

IMPACT REPORT



L.A. OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH COLLABORATIVE



“Every young person in Los Angeles deserves to grow in an environment surrounded by meaningful opportunities to thrive in school, the workplace, and their communities. The LA OYC team works tirelessly every day to ensure our most vulnerable, especially transition age foster youth, have better systems and services to help them succeed in life.”

Lisa Salazar

*Los Angeles Youth Development
Department Executive Director*

CONTENTS

Who We Are	1
A Message from the Director	3
A Message from a Young Leader	4
2021 Highlights	7
Foster Youth at Work	11
Letzy’s Story	13
Foster Youth College Advancement Project	15
Mariahunalahni’s Story	17
LA OYC Young Leaders	19
Izzy’s Story	21
Thank You to Our Partners & Supporters	23





WHO WE ARE

Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative is a collaborative of over **120 partners from public agencies, community-based organizations, foundations, youth, and educational institutions.**

OUR MISSION

is to build multi-sector partnerships to improve education and employment outcomes for transition age foster youth to thrive.



WE BELIEVE

Transition age foster youth in Los Angeles County have the knowledge and skills to allow them to **achieve economic mobility and flourish in their personal lives.**





The LA OYC builds partnerships across sectors to improve education and employment outcomes for transition age foster youth (TAY).

We work collaboratively with partners, including government agencies, education institutions, philanthropic and community-based organizations, youth, and private sector employers. Utilizing the five strategic priorities below, we believe we can improve the systems designed to support TAY through a long-term and sustainable collective impact approach:

Making Connections

Building Capacity

Transforming Systems

Elevating Youth Voice

Promoting Awareness

“ *The LA OYC builds bridges to a collective vision and mission for transition age foster youth through partnerships that provide guidance in building successful pathways towards education, careers and social well being.* ”

ROBERT CHAVEZ

*Operations Manager - South Bay
Workforce Investment Board*

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

The Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative partners continue to dream big and work together in creating systemic change, to improve our county's public services for youth and young adults who experience foster care, juvenile justice and homelessness in Los Angeles.

The LA OYC Young Leaders lead our collaborative. As young people with lived experience of systems, they are systems experts. Young adults are able to eloquently express the gaps between policies and practices and provide concrete solutions for change. They are partners with professionals who understand how systems work and move, and the LA OYC Young Leaders are key experts needed to partner with public servants, advocates, and direct service providers to reimagine systems designed to better serve youth.

We are excited to share our collective accomplishments across our collaborative partners, as they are only possible because of the power of the collective!

In gratitude,

Lauri Collier
Director

MESSAGE FROM A YOUNG LEADER

As a child, I was always told I had a heart of gold. It wasn't until my pre-teen years that I realized this title and having a kind soul wasn't a weakness. That is when I began advocating for myself and my peers. As I experienced adulthood after foster care, I began to find my strength in advocacy.

My time as an LA OYC Young Leader has helped me realize that no matter how different or similar our backgrounds are, we are in this together. Through the program, I have learned to improve my communication skills, Zoom skills, being okay with setting boundaries, networking, and, most importantly, how diverse foster youth and former youth in care can be.

What makes the LA OYC special is that it is youth-led while working alongside adult professional system changers. Education and work experience is needed for improving foster youth outcomes, but their lived experiences are what make the real change. The program makes space for youth to inform and make suggestions towards real solutions that will improve the lives of the next generation of youth in care. The LA OYC is an amazing program, and I am grateful I was part of it.

As a result of my time in the LA OYC, I gained the courage and skill set to continue the good fight. Today, I am blessed enough to fulfill my life purpose by founding Sunflower Foster Youth Investment, a non-profit organization, providing services to foster youth and former youth that need resources to develop a sustainable career and lead stable, productive, healthy lives. The LA OYC is an amazing program, and I am grateful I was part of it.

In service and gratitude.

Jaci Cortez

LA OYC Young Leader

Founder and Executive Director,
Sunflower Foster Youth Investment
Pronouns: Any



2021 HIGHLIGHTS & COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Website Launch



Launched in July 2021 and accessed by over

30,000 users



The LA OYC hosted

41 trainings and convenings



for practitioners with **3,748 total attendees**

98% of attendees rated our trainings as good or excellent.



