

# ONE UNITED VOICE FOR CHANGE



2022 YOUTH LEADERSHIP  
SUMMIT REPORT



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Transforming foster care &  
Ending youth homelessness

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### OUR MISSION

Our mission is to transform the foster care system and end youth homelessness.

Mockingbird creates, supports, and advocates for racially equitable, healthy environments that develop young people at risk of or experiencing foster care or homelessness.



### OUR VISION

Each and every young person, regardless of race and individual experience, reaches adulthood with an equitable opportunity to thrive.



# WHAT IS SUMMIT?



Mockingbird Youth Programs is a statewide coalition of powerful young people affected by foster care and/or homelessness. Throughout chapters located across the state, Summit brings together young people who have experienced the child welfare system or our state's homeless youth response system first-hand so that they can present not just issues, but solutions – so that tomorrow's youth do not have to face the same challenges they have. This year we celebrated our 17th annual Summit!

## EVENT SCHEDULE

The 2022 Summit was conducted via a hybrid model so that youth and community members from across Washington could join together.

### Opening & Land Acknowledgment

Summit 2022 was hosted on the land of the Coast Salish Peoples- specifically the Muckleshoot, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, and Duwamish Nations.

### Guest Speakers

Justice Barbara Madsen, Co-Chair of the Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Foster Care; Gage Spicer, Vice Chair of the Office of Homeless Youth Advisory Committee; Tasha West-Baker, President of Mockingbird Board of Directors; and Jim Theofelis, founder of Mockingbird joined us to share their wisdom.

### Chapter Presentations with Q&A

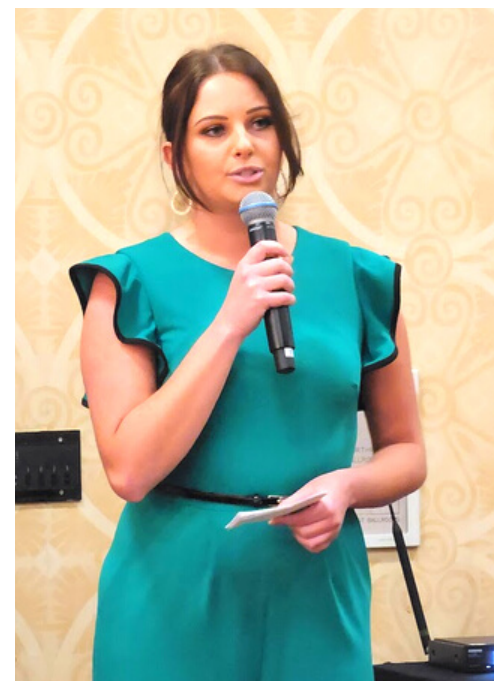
Each chapter of youth advocates presented their chosen topics to the community and then facilitated a discussion.

### Guest Speakers

Rodney Robinson, Chair of the Office of Homeless Youth Advisory Committee; and Washington Secretary of State Ross Hunter, Co-Chair of the Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Foster Care also joined us to share space.

### Closing & Awards Ceremony

Jim Theofelis presented the ACE Award, and youth advocates were honored for all their hard work.







# CHAPTER ISSUES

## Seattle & Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness Chapters

### **Expanding Extended Foster Care**

The Seattle and YAEH Chapters are proposing an expansion of Extended Foster Care (EFC). EFC exists to help young people who are dependents of the state when they turn 18. However, many young people in foster care are not receiving the support they need while in EFC, with some recipients still experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, and other struggles. By expanding EFC eligibility requirements and available resources, Washington could better support its young people as they navigate life.

### **Eastern Chapter**

### **Student to adulthood readiness training (START)**

The Eastern Chapter is proposing that student to adulthood readiness training, or START, be a required course for high school graduation. In this course, students would be required to learn the basics of what it's like to live an adult life. This would include financial literacy, professional development, basic mechanics, basic cooking skills, and how to access resources in the area. Only one credit is required, and youth can take the course at any point in their high school career. Doing this will open more positions in schools for teachers to fill as well as preventing homelessness in youth. By making this a high school requirement for all youth, everyone is given a chance at a successful adulthood.



# CHAPTER ISSUES CONT.

## Peninsula Chapter

### ***Minor access to shelter***

The Peninsula Chapter has noted that some youth under age 18 who are experiencing homelessness cannot safely return home. Additionally, youth under 18 cannot consent to their own shelter. In cases where youth cannot return home, and their parents do not give consent or cannot be located, youth may end up experiencing homelessness. The Peninsula Chapter is proposing a pathway for youth to be able to selfconsent to shelter or private housing (such as with a family friend) when they cannot safely return home and while they are pursuing legal pathways such as a CHINS or dependency or guardianship. The Chapter is considering what a safety assessment for that situation would look like to ensure that the youth’s choice is a safe space.

## Northern Chapter

### ***Limiting access to juvenile records***

Juvenile records have significant consequences for young people, and can cause youth to be denied for school, jobs, and homes, so they struggle to get on their feet as young adults. Black, Indigenous, and other youth of color are overrepresented in the juvenile legal system, facing higher rates of referrals to court and adjudications for criminal offenses than their white counterparts. Despite the existence of automatic sealing for some juvenile records, a number of offenses are not eligible for automatic sealing, or sealing is dependent on full restitution to victims. Many young adults aren’t aware of the process and don’t have someone who can help them through it. Prior to sealing, the records are open and accessible online, making it very difficult to actually pull back records. The Northern chapter is proposing a multipart solution: making juvenile records confidential to begin with, and creating a system of accountability to fine state agencies which fail to safeguard confidential or sealed juvenile records.



