 2005 program graduate, currently majoring in international relations at University of California, Davis]

We would like to thank our 2009 major sponsors:

California Bar Association
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National Basketball Players Association
City of Richmond YouthWorks Summer Youth Employment Program
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We also thank the U.C. Berkeley Computer Science Division
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Center for Youth Development through Law
Operated in cooperation with
U.C. Berkeley School of Law

We invite you to hear the voices of young people affected by our program in our short film
available at www.youthlawworks.org/movie

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