98 convenings



connected young adults who experienced foster care to systems leaders

3,630 practitioners and youth attendees



621 caregivers



trained through newly-launched online caregiver training on Foster Parent College



82
providers



including FFAs and STRTPs, must now complete a robust college and career planning section when completing the newly launched Needs and Services Plan in LA County

15.7%
increase in
newsletter
subscribers



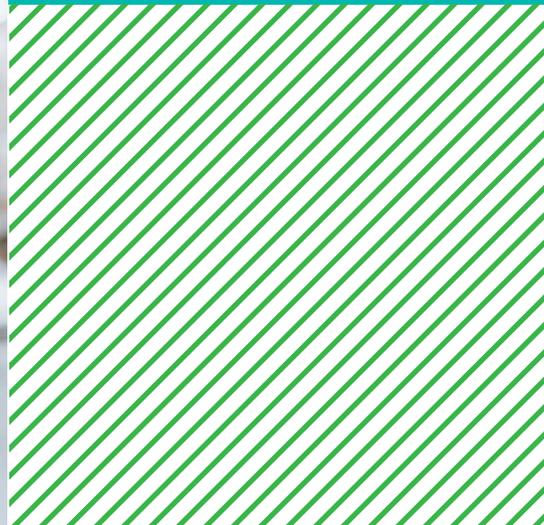
(1,495 in Dec 2021
1,292 in Dec 2020)

From June 2021,

**97% of
foster
youth**



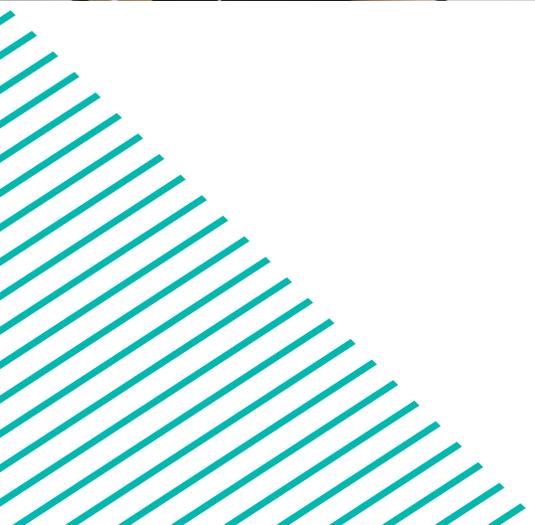
who were placed in a subsidized work experience completed the TAY World of Work Professional Enrichment Training, an increase of over 20% from the previous fiscal year



\$30
million dollars



in funding successfully secured for direct educational support services for K-12 foster youth





Due to the efforts of the Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the foster youth **Automated Referral System (ARS)** was recognized and awarded by the county for ensuring a streamlined and efficient process in which foster youth across LA County can participate in soft skills development and paid work experience.



AWARDS RECEIVED:

Los Angeles County, Quality and Productivity Commission, 34th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program,

National Association of Counties (NACo), 2021 Achievement Award:

“Leading with Excellence”, Certificate of Recognition: for those programs deserving honorable mention

“Foster Youth Automated Referral System (ARS)” in the category of Information Technology



Partner Highlight

Jenny Serrano
Director of Special Projects & VIP Sections
LA DCFS



Partner Highlight

Mamikon Nalchajyan
Human Services Administrator I
LA County WDACS



“It is an honor to see the ARS recognized as an innovative tool linking foster youth with the local workforce network. It really highlights that togetherDCFS, WDACS, the OYC and our many collaborators—can get things done for youth!”

—Jenny Serrano

“Los Angeles County is home to over 2 million young people, 80 school districts, and complex child welfare and juvenile justice systems. It takes organizations like the LA OYC that not only understand these systems, but are led by some of the young people most impacted by them. The LA County Youth Commission is proud to partner with the LA OYC as we strive to create a County where young people can thrive and improve the systems that impact their lives and communities.”

Alain Datcher

Executive Director
Los Angeles County's Youth Commission



FOSTER YOUTH AT WORK

Campaign launched by
the LA OYC in 2013

Convened by
the Alliance for
Children's Rights and
UNITE-LA



FOSTER YOUTH AT WORK

engages public workforce and child welfare agencies in L.A. County in devising collaborative, systemic solutions to improve foster youth connection to work readiness training, early work experiences, and pathways to sustainable careers.

