

Program Overview:

In FY19, Be Strong Families (BSF) partnered with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services in ensuring compliance with the Youth Advisory Board Act (20 ILCS 527/) by:

- Supporting the convening and maintenance of:
 - a Statewide Youth Advisory Board; and
 - regional youth advisory boards in the Cook and Northern regions of the state.
- Supporting each regional youth advisory board in working with the Department or its designee to determine how to best provide services to current and former youth in foster care living within their regions.
- Supporting the Statewide Youth Advisory Board in advising the Department and the General Assembly with respect to all matters involving or affecting current and former youth in foster care.

Through this program BSF partnered directly with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board members and DCFS to ensure the board met the responsibilities of the Youth Advisory Board act by:

- 1) Providing the Department and the General Assembly with the perspective of youth under the care of the Department:
- 2) Identifying, analyzing and recommending solutions to any issues concerning adoption and guardianship and youth in foster care.
- 3) Reviewing and advising the Department on proposed or pending legislation, primarily as it concerns current and former youth in foster care; and
- 4) Reviewing and making recommendations on Department foster care and child welfare service delivery policies, guidelines, procedures and training.

The scope of services included partnering with SYAB youth in successfully planning, coordinating, and implementing 4 Statewide Youth Advisory Board meetings (one in each region, per quarter) and an annual Youth Advisory Board retreat as well as partnering with the regional officer slates in the Cook and Northern regions to support the successful planning and implementation of monthly regional board meetings, which also included the coordination of Interactive Leadership Meetings (ILM) and promoting civic engagement / policy advocacy that assists youth in the development and submission of problem statements, recommendations, and systems change proposals that address youth concerns. Through this program, we partnered with board members in promoting opportunities for YAB members to participate in public forums, panels, and conferences in order to represent their own experience and the voice of youth in care. We also invited collaboration with the IL Chapter of Foster Care Alumni of America to provide information on their legislative agenda and provide collaboration opportunities for board members. BSF also partnered with youth liaisons to attend and represent the board at several DCFS Advisory councils and assisted youth in participating in the annual Legislative Shadow Day. The program also supported engagement with YAB approved initiatives such as the Therapeutic Residential Performance Management Initiative (TRPMI) and the Loyola University Legislation and Policy Clinic (LULPC) as well as other activities. Beyond the programmatic goals, efforts also focus on building the capacity of YAB members to develop authentic youth-adult partnerships and by coordinating and

offering youth development training and leadership development opportunities.

Cook and Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board Meeting Activities:

Below is an overview of Cook and Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board activities in FY19 by quarter, followed by details on each monthly RYAB meeting.

Q1 included the following meetings:

- Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB meetings – July, August, September
 - ILM Meetings – July, August, September
- Cook Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB Meetings – July, August, September
 - ILM Meetings – July, August, September

Q2 included the following meetings:

- Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB meetings – October, November, December
 - ILM Meetings – October, November, December
- Cook Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB Meetings – October, November, December
 - ILM Meetings – October, November, December

Q3 included the following meetings:

- Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB meetings – January, February, March
 - ILM Meetings – January, February, March
- Cook Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB Meetings – January, February, March
 - ILM Meetings – January, February, March

Q4 included the following meetings:

- Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB meetings – April, May, June
 - ILM Meetings – April, May, June
- Cook Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) meetings:
 - RYAB Meetings – April, May, June
 - ILM Meetings – April, May, June

July Meeting Summaries / Highlights:**Cook Region***ILM Meeting*

Be Strong Families Cook Region Coordinator arranged for the regional officers to meet by teleconference and none of the officers attended the call. In working to develop an updated program plan in partnership with Youth and partners, one way we anticipate addressing sporadic attendance is providing additional stipend incentive to RYAB officers for the completion of materials discussed over the ILM call.

RYAB Meeting

July's RYAB meeting convened on the 19th with a total of 41 individuals in attendance (26 youth and 15 staff).

Presentation

July's workshop was titled "Youth Voice" and participants worked in small groups, reviewing a draft of Administrative Procedure #30. The draft procedure address is intended to address communicating with youth, instructions for addressing youth issues and concerns, data tracking, and included a proposed youth issue and concerns form. Participants thoroughly analyzed each section of the AP #30 in their small groups and provided recommendations for changes or additions. Youth were able to practice making advisements to the department and advocating on behalf of their peers.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were 5 youth issue and concerns submitted. Issues included: the need for a cell phone (2), sibling visits, insufficient allowance, and a lack of confidentiality. All forms were submitted to Lynda Swan McClendon in OETS and Rod Remolina at the advocacy office within the required timeframe.

