

The Louisiana Center for Children's Rights

"Marshall" was a sweet, polite, and somewhat shy teenager. But to the surprise of his teachers and classmates, he started acting out in school. He was suspended several times for disruptive behavior, and ultimately was arrested for a fight on the school bus.



LCCR Managing Director Meg Garvey with the Juvenile Justice Youth Leadership Council

Thanks in large part to the Impact 100 grant, Marshall's team at the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights was able to get straight to work.

They started where they most often do: identifying the root causes of a child's behavior. Heather, Marshall's social worker, quickly learned that he spent a lot of time alone. His mother worked multiple jobs to make ends meet, and Marshall didn't have any activities to attend while she was away. Once his suspensions started, Marshall had even more idle time on his hands.

"He's a good kid but just didn't have enough to do," says Heather. "And he saw that when he acted out, the negative attention he received was still attention."

So his team got started on finding positive activities for Marshall to join. When a youth leadership program came across Heather's desk, it seemed like the perfect fit – so she helped Marshall fill out the application.

Marshall was not only accepted into the program, but thrived in it. His behavior at school began to improve. So did his grades, especially after Heather met with his teachers to ensure his special education needs were being met. Marshall's LCCR lawyer, Lauren, presented the court with his progress and successfully convinced the judge to close his case early.

The Impact of Your Support

"Children like Marshall need more than just a lawyer," says LCCR Executive Director Aaron Clark-Rizzio. "The wraparound services we provide help get at the core of what leads to arrest and incarceration. And by addressing those issues, we're setting our kids up for success in leaving the juvenile justice system behind for good."

The Impact 100 grant directly supports the work of Marshall's social worker, Heather. She and the rest of LCCR's client services team spend each day connecting kids with the resources they need to thrive. Over the last six months, they have helped:

- **120 CHILDREN ENROLL IN SCHOOL**
- **18 CHILDREN SECURE SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORTS**
- **38 CHILDREN SECURE MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE CARE**
- **34 CHILDREN CONNECT WITH MENTORING PROGRAMS**
- **106 CHILDREN CONNECT WITH JOB TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

"By intervening and, for example, helping a child get a school uniform so that he won't get suspended," says Heather, "we're removing the pitfalls that can slide that child right back into the justice system. And we're keeping children together with family. One less child behind bars is one more child back in his mother's arms."

LCCR's holistic approach has played a key role in reducing youth incarceration: Over the past seven years, New Orleans has seen a 31% drop in juvenile arrests and a 65% decline in the number of the city's youth in juvenile prisons.

LCCR will soon be expanding its unique brand of wraparound care to East Baton Rouge with our housing of a full-time social worker in the juvenile division of that parish's public defender office. We believe this will help more of Louisiana's at-risk youth stay in school, at home with family, and on the path to a bright future.

"We are so grateful for the Impact 100's support," says Mr. Clark-Rizzio. "It means a lot knowing that you all believe enough in the strength and resiliency of our kids to help them onto a better path."