PARTNERS



Alliance for Children's Rights
California Department of Rehabilitation
Foothill Workforce Development Board
iFoster

L.A. City Economic and Workforce
Development Department

L.A. County Department of Children and
Family Services (DCFS)



FY@Work Case Study Published

LA OYC published a [case study](#) on L.A. County’s coordinated referral process connecting foster youth with career development services, that included 10 recommendations to streamline access. Soon after, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a motion by Supervisor Barger adopting the case study recommendations and directing county departments to develop an implementation plan.

Our Quarterly LA OYC/P3 meeting in September highlighted the referral process case study recommendations with a group of over 100 attendees and featured a panel of youth workforce practitioners who shared best practices in engaging youth.

“Our foster youth deserve to have their identifying documents in order to apply for jobs, scholarships, college, and much more. I’m proud to have introduced this Board motion to ensure that the Department of Children and Family Services works diligently to get each and every foster youth the documentation they need to engage in a productive and fulfilling life.”

Supervisor Kathryn Barger
5th District

Department of Rehabilitation Referral Pilot Launched

Building relationships, the LA OYC launched a new pilot program with the CA Department of Rehabilitation (DOR). DOR administers the largest vocational rehabilitation and independent living program in the county, and its services are designed to help young adults with Individualized Education Plans and 504 plans (or disabilities) obtain competitive employment. With the support of the LA County Department of Children and Family Services, the Universal Referral Process was implemented with DOR to connect youth with disabilities to the work experience program. The LA OYC, DOR, DCFS, and WDACS will continue to work with youth, social workers, and community-based agencies to connect TAY with this opportunity.



State WIOA Waiver

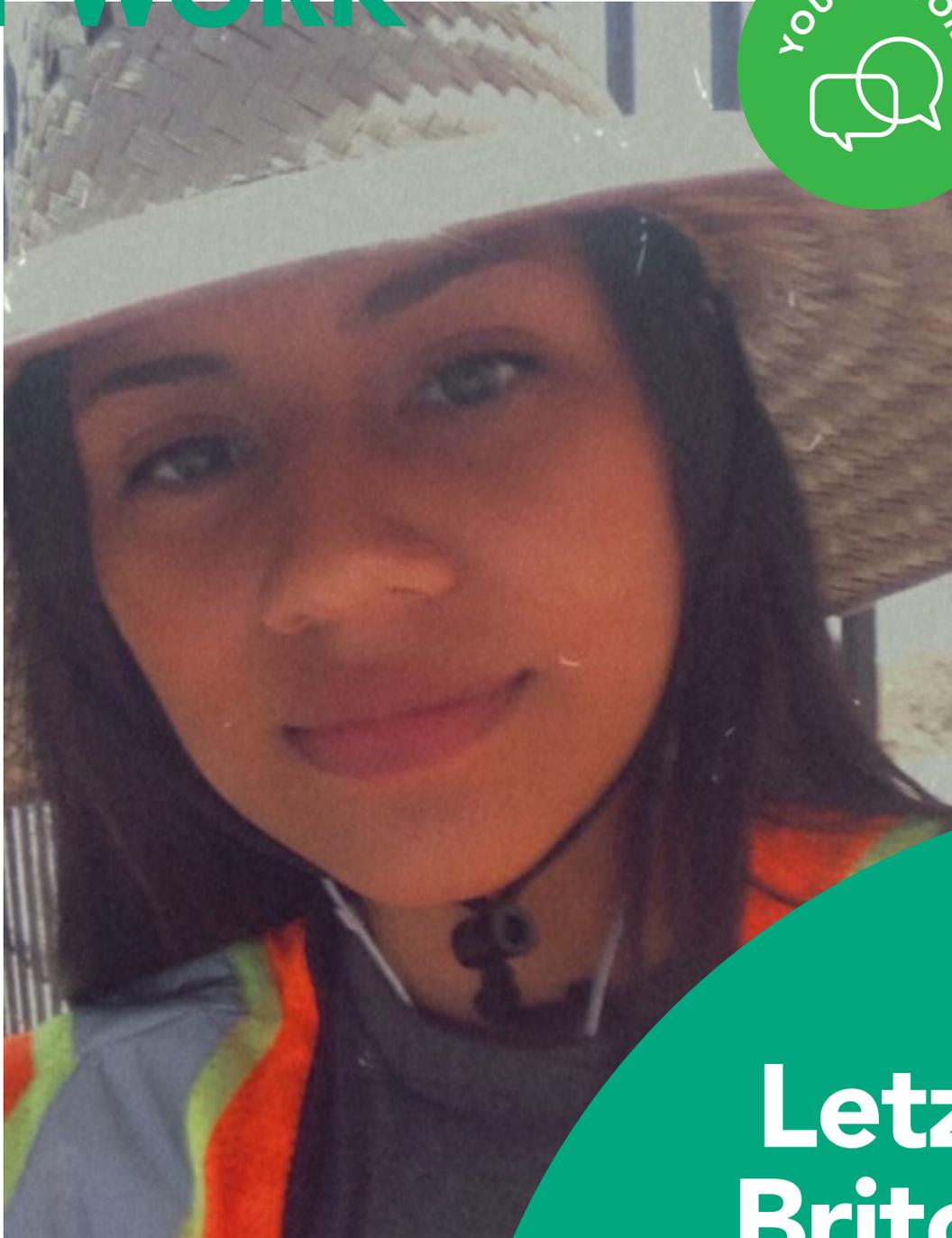
The LA OYC and LA P3’s collaboration implemented a county-wide Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) waiver that allowed foster youth who were in school to be enrolled in WIOA programming. Under existing federal law, in-school foster youth are not prioritized for workforce services because the 75% of WIOA youth were required to be out of school. Through our work with the **California Opportunity Youth Network (COYN)** our federal waiver has been approved to be used across California! It also makes our waiver permanent for the state.