Director's Update

Lynda Swan McClendon could not make the July meeting however, she did requested BSF staff solicit youth feedback on a recent communication from the Director's Office. The communication addressed new and innovative ways to communicate with the youth with the Director asking how YAB members felt about creating an avatar/ bitmoji (similar to Snapchat) that would be associated with their case file. The youth discussed the idea and gave feedback on conditions they would like to see put into place before moving forward with the idea. All suggestions were forwarded to Lynda Swan McClendon.

Additional Highlights

The Cook board elected new Officers during July's meeting which included, Tierra Winters as Sergeant at Arms and Charlise Fenderson as the Vice President in FY19.

Outreach

July's outreach included submission of monthly flyers via email to all agencies on our contact list. Follow-up phone calls and emails were conducted to gather / confirm RSVP counts.

Northern Region:*ILM Meeting*

Staff assisted youth with conducting their ILM meeting in preparation for July RYAB. Officers discussed ways they would like to see their meetings improved by making the meeting more interactive opposed to a lecture style. Youth decided to facilitate a team building activity used during previous Statewide meetings. Staff assisted youth with preparing speeches to obtain new positions within the board along with encouragement to be confident and speak from the heart. Youth also decided by way of consensus on which officer will do what during the meeting. Overall the youth displayed great teamwork and growth as they are fine tuning their ability to come to a consensus.

RYAB Meeting:

July's RYAB meeting was held on the 17th of the month and included 22 participants (14 youth, 8 staff)

Presentations:

At July's meeting, Northern RYAB Officers facilitated a team building activity for participants. The activity which worked with small groups, was designed to help participants recognize individuals' unique communication styles and address how to navigate different communication styles from your own. MEMBERS reflected on how they communicate with others and how they strengthen their ability to communicate their needs in different situations. Anecdotal reporting showed that the youth enjoyed the workshop and it was a great opportunity for members to practice their public speaking and presentation skills.

Youth Issues and Concerns:

3 Youth Issues and Concerns were collected during July's meeting. Youth reported being mistreated by staff and being engaged in a non-professional way—including issues with staff not allowing an individual to attend RYAB as a result of having "small" clothes and their hygiene not up to par as well as not being able to attend court appearances due to restrictions at their placement. All forms were submitted to Nutashia Bynes and the advocacy office within the required timeframe.

Director's Update:

Nutashia Bynes provided the Directors Update, asking a series of open-ended questions to assess participants' level of knowledge on scholarship opportunities offered through DCFS and whether they had obtained information on scholarship programs. The presentation also asked youth their opinion on communication with their worker and whether it had been going well. Some youth reported having very limited contact with their worker and that there were instances that information would be provided late or not at all. Participants suggested that there should be an opportunity for youth to confirm that communication / follow up had occurred by signing off on them.

Additional Highlights:

The Northern Region held elections for members and officers looking to hold a different position. All five officer positions have been filled with the addition of one member winning the election for Executive

Team Leader. Currently, there are no vacancies within the Northern Region.

Outreach:

Be Strong Families staff reached out to agencies in the Northern Region to encourage agency participation and additional emails were sent to agency staff in an effort to address and clarifying questions they had on the YAB program. Flyers were also transmitted to agencies promoting RYAB meetings

August's Meeting Summaries/ Highlights

Cook Region

ILM Meeting

The Cook ILM meeting was held on August 13th and two officers participated. The group started the meeting with an update from the retreat earlier in the month and BSF staff addressed behavior concerns that arose over the weekend. The team was challenged to reflect on how they would ensure that they were performing at their best. Those in attendance committed to supporting efforts to ensure their peers conducted themselves more appropriately in the future. August workshops and the presenter request forms were approved. The meeting then moved towards discussion of September's SYAB meeting, hosted by Cook, and brainstorming ideas for workshops. The group then discussed outreach and specifically some agencies who had been inquiring about the board. Participants agreed to join BSF staff in supporting outreach and provided their availability.

RYAB Meeting:

August RYAB meeting convened on the 16st with a total of 37 individuals in attendance. 23 youth (members, guest) and 14 staff.

Presentation:

The Cook RYAB workshop in August was titled "Youth Alternatives to Gangs and Drugs" and was facilitated by Officer Williams of the Chicago Police Department. In addition to addressing the topics in the title, Officer Williams addressed the perception of police, uncovering that many in attendance had negative feelings when asked what came to their mind when they heard "Police", with very few associating the term "Police" as a positive. He shared his background and what led him to policework as a career. The workshop then included discussions on drugs and their negative impact as well as gang violence and encouraging the youth to steer clear of the different gangs in Chicago. Closing out the workshop, the group discussed what to expect when coming in contact with the police, what might occur, terms to use and how to know if you're being detained. The workshop ended on a positive note with the group discussing how to be their best selves in everything they do.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were 12 youth issues and concerns submitted. Issues included: lack of caseworker contact, the need for a cell phone, lack of basic needs, and placement issues. All forms were submitted to Lynda Swan McClendon in OETS and Rod Remolina at the advocacy office within the required timeframe.

