

June 2021

FRESH LIFELINES FOR YOUTH SYSTEMS CHANGE POSTCARD

- *A key success in the continuing effort to reimagine public safety in Oakland*
 - *“Care Not Cops” wins the day in San Jose Unified School District*
- *FLY leads focus groups with youth in DJJ about SB823 realignment plans*
 - *FLY’s Board forms a Systems Change Committee*
 - *Farewell to our 2020-2021 Policy Fellow Brittney Johnson*

Questions? Comments? Email systemschange@flyprogram.org

Oakland redirects police funding to pay for social services and violence prevention

Below is a partial statement by the [Anti Police-Terror Project](#) about the June 24 approval of a city budget that included \$18.5M for policing alternatives. FLY staff and youth have worked hard on this issue - thank you for your advocacy!

The Oakland City Council just voted to reallocate \$18M from Oakland Police to violence prevention programs and mental health services. Today we changed the course of direction for our city.

Today's vote in support of @nikki4oakland's budget to cut police spending & fund crucial social services shows Oakland's commitment as a progressive city to support policies that actually keep us safe.

While more work must be done to strengthen our public services, build affordable housing, and fund police alternative programs to ensure people who need help or are going through crises get the help that they need, today, the City Council gave much-needed hope to the organizers, mental health advocates, faith leaders, and working families across the city working to defund the police and invest in community.



Photo credit: Amir Saadiq via APTP

“We will continue this effort to defund OPD until our campaign goals are met -- to defund the Oakland Police Department by 50% and reinvest in the community.” @APTAction

San Jose's largest school district removes cops from campuses!

As reported in the [San Jose Mercury News](#) on 6/25: *Following steady public pressure from reform advocates, the San Jose Unified School District has joined other large districts in the city that moved to end the routine campus presence of San Jose police officers. On Thursday, the Board of Education rejected a related extension with the city of San Jose, effectively ending a long-standing partnership between one of the South Bay's largest school districts and SJPd.*

That steady public pressure was largely the result of tireless organizing by the San Jose Unified Equity Coalition, which was joined by many of our staff representing FLY as well as their own community groups. Thank you! You have made a difference for our kids and hopefully many future generations of students!



Photo credit: San Jose Spotlight

“The purpose of schools is for our next generation to realize their potential. I do not picture cops there with guns and with punitive approaches, who not only make students feel unsafe but also criminalize them.”
- Local organizer Mary Celestin

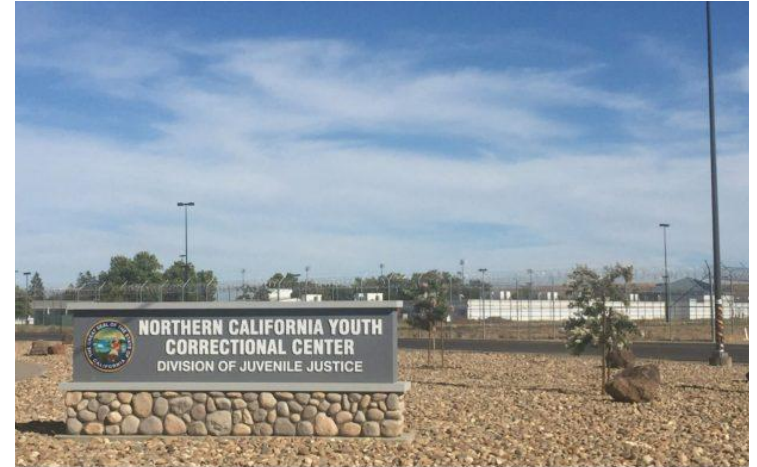
FLY-led focus groups of DJJ youth will help inform plans to serve them in our counties

Last year, [SB823](#) mandated the closing of California's youth prisons, which has been managed by the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The bill requires each county to create a coordinating body to plan for how to serve youth closer to home.

FLY has representatives working on SB823 plans in all three of our counties. We were asked to lead virtual focus groups of youth currently residing in units of DJJ facilities with the highest number of youth who will return to AC, SCC, and SMC. Several members of FLY staff and our Youth Advisory Council facilitated the discussions.

After grounding in FLY, Youth Voice, and SB823, the youth answered questions about their experiences during incarceration. They then reflected on what safety, security, support, services, and accountability look like to them. They also shared ideas about alternatives to DJJ as well as other hopes and concerns.

The FLY team will synthesize and share this valuable feedback so that Youth Voice can directly influence programs for serving DJJ youth in our local facilities and when they reintegrate into our communities.



Entrance to shared site of DJJ's secluded O.H. Close and Chad facili

Photo: [witnessla.com](https://www.witnessla.com)

“Support and services look like having more mentors, anything with people that could teach me stuff, people who have been through what I’ve been through and have overcome it and found a better path.”
DJJ Youth

A new Systems Change Committee for FLY's Board

Members of FLY's Board of Directors have been active "behind the scenes" in our systems change work this year. In particular, they've provided support in researching and developing our positions on state legislation and last year's propositions. Now they are **forming a Systems Change Committee that will support FLY's systems change efforts** and advance the Board's understanding of FLY's role in systems change.

The Committee's primary responsibilities will be to determine FLY's position in support of or against legislation that impacts FLY's young people, and to provide guidance to staff, as needed, when faced with a significant systems change opportunities.

They will also help elevate current events and conversations about justice, equity, and the pipeline to the full FLY Board and will regularly update them on our systems change activities.

We look forward to their deeper support and engagement in our work. You can read more about their commitment to justice and equity [here](#).



Goodbye to FLY's 2020-2021 policy fellow, Brittney Johnson

From the moment she joined our Systems Change Task Force, Brittney put her research and writing skills, and her passion for young people impacted by the justice system, to work in developing systems for analyzing and tracking legislation. Shout-outs to Brittney for:

- Maintaining our bill tracking system and updating us regularly on the progress of a wide range of proposed bills related to criminal and juvenile justice
- Researching and writing Legislative Advocacy Proposals for approval by our Board of Directors, which allowed us to publicly lobby for bills that will benefit our youth
- Writing profiles of key legislators to help our leaders prepare for meetings with potential mentors and allies in Sacramento
- Tracking news reports to give us the latest updates and different perspectives on important issues

Brittney worked for FLY during her first year of an EdD program in Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy at the Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology. Whew!

We will miss her energy, kindness, and infectious enthusiasm!