L.A. County Office of Child Protection (OCP)
L.A. County Workforce Development, Aging & Community Services Department (WDACS)
Pacific Gateway Workforce Development Board

SELACO Workforce Development Board
South Bay Workforce Investment Board
UNITE-LA
Verdugo Workforce Development Board

FOSTER YOUTH AT WORK



Letzy
Brito's
STORY





Young Leader Letzy Brito is a foster youth who was pushed out of her traditional high school in the 11th grade. Despite being disconnected from traditional education, she has been engaged with various workforce development and education programs with the Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD) since the summer of 2019, including the Los Angeles County Youth@Work program.

Through Youth@Work, also known as HIRE LA Youth in the City of Los Angeles, Letzy received her first paid internship opportunity as a clerical office assistant at the Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD). Youth@Work gave Letzy the opportunity to gain valuable work experience and learn transferable customer service skills while welcoming community members to the center and connecting them to education, job training, and support services.

Letzy's involvement in Youth@Work also opened additional doors to a continuum of comprehensive education and workforce development programs, such as CRCD's South LA YouthBuild program. As a South LA YouthBuild member, Letzy has the opportunity to finish her high school diploma at CRCD Academy while receiving industry-recognized construction training and hands-on experience at local affordable housing developments. In addition, as a YouthBuild AmeriCorps member Letzy has demonstrated tremendous leadership through community service efforts, such as food and PPE distribution and neighborhood beautification, to support the community during COVID-19.

Most recently, building on the work experience she gained in her Youth@Work internship, Letzy joined the **City of Los Angeles, LA Mayor's "Angeleno Corps"** where she will be utilizing her professional skills in a year-long supported service placement at a local nonprofit agency. Due to the exposure to various career fields and opportunities initiated by the Youth@Work program, Letzy realized her incredible impact in her South Los Angeles community and is motivated to continue to make a difference in the lives of others.

FOSTER YOUTH COLLEGE ADVANCEMENT PROJECT (FYCAP)

Campaign launched by
the LA OYC in 2017

Convened by
John Burton Advocates
for Youth (JBAY)



FYCAP is committed to increasing post-secondary educational attainment for youth in the foster care system, whether it be career technical education or a 2-year or 4-year degree.

“The Foster Youth College Advancement Program (FYCAP) is critical to the success of our young people as they transition to adulthood. Caring for foster children is a calling of the heart, however preparing our foster children to become successful adults requires a set of skills and support that is needed to help our young people prepare for college, apply to the future, and succeed in their dreams. Children in our foster care system need every type of support and guidance they deserve to have opportunities to make choices about where their future will take them. FYCAP gives our families and children the chance to make those dreams come true.”