Director Updates

No DCFS updates were presented, but Antwan Turpeau led a discussion on dually involved youth (youth with Juvenile Justice Cases and a DCFS case), asking youth to share their experiences having contact with the police and sharing statistical information on dually involved youth and then polled participants on five topics: family/ support (support from families, friends, and teachers would help youth become more successful), school/ education (schools need more resources), violence/ safety/ police (gang presences is a top concern), money/ employment (youth need more help finding jobs), and opportunities (opportunities expose youth to a new life). Youth indicated how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement by marking each topic with a 1- strongly agree or a 4- disagree.

Additional Highlights:

10 first time youth attended the August meeting and they seemed to have a positive experience that will lead them to join future meetings.

Cook Outreach:

In August, BSF sent out flyers to all agencies in contact list via email and made follow-up calls to confirm RSVP counts with each agency. TRPMI has been an effective outreach resource helping youth get to the meetings by encouraging their agencies to become more involved. One example is Ibukin, who supported a youth's attendance in August with the assistance of TRMPI.

Northern Region*ILM Meeting*

The focus of Northern's ILM was understanding officer roles for those in new positions, discussion on August's RYAB workshop, and coming to agreement on what information to bring back to their peers from the retreat that occurred earlier in the month. The group agreed that August's workshop would focus on creating an elevator speech for themselves (who they are in 60 seconds or less) that they had experienced at an earlier statewide and then participants assigned each other their sections of the agenda. In northern region, the officers have really taken ownership of the ILM with little support needed from staff—they have been working together to identify solutions to issues and are able to address minor disagreements civilly.

RYAB Meeting:

August's meeting was held on the 21st and welcomed 21 youth (17 members, 4 guests) and 10 staff.

Presentations:

As agreed on the ILM, the RYAB officers conducted an "Elevator Speech" workshop which helped youth build communications skills that would support their ability to share their story in a very limited amount of time (60 seconds or less). The workshop helped participants capture the key thoughts/ aspects of their "introduction" and encouraged youth to only share aspects of their life that they were comfortable with. The officers who facilitated the workshop offered positive individual encouragement to all in the

room which helped participants feel more comfortable in writing and sharing. 8 of the 21 participants shared their stories with the group and was received with positive feedback from all.

Youth Issues and Concerns:

0 Youth Issues and Concerns were collected during August Northern RYAB meeting.

Directors Updates:

The Advocacy Office was in attendance and on their role in serving the YAB. The representative from the advocacy office explained the process for reporting youth issue and concerns, the type of issues that can be reported, what to expect from the advocacy office when they are informed of a grievance. In sharing the many items they can assist with, they addressed some issues that they had no control over, such as, what type of food is chosen for meals in their placements.

Outreach:

In Northern, BSF reached out to agencies in northern via email to encourage agency participation, sharing flyers and confirming times for RYAB meeting times. As a result there were youth in attendance who normally wouldn't have been in attendance. Examples include Allendale (4 youth) and One Hope United (5 youth).

September Meeting Summaries / Highlights:

Cook Region

ILM Meeting

Cook's ILM was held On September 5th and two officers participated in the call. The participants and BSF staff discussed their final plan for the youth to youth presentation as well as regional meeting planning. The Cook RYAB received a request from Illinois Courts to attend September's meeting, following up from their attendance in April where youth shared their court experiences, to provide an update on their findings from across the state. The group then discussed workshop ideas, and the idea of a back to school workshop was discussed and agreed upon by officers, and the group agreed to invite Corey Shannon (former CPS teacher and Principle) to lead a discussion around academic success. The last item on the agenda included a presentation request from the Associate Deputy of Residential Monitoring to have officers speak at their next all staff meeting on Nov 19 – 20. Before closing the call, the officers were reminded of an upcoming meeting with the Director's Office and Casey Family Programs on September 17th to discuss program plan development for the rest of this fiscal year with an increased focus on YAB composition and Adult-Youth Partnerships.

RYAB Meeting

September's meeting convened on the 20th with a total of 31 individuals in attendance (17 youth and 14 staff).

Presentation

Corey Shannon, Education Assistant for DCFS, and former CPS teacher and Principal, led the

workshop/discussion on success in academia and in life. Mr. Shannon began by telling his story about flunking out of college and being set back home and urged participants to learn from his mistakes. He talked about what inspired him to get back on track, finish school, and what it took to overcome the “statistics”. Mr. Shannon highlighted opportunities that are currently available to youth and some that he is currently working on such as employment partnerships with well-known companies. The overall message to the youth was to find the proper steps and procedures that work for them as an individual and to make sure they advocate for themselves and follow through.