# OUR IMPACT



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Every year, the thoughtful solutions that youth advocates at Mockingbird create at Summit influence meaningful change for other young people across Washington. Because of their tireless work providing testimony, meeting with legislators and supporters, and building relationships in the community; Mockingbird has achieved countless legislative wins. Most recently . . .



## 2021 - 2022 WINS!

### HB 1219

*Provides legal representation to youth in foster care*

**\$1.9 mil**

*Secured in funding for foster youth transitioning to independence*

### SB 5096

*Creates revenue for education, early learning, and childcare programs*

### HB 1277

*Creates and funds a permanent eviction prevention program at the Department of Commerce*

### SB 5151

*Creates a “child specific license” to help people who would like to foster parent a specific young person, like a relative, with faster licensing*

### HB 1236

*Prohibits landlords from issuing a 20-day “no cause” eviction*

### SB 5160

*Ensures tenants are able to have an attorney represent them in eviction court and requires dispute resolution prior to eviction*

### HB 1140

*Requires that minors who are stopped by police have an opportunity to consult with an attorney before waiving their Miranda rights/answering police questions*

### SB 5793

*Provides stipends for low-income or underrepresented community members of state boards, commissions, councils, committees, and other similar groups.*

### HB 1310

*Modifies the use of force statute, prioritizes de-escalation, and requires that use of force be a last resort*

**\$10.6 mil**

*Budgeted to continue providing stipends for young people aging out of Extended Foster Care*

**\$269,000**

*Provided to expand the Mockingbird Family Model*

**\$325,000**

*Budget proviso directing DCYF to increase access to bank accounts for youth in foster care*

### SB 5883

*Allows unaccompanied homeless youth to provide informed consent for their own healthcare*

### SB 5566

*Expands the eligibility for the Independent Youth Housing Program. \$4 Million included in final state budget for implementation*

**\$600,000**

*Provided to expand the availability of on-site behavioral health services in under-18 youth shelters*

**\$750,000**

*Provided to continue work on the establishment of a lifeline for youth and young adults who have experienced or are at risk of entering into public systems of care*

### HB 1905

*Focuses on reducing homelessness for youth and young adults discharging from a publicly funded system of care. \$4.4 Million included in final budget for implementation*

### HB 1186

*Creates a community transition program for the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration*





# PEOPLE ARE TALKING!

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100% of youth participants agreed that Summit improved their leadership skills and helped them to see themselves as a leader.\*



*"I feel listening to youth with lived experience is invaluable. The youth who presented are amazing humans and have well thought out ideas." – Community Participant*



*"It made me feel more connected to like minded people. I really felt a sense of community. It wasn't a competition, we were all there for the same goal and we all supported and uplifted each other. It made me more aware of issues I didn't even realize were issues. I'm grateful that I got to be a part of something great and that I have an impact on important matters just by sharing my voice and perspective." – Youth Advocate*

Youth participants noted that their favorite moments from Summit 2022 were. . .

- *"Getting to present in front of legislators after all the work we put into it!"*
- *"The little moments of support that often are overlooked. I loved that we all cared for each other even by seemingly doing the littlest things. Sometimes that makes the most impact. "*

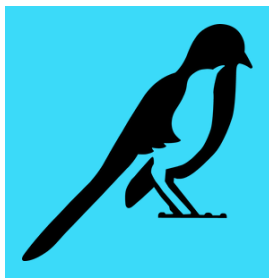


92% of youth advocates agreed that Summit increased their desire to empower others to fight for change.\*

*"I love hearing from young people with lived experience and knowing what their ideas are I can incorporate into my work for system change." –Community Participant*

\*That completed the post-event survey.





# AWARD CEREMONY



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## Reuven Carlyle

WA State Senator, 36th  
Legislative District – Seattle

## ACE AWARD 2022

The ACE Award celebrates those individuals who have made a significant impact on the lives of young people and families. The ACE is a reference to an “ace” in your hand, one factor that makes all the difference in the hand you are dealt. This year, Founder Jim Theofelis presented the award to Senator Reuven Carlyle. Senator Carlyle has been working alongside Mockingbird and youth advocates since its beginning, and he continues to support young people in their efforts for change by listening deeply, sponsoring many of our legislative items, and by making these issues a priority.

*"We all know the line from Martin Luther King that the arc of history bends towards justice. The arc of history – in terms of Mockingbird's work – bends towards progress and results and steps in the right direction, year after year after year. Every year, you and your predecessors have shown up with authenticity, with real stories, with the reality, with pain, with hurt, with anger, with joy, with love; all of those deep underlying sentiments that make this work real agendas that then move into action." – Senator Carlyle*

## Youth Advocate Awards

The youth advocates present were also honored for their hard work and participation in creating and presenting their solutions.



# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

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*The Mockingbird Society is deeply grateful to all of our 2022 Youth Leadership Summit sponsors. Your generosity allows us to make our annual event possible! Thank you for investing in these young leaders and their dedication towards creating change.*



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**Group Health  
Foundation**