Kym Renner

*Deputy Director, LA Department of
Children and Family Services*

PARTNERS



Alliance for Children’s Rights
Children’s Law Center of California
First Star
Foster and Kinship Care Education

Los Angeles Community College District
Los Angeles County Department of Children and
Family Services
Los Angeles County Office of Education



Launched the Foster Youth College Promise

The LA OYC partnered with the LA Community College District to launch a new initiative to increase college enrollment and persistence among foster youth through enrollment into the LA College Promise program. While this intervention has demonstrated success among the general first-time college population, its success among foster youth is untested. Utilizing a human-centered design approach, 14 focus groups were first conducted with community college, K-12, and child welfare professionals.

Increased Training for Caregivers on College Planning

Building on the caregiver training requirement enacted in 2020 in LA County, JBAY partnered with Foster Parent College to launch a new college readiness course on their online training platform, reaching 621 caregivers since May 2021, with 91% agreeing that it added to their knowledge. Additionally, the *Turning Dreams into Degrees* curricula is now offered by both LACOE and FKCE, reaching over 2,292 resource parents since its initial launch in April 2019.

Advocated for \$30 million in State Funding for Education

JBAY, National Center for Youth Law, and First Star successfully advocated for a \$30 million set-aside in the state budget to provide direct services to address the educational needs of foster youth in K-12, including \$5 million to provide postsecondary educational support services.

Advanced Financial Aid Completion through an Equity Lens

In partnership with LACOE, financial aid completion rates were analyzed through an equity lens to identify priority populations for 2021-2022, and the first ever countywide FAFSA dashboard was developed within LACOE's Educational Passport System.

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Los Angeles County Probation Department
Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection
Los Angeles County Workforce Development
Aging and Community Services

Los Angeles Unified School District
National Center for Youth Law
UNITE-LA
United Friends of the Children

FOSTER YOUTH COLLEGE ADVANCEMENT PROJECT (FYCAP)



Mariahunalahni Salevao's STORY





Mariahunalahni (“Mariah”) Salevao, LA OYC Young Leader, graduated high school in May 2021 and currently attends the University of La Verne as a kinesiology major. She is a highly motivated and bright young woman, and she credits her success to those who supported her journey to higher education.

From a young age, Mariah knew higher education would benefit her, so it became her goal. While she was in high school, figuring out applications, financial aid, and campus supports was challenging, and Mariah thanks her mentor from the California Community Foundation who supported her through the process of applying to college. With her mentor’s help, she was able to secure free residence in the University of La Verne dorms. Mariah also shares that the emotional support from her therapist, mentor, and the LA OYC Young Leaders helped her transition from high school to college.

Now Mariah is continuing to build her support network and a connection with her campus, and she is also a member of Give Back Scholars, a foster youth educational support program at the University of La Verne. She believes that the encouragement and guidance from those around her has been her most impactful supports.

LA OYC YOUNG LEADERS

Campaign launched
by the LA OYC in
2015

Convened by the
Alliance for Children's
Rights



THE LA OYC YOUNG LEADERS PROGRAM is a one-year training program for youth in leadership development and advocacy. Through regular meetings, trainings, and active participation in local efforts, members are empowered to use their collective experience to become impactful agents of change in the Los Angeles community.

"Being a young leader isn't only amazing to grow as an advocate and professional, it also grows you as an individual. Being someone with lived experience can be hard when doing the work, but the LA OYC really makes it a mission that the young leaders are okay while also doing the work. The LA OYC is a great organization to work with, and it's also a great organization to meet some really cool folks working to change the system."

Izzy Moncada
LA OYC Young Leader

PARTNERS



Coalition for Responsible Community
Development

Los Angeles County Department of
Children and Family Services

Reproductive Health Equity Project (RHEP)

National Foster Youth Initiative (NFYI)

United Friends of the Children

Los Angeles Community College District

First Star



Co-creation of LA Foster Power with CYC, Journey House, and NYFI

In March 2021, the Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative, **California Youth Connection**, **Journey House**, and the **National Foster Youth Institute**, partnered to host **LA FosterPower**, a summit to convene current and former foster youth from across LA County. All four participating organizations agreed to host quarterly meetings to continue to build the political consciousness and skills of these young people, in the hopes that it will lead to a sustainable, youth-led campaign. This kind of powerful work puts youth at the forefront of the decision-making that affects them, in order to improve transitions to college, career, and independence for former foster youth. Over the last year, the leaders participating in LA FosterPower have developed a shared vision for change, one that will support former foster youth to achieve their dreams.