Youth Issues and Concerns:

There were 2 youth issues and concerns submitted. All forms were submitted to Lynda Swan McClendon in OETS and Rod Remolina at the advocacy office within the required timeframe.

Director’s Update:

The Director’s update was Lynda Swan McClendon who shared an update on Phase 3 of the Governor’s Cabinet Project. Youth who completed the survey at the youth summit and opted to participate in phase 3 of the project will be invited to attend the Youth Solution Summit scheduled to occur in Bloomington, IL on October 25th and 26th. At the Solution Summit, youth will engage with state agencies and DCFS to discuss and provide solutions to some of the issues dually involved youth face. Youth who attend will be rewarded with prizes, a stipend, and a certificate of completion.

Additional Highlights:

Thresholds attended the meeting with two first time youth and the meeting welcomed a youth from UCAN’s TPSN program who attended as a result of positive work of mouth from one of her peers.

Cook Outreach:

BSF sent out monthly flyers to all agencies in our contact list via email and some agencies also received SYAB postcards providing additional information about the Board to share with their youth. Follow-up calls were made to gather RSVP counts from each agency. In September, however, despite receiving 40 RSVPs, only 17 were in attendance.

Northern Region

ILM Meeting

BSF staff, executive officers (5 officers, 5 members and 1 staff) convened the monthly ILM on September 11th. On the, ILM youth collaboratively assigned roles, set goals and discussed the outcomes they wanted to see at the RYAB meeting in September. In addition to setting the agenda and assigning tasks, the team agreed on the workshop and came to agreement on how to make announcements at the upcoming meeting.

RYAB Meeting:

September’s meeting was held on the 18th welcomed 12 youth (10 members, 2 guests) and 9 staff.

Presentation:

Youth provided a team building activity for the RYAB in the meeting which broke participants into two teams who were working to build the tallest standing tower using marshmallows and spaghetti. The purpose of this activity was to gauge how well others work together when collaboration is a key factor that will contribute to success. As the participants went through the activity the key factors were how leaders emerged as leaders in helping each group maintain focus and how effectively suggestions and ideas were received among one another. Although participants felt at times they were in competition, everyone was announced as a winner.

Youth Issues and Concerns:

1 Youth Issue and Concern was collected where a youth was not able to access their social security card which prevented them from obtaining employment. This form was submitted to Nutashia Bynes, OETS and the advocacy office within the required timeframe.

Director's Update:

Nutashia Bynes provided the update sharing information and materials on the Find Your Future internship and encouraging RYAB members to apply. Nutashia addressed questions from youth on how to apply and contact with additional questions. Youth were also alerted to be on the lookout for DCFS scholarship information which is expected to be presented in January.

Northern Outreach:

BSF contacted agencies via email and telephone in September informing them of meeting times and sending fliers.

October's Meeting Summaries / Highlights:**Cook Region***ILM Meeting*

The Cook Region ILM convened on October 3rd by teleconference. Two officers participated in the scheduled teleconference and the primary agenda item was discussing plans for October's RYAB meeting. The team decided to introduce a Halloween theme into the meeting which included decorating the space and providing guests with treat bags. The agenda was reviewed and each of the sections were assigned. BSF staff also informed the officer slate that a representative from the teen parent network would be in attendance to address concerns raised by teen parents.

RYAB Meeting

October's RYAB meeting convened on the 18th and welcomed a total of 52 individuals (35 youth and 17 staff).

Presentation

The presentation in October included a return visit from the Courts, Children and Families Unit of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts. The purpose of this visit was to follow up on focus groups

conducted in April, 2018 with the regional boards that was gathering input on youth's experiences when going to court. They reported commonalities across the regional board and overall that negative experiences overshadowed the positive. Statewide, youth reported frustrations with their experiences feeling as if they were not being heard and that at times caseworker reports were exaggerated, and difficulty getting connected with the Guardian Ad Litem. In addition, the respondents indicated a strong desire to have more information shared with them regarding the court dates that impact their lives. For instance, being notified when court dates are coming up and also being allowed the option to attend their own court dates if interested in doing so.

Ultimately, youth in Illinois want to feel respected and listened to, especially when it comes to the trajectory of their own lives. Illinois Courts shared that these results were shared with judges across the state as well who had a positive response to what the youth were asking for.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were 8 youth issue and concerns raised at October's meeting. Issues included: the need for a cell phone, lack of variety in food options, unfair restrictions, caseworker turnover rate, lack of caseworker contact/ effort, feeling unsafe in placement, and lack of available information. All forms were submitted to Lynda Swan McClendon in OETS and Rod Remolina at the advocacy office within the required timeframe.