National Center for Youth Law
California Youth Connection (CYC)
California Mentoring Partnership
LA County Office of Child Protection (OCP)

Social Media

The LA OYC Young Leaders established and participated in the first LA OYC Instagram Takeover for National Foster Care Awareness Month in May 2021. The Young Leaders shared uplifting video messages for the foster youth community, tips for communicating with TAY, and foster youth facts around education, employment, mental health, and housing.

In September 2021, LA OYC Young Leaders, iFoster, Think of Us, and California Youth Connection, tapped into the foster youth community on Instagram and TikTok to share information and resources to sign foster youth up for the CA Foster Youth Stimulus Payments. Over 300 foster youth were able to be signed up through iFoster's designated hotline.

Board Motion: Youth@Work Board Motion \$15.7 million

The Youth@Work Program is a vital connection point of cross-sector collaboration between employment and child welfare systems to provide young people with work experience and income, and to prevent youth from aging out of foster care to homelessness in LA County. The Young Leaders wrote public comments to support funding for Youth@Work and ensure young adults get entry level job experience to be competitive in the labor market as they work to recover from the pandemic. The Board of Supervisors then unanimously passed the motion to allocate the one time funding of \$15.7 million for Youth@Work, which helped fully restore the \$20.7 million Youth@Work budget.

Education Coordinating Council (ECC)
LA Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
LAC Department of Arts and Culture
Youth Commission

Board Motion: Contingency Planning

On December 31, 2021 more than 1,100 young adults were ending their time supported by Extended Foster Care and ran the risk of transitioning to independence without financial assistance, case management support, or housing plans.

LA OYC Young Leader Taneil Franklin testified before the LA County Board of Supervisors, emphasizing the urgency of the Board motion presented on December 7, 2021 instructing county agencies to coordinate and ensure that all youth have the ability to obtain Rapid Rehousing Funds and linkages to housing resources.

The Board of Supervisors voted in favor of the motion and DCFS responded by meeting with every single young person to make contingency plans for their transition.



LAOYC YOUNG LEADERS



Izzy
Moncada
STORY



IZZY MONCADA'S STORY



Izzy Moncada joined the LA OYC Young Leaders just one year ago , and has since learned so much about how to use their voice and experience to enact change in the child welfare system. Their journey to this point was not without hardships, but now as an LA OYC Young Leader, they have been able to impact our community as a youth advocate.

Izzy spent 21 years in the foster care system, moved through more than 15 placements, and experienced homelessness for nearly two years. They never quite felt as though they belonged, until they got involved in advocacy at the age of 18 and found themselves amongst peers with shared experiences and a desire to change foster care. They felt there were many truths to be told and reforms to be made, and approached their work with vigor. Their determination led them to attend stakeholder meetings, and pursue an internship with the California Department of Social Services' Foster Care Ombudsperson's office, all of which led to their current position with the LA OYC.

In the past year alone, Izzy has taken part in a panel with the LA County Department of Mental Health and University of California, Los Angeles, spoken before over 200 participants on a call to action for the kickoff of the DCFS Office of Equity, and attended their Monthly LGBTQ Steering Committee. They have also served as a member of the DCFS Director's Advisory Council, and participated in an advocacy and education project through the Center for the Study of Social Policy. While working with the LA OYC, Izzy was offered a position at the LGBT Center of Los Angeles while simultaneously participating in multiple internships throughout the summer. **"I am grateful for the experience and will forever hold LA OYC close to my heart,"** they said.

As an LA OYC Young Leader, Izzy continues to change lives, uplift voices, and elevate stories that need to be told.

Izzy Moncada
LA OYC Young Leader



THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

We are proud to recognize the many public agencies, community-based agencies, young leaders, networks, and foundations that have championed our collective work last year.