Director's Update

Dena Marshall-Howell, Advocacy Office provided the update by giving an overview of the services available through the DCFS Advocacy Office. She emphasized the importance of completing a youth issue and concern form and raised awareness of the different types of issues that the advocacy office can address. She also reviewed the process with youth of how youth issues and concerns are submitted, received, and addressed.

Northern Region:

ILM Meeting

The northern region ILM occurred on October 8th by teleconference and 3 of the 5 officers participated. In addition to the standard agenda items, the group took the initiative to include an interactive public speaking workshop using tools/ skills they gained through the Statewide Youth Advisory Board meeting that they would lead meeting participants through. Dayveon, one of the officers, took the lead in incorporating it into the agenda and finalizing it in advance of the meeting.

RYAB Meeting:

October's RYAB meeting was held on the 16th and welcomed 38 participants (28 youth and 10 adults).

Presentations:

As reported in Cook Region, the Illinois Courts returned to the Northern RYAB to present the findings from their April, 2018 focus group. In addition, northern officers facilitated a short workshop addressing "What the Youth Advisory Board Means". This workshop focused on introducing public

speaking skills and tools learned at the Statewide Youth Advisory Board meeting and had a creative element that engaged the participants. Youth broke into groups of three and brainstormed what the YAB meant to them and collected the responses on post-it notes. Then each group gathered the comments and created a visual image that represented the larger list that they reported out on. The results were:

- Stairs (representing growth / elevation in life)
- Peace Sign (representing a place of calmness)
- Heart (representing love and belonging)

Youth Issues and Concerns:

There were 8 youth issues and concerns collected during the meeting. Issues submitted included: lack of professionalism displayed by staff, agency withholding funds, a door being removed on dorm, bullying, a lack privacy, staff/ youth ratio, and visitation. All forms were submitted to Nutashia Baynes and Rod Remolina with the DCFS Advocacy Office within the required time frame.

Director's Update:

Nutashia Baynes provided the Director's update for the meeting which focused on reminding participants to apply for FAFSA benefits if they had not already done so.

Outreach – Cook and Northern

In October, BSF and the Regional Officers partnered with TRPMI to assist with implementing a “youth experience in care” survey. This included attending multiple residential programs to talk with youth about the YAB, the benefits of being on the board and they were encouraged to attend upcoming meetings. In addition, BSF sent out meeting information electronically and posted regional meeting information on the Dnet.

November Meeting Summaries/ Highlights

Cook Region

ILM Meeting

Cook's ILM meeting was held on November 1st with two of the five cook officers participating by teleconference. BSF assisted in facilitating the agenda which began with officers discussing October's meeting and where the meeting could be strengthened and improved. Consensus among the group was that turnout was good and that the officers executed their roles effectively and kept their peers engaged throughout the meeting. They also liked the interactive elements of the meeting. The group discussed the possibility of adding childcare at the meetings to assist with teen moms as an area of improvement since October's meeting had several children in attendance. Following October's debrief, the group began planning for November's RYAB meeting. The group agreed to offer a presentation on Sex Trafficking Prevention which was a topic raised in FY18. Youth determined food options and assigned officers to their roles within the agenda. BSF also reviewed the new intern program that was in development, sharing the purpose behind it and reviewing the requirements that were being

considered for anyone applying. The group also discussed the updated membership incentive program and increased stipend opportunities for officers.

RYAB Meeting:

November's meeting was convened on the 15th and welcomed a total of 38 individuals (26 youth and 12 staff).

Presentation:

The workshop presented in November focused on sex trafficking was facilitated by Kara Thompson from *Selah Freedom*, a national organization with the mission to end sex trafficking and bring freedom to the exploited. The interactive presentation started by polling participants on their awareness of the subject and the majority of those present knew about the subject and issue and then participants walked through some basic definitions on the topic. Members then viewed clips from a film "Caught up" and after each small clip that illustrated scenarios and then challenged participants to identify what was going on, what was heard, and the types of behaviors and actions they saw from the perpetrators and youth. The goal of the film clips were to expose many of the dark secrets behind sex trafficking. The presenter emphasized how youth are targeted and recruited and signs to look for from their peers that might indicate they are being trafficked. In addition the presentation broadened the definition of sex trafficking beyond just sex in exchange for money, clarifying that trafficking included the exchange of sex for other items like drugs, clothes, a place to sleep and food to name a few examples which surprised the youth. The presenter also warned that perpetrators can sense vulnerabilities and weakness that they will use to manipulate then and when a youth is on run they often play off those weakness to lure them into "the life".

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were 3 youth issues and concerns submitted. Issues included: theft within foster placement, placement not attending to their needs, and furniture needs within their agencies. All forms were submitted to Lynda Swan McClendon in OETS and Rod Remolina at the advocacy office within the required timeframe.

Director Updates

There were no Director updates provided at November's meeting.

Cook Outreach:

In November, flyers were distributed to all of the agencies in our contact list by email and follow-up calls were made to gather RSVP counts from each agency. BSF staff also attended a Residential monitoring all staff meeting to provide an overview of the Youth Advisory Board and addressed some of the barriers preventing youth from attending. BSF and the monitoring staff discussed strategies for assisting agencies with informing and encouraging their youth to attend YAB.

Northern Region*ILM Meeting*

The Northern meeting was held on November 12th and only one officer participated. During the meeting the staff and individual present debriefed October's meeting. The individual present indicated that the meeting went okay, but felt that the officer team (themselves included) needed to work on engaging their participants more effectively. Staff provided positive feedback towards the northern officers highlighting their effectiveness at listening and being attentive to the concerns of their fellow members and stressed the importance of the full officer slate being on the same page when presenting to the larger group. With the plan in place to offer a sex trafficking prevention workshop, those present expressed concerns that the workshop might make some participants uncomfortable. They discussed strategies to assist in creating a safe space for the presentation because the topic was important for youth in care to be aware of, including making sure that it was clear to participants that if the topic became overwhelming that they'd be supported if needing to leave the room in order to take a minute to collect themselves. Before closing the meeting BSF shared information on the new stipend and incentive programs being rolled out as well as the intern program that was being developed.

RYAB Meeting:

November's meeting was held on November 20th and welcomed 36 people (23 youth and 13 staff).

Presentations:

As was delivered in Cook, Northern's November presentation was on the topic of Human Sex Trafficking Prevention. Despite concerns going in, those in attendance were really engaged and interested in the topic and participated heavily in the discussion. Youth learned about methods that sex traffickers use to recruit young people, were able to identify risk factors, and were taught tactics to avoid becoming a part of "the life".

Youth Issues and Concerns:

There were 2 Youth Issues and Concerns collected during the meeting. The issues submitted included a lack of hot water, no heat in the residential school setting and not receiving adequate food portions. All forms were submitted to Nutashia Baynes and Rod Remolina with the DCFS Advocacy Office within the required time frame.

Director's Update:

Updates were provided by Nutashia Baynes and once again reminded all high school seniors to complete their FAFSA forms to support their financial aid efforts. In addition, High School Seniors confirmed their contact information to ensure they were enrolled in the scholarship program.

Outreach:

During the month of November, BSF continued to build relationships agency personnel in the Northern region. Staff sent email correspondences to agencies and asked that they encourage youth participation. The November YAB flyer was also posted on the Dnet. There were positive results in that both One

Hope united and Arden shore attended with youth. They had previously reported the distance being a barrier to having youth attend.

December Meeting Summaries / Highlights:**Cook Region***ILM Meeting*

The Cook meeting was held on December 6th and two there were only two members of the officer slate attended. The meeting began with a debrief of November's meeting and youth on the call shared what went well in addition to areas to improve. Everyone on the call agreed that the sex trafficking prevention workshop was a positive highlight and beneficial to members, however, there were some maturity issues around some members being able to fully appreciate the training and seriousness of the topic. Following the debrief, the group began discussing ideas and planning for December's meeting. Being that the meeting was in advance of the December holidays, the group discussed ideas for making the meeting festive with interactive games and prize incentives for members including making sure each person in attendance left with a gift. Responsibilities for the agenda were delegated among the team and staff reminded the group of the new incentive program. There was an approaching policy meeting with Loyola coming up and before ending the call, the group discussed what to expect from that policy meeting.

RYAB Meeting

December's meeting convened on the 20th welcoming 35 individuals (19 youth and 16 staff).

Presentation

The December workshop was titled "Youth Voice" in which efforts focused on participants proposing policy revisions and comments. This is just one way the (YAB) provide the department with the unique perspective of those youth in care. The members split into small groups and reviewed Procedure 302 (Transition Planning for Adolescents) and each small group identified suggestions for changes / improvements and following the meeting those changes were submitted to the DCFS Policy Department. Following the policy work, the agenda shifted towards a holiday celebration where members and staff listened to holiday music, played games, decorated cookies, and had a coloring contest. Each youth in attendance received a small gift upon arrival and prizes were given to individuals who won the coloring contest, musical chairs, and the cookie decoration contest.