OUR STEWARDSHIP GROUP

- Alliance for Children's Rights
- Coalition for Responsible Community Development
- City of Los Angeles Economic & Workforce Development Department
- First Place for Youth
- iFoster
- John Burton Advocates for Youth
- LA County Department of Children and Family Services
- Los Angeles County, Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services
- Los Angeles County Office of Education
- Los Angeles LGBT Center
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative Young Leaders
- South Bay Workforce Investment Board
- UNITE-LA
- United Friends of the Children

OUR SUPPORTERS

- Angell Foundation
- The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions
- Ballmer Group
- The Carla & Roberta Deutsch Foundation
- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation**
- Goodwin Family Memorial Trust
- May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust
- Pritzker Foster Care Initiative**
- Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
- The Stuart Foundation
- Think of Us

OUR PARTNERS

A Sense of Home
 Alliance for Children's Rights** ^^
 Antelope Valley America's Job Center of CA (JVS)
 Antelope Valley College
 Anthony & Jeanine Pritzker Family Foundation
 Archdiocese Youth Employment
 Aspen Forum for Community Solutions
 Bridges from School to Work
 Brotherhood Crusade
 Cal Poly Pomona
 Cal State Univeristy, Dominguez Hills
 Cal State Univeristy, Long Beach
 Cal State University, Los Angeles
 California Department of Rehabilitation
 California Opportunity Youth Network
 California Youth Connection
 CASA – LA
 Cerritos College
 Children's Hospital Los Angeles
 Children's Law Center of California
 Citrus College
 City of Los Angeles Economic & Workforce Development Department**
 City of Los Angeles Youth Development Department
 Coalition for Responsible Community Development**
 College of the Canyons
 Compton College
 Conrad N Hilton Foundation
 DemocraShe
 Doing Good Works
 East LA College
 El Camino College
 Extraordinary Families
 Faith Foster Family Network, 3FN
 First Place for Youth**
 First Star
 Foothill Workforce Development Board
 Foster and Kinship Care Education
 Foster Care Counts
 Foster Ed
 Foster Nation
 Foster Together Network
 FosterMore
 Friends of the Children – Los Angeles
 Glendale Community College
 Glendale Youth Alliance
 Goodwill Southern California

Happy Trails for Kids
 Hathaway-Sycamores
 Hillsides
 Hire Opportunity Coalition
 iFoster**
 John Burton Advocates for Youth**^^
 Journey House
 L.A. Compact
 LA Tech4Good
 Learn4Life
 Long Beach City College
 Long Beach Forward
 Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services**
 Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources
 Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
 Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection
 Los Angeles County Office of Education**
 Los Angeles County Probation Department
 Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board
 Los Angeles County Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services**
 Los Angeles County Youth Commission
 Los Angeles Harbor College
 Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
 Los Angeles LGBT Center**
 Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative Young Leaders**
 Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot
 Los Angeles Pierce College
 Los Angeles Southwest College
 Los Angeles Trade Tech College
 Los Angeles Unified school District
 Los Angeles Valley College
 Loyola Marymount University
 Mount Saint Mary's University
 Mt San Antonio College
 Music Forward Foundation
 National Center for Youth Law
 National Foster Youth Institute
 New Ways to Work
 Office of Child Protection
 Office of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti
 Olive Crest
 Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network

Para Los Niños
 Pasadena City College
 Peace4Kids
 Public Counsel
 Ready To Succeed
 REDF
 ReLAY Institute (ReConnecting Los Angeles Youth)
 Reproductive Health Equity Project for Foster Youth
 Rio Hondo College
 Safe Place for Youth
 Santa Monica College
 School On Wheels
 Seen & Heard
 She Ready Foundation
 South Bay Workforce Investment Board**
 South East Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board
 South Los Angeles Transit Empowerment Zone (Slate Z)
 St. Anne's Family Services
 The Academy Project
 The Community College Foundation
 The Emporium
 The Imprint
 The RightWay Foundation
 Think of Us
 UCLA YouthSource Center
 Unite-LA**^^
 United Friends of the Children**
 University of California, Los Angeles
 University of Southern California
 Verdugo Workforce Development Board
 Walden Family Services
 Wayfinder Family Services
 Wellnest Los Angeles
 West Los Angeles College
 Yes2Jobs
 Yo Watts

**denotes Stewardship Board
 ^^denotes co-convenor



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