Youth Issues and Concerns:

There were three youth issues and concerns submitted. Submitted issues included lack of sibling contact, wrongfully being placed on run, and not receiving transportation to and from school. All forms were submitted to Lynda Swan McClendon in OETS and Rod Remolina at the advocacy office within the required timeframe.

Director's Update:

Updates were provided by Lynda Swan-McLendon who informed the board that she was retiring as of March 1, 2019. She informed the members that a representative from OETS would be joining the upcoming meetings to see how things were being done in order to assist with the transition. Graduations and Youth Summit planning were also included in December updates and participants were informed that the annual graduation celebrations that have traditionally occurred will not be taking place this year due to low attendance, but that planning for the 2019 Youth Summit would begin in January. The new YAB intern program was also presented and participants were made aware of the December 31 deadline.

Additional Highlights:

At the meeting youth reported liking the policy work (specifically being able to give their opinion on policies that pertains to them) and the holiday celebration. The gift they received was extremely valuable as some participants shared that they expected it to be the only gift that they would receive during the season. In addition, one new youth was voted in as a member in December.

Cook Outreach:

In December, agency outreach was conducted via email and staff created a flyer with the YAB meeting logistics and sent it out to agencies requested it be posted it on the Dnet. BSF also finalized the YAB Intern application in partnership with DCFS and that was shared across the agency by DCFS

Northern Region*ILM Meeting*

The Northern meeting was held on December 5th with four Officers and one member participating. The group debriefed November's meeting and all present agreed that they felt participation was strong and the workshop presentation was positive. The group shared that they still felt improvements needed to be made to work better as a team and sticking to the agenda in order to capture participants attention early on and keep them engaged throughout the meeting.

The team shifted towards planning for December's meeting which like Cook would have a holiday focus in addition to regular business. The group felt it beneficial to facilitate icebreakers and games that would help keep the energy in the room high and get people out of their seats. For the holiday celebration, an ice cream social was recommended and the team discussed needs for that. BSF reminded the officers of the stipend programs and recommended that they review the application to familiarize themselves with the guidelines. The next SYAB meeting was discussed as it would be hosted by Northern and the group was advised to begin planning youth to youth life skills presentations and other regional activities. As in Cook, the team was reminded of an upcoming meeting with Loyola to continue work on the FAQ document as well. BSF also notified the officers that a new Program Coordinator had started who would be starting the next day and indicated they'd have a chance to meet her at the upcoming RYAB.

RYAB Meeting:

December's meeting convened on the 18th and welcomed 22 individuals in attendance (12 youth and 10 staff).

Presentation:

December YAB is always a time for the youth and staff to celebrate the Holiday and this meeting was no different. Although workshops are not traditionally provided during the December meeting, December's meeting did include an activity that focused on proposed policy revisions and providing a platform for members to provide feedback as was done in Cook as well. For the Northern region, the youth broke off into small groups to review and discuss proposed changes to procedure 309.170 (adoption and guardianship services). Suggested changes to the procedure were noted and submitted to the DCFS policy department. Following the policy review, youth had the opportunity to enjoy an ice cream social planned and coordinated by the officers and like in Cook played games such as musical chairs and telephone, for example, where members had the opportunity to win prizes.

Youth Issues and Concerns:

There were two youth issues and concerns submitted. Issues included lack of proper maintenance at a TLP and concerns regarding in-appropriate advances made by a peer. All forms were submitted to Nutashia Baynes and Rod Remolina with the DCFS Advocacy Office within the required time frame.

Director's Update:

Nutashia Baynes provided the update informing the youth of the 2019 Youth Summit date and asked the members to develop a list of gifts/ prizes for the summit. She shared that she would not be purchasing the gifts this year (As in the past) and wanted to ensure that youth had input into what was purchased. FAFSA and in-state tuition were also topics of discussions and members were told to complete their financial aid before January in order to receive the maximum assistance. Ms. Nutashia reminded youth of the find your future summer internship and the deadline to apply as well.

Additional Highlights:

Although attendance was low, the smaller size created a positive opportunity for those in attendance to bond in a way they had not before. The size of the group allowed for the team to maneuver through the agenda more expeditiously which allowed additional time for conversations and fellowship. Two new youth were sworn in as members in December. BSF also introduced new Program Coordinator Laverne Smith in the meeting.

Northern Outreach:

The new coordinator spent time during the month getting acclimated with agencies in the Northern region. She introduced herself to agency personnel by phone and informed them of her role with the YAB moving forward. Flyers were created and transmitted to agencies and meeting information was posted on Dnet. BSF also finalized the YAB Intern application in partnership with DCFS and that was shared across the agency by DCFS

January Meeting Summaries / Highlights:**Cook Region***ILM Meeting*

The Cook Region ILM convened on January 8th by teleconference with two officers participating. The agenda was discussed and they agreed to have an educational workshop in the month of January. The new active membership incentive was discussed and BSF informed the officers that youth would begin receiving gift card incentives based on their 2nd quarter participation and the team agreed to present the active members with their gift cards during the elections portion of the agenda.

RYAB Meeting

January's RYAB meeting took place on the 17th and welcomed a total of 46 individuals (28 youth and 18 staff).

Presentation

DCFS NIU Education Advisors, Ms. Diane Fitzhugh and Ms. Donna Briscoe provided January's educational presentation with the goal of educating youth on Academic resources available through the department. The facilitators shared information on resources that included: Youth in College and Youth Scholarship programs, the Community College Payment Program, Education Training Vouchers, Tuition and Fee Waivers. The group discussed each of these resources in depth addressing questions on eligibility, requirements, benefits, and clarifying what was covered as part of the resource and areas of expense that were not included. Beyond the resources, the presentation also included a discussion around the DCFS Employment Incentive Program.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were 5 youth issue and concerns raised at January's meeting. Issues included: family visits, staff mistreatment, bullying, placement, and concerns with DCFS staff. All forms were submitted to Lynda Swan McClendon in OETS and Rod Remolina at the Advocacy Office within the required timeframe.

Director's Update

DCFS updates were provided by Lynda Swan McClendon from the Office of Education and Transition Services (OETS). Updates included details on June's Youth Summit with the members contributing their ideas on colors and themes. Lynda also reminded the RYAB that she would be retiring on February 28th. She introduced John Kasper, from OETS, who would be likely be representing the department at the monthly meetings.

Outreach

In January, BSF continued to identify agencies in Cook to invite them to the monthly meetings, send meeting information electronically and soliciting support from the department to post information on the agency Dnet. BSF also continued ongoing communications with representatives from TRPMI and traditional monitoring to encourage additional agency participation.

Northern Region*Northern ILM*

Northern's ILM was held on January 7th with two officers in attendance and one board member. The group discussed the topic of education and the importance of having the option of attending college for youth in care to be included as part of the RYAB agenda. Beyond secondary education, the team agreed that the workshop should be inclusive of all options and resources available to youth in care and not limiting it to only college resources. The officer team began expressing interest in being able to offer college visits for youth in care to assist youth in care in visualizing what the college experience would be like. Although unable to confirm a college tour, we are collaboratively working to bring more information on the 12 in-state universities at board meetings and revisiting the tour option in the future.

Northern Youth Advisory Board Meeting

January's RYAB meeting was convened on the 15th and welcomed a total of 27 individuals (19 youth and 8 adults).

Presentation

The January presentation was facilitated by BSF's Northern Region Program Coordinator, Laverne Smith. The workshop worked to enlighten youth to post-secondary opportunities and resources available through DCFS; focusing heavily on the tuition reimbursement. BSF did a "Future Box" activity to assist participants in identifying and expressing their goals to further their education. Inside "The Future Box" contained the name of the 12 state schools that accept the tuition waiver on a piece of paper and on the back of each school one of the majors they offer was written down. Each participant chose a school and then were challenged to look into the mirror at themselves to reflect on their education or post-secondary aspirations as they prepare to embark on their next journey for higher learning. The goal of this portion of the presentation was to promote positivity and test their confidence. All the youth in attendance all participated and enjoyed the workshop, they stated how helpful and insightful the information was.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were four youth issues and concerns raised during this portion of the agenda: Theft, favoritism, bullying and visitation hours being cut. All Youth Issues and Concerns were submitted to the Advocacy Office within the required timeframe.

DCFS Updates

DCFS updates were facilitated by Nutashia which included updates on Juvenile record expungement and the tuition waiver program. One of the updates was that youth currently enrolled in college who had previously not received the waiver would now be eligible and she also distributed resources for those in need of record expungement. Youth summit planning was also a topic of discussion and participants discussed ideas for t-shirt colors and slogans for the event.

Outreach

At December's meeting there was some concern about low attendance. Outreach efforts were amplified in advance of January's meeting which resulted in a higher attendance for January's meeting. Issues raised about the timing of the meeting and that it was a school night did not have an impact. BSF continued its traditional outreach as well, sharing with partner agencies and posting on the Dnet. Prior issues of the distance and the time of the meeting on a school night, didn't appear to be an issue this month. We were also successful in partnering with Norman Sleezer who were able to send 2 youth to the meeting.

February Meeting Summaries/ Highlights

Cook Region

ILM Meeting

Cook's ILM meeting was held on February 7th with two officers participating by teleconference. ILM began with officers discussing January's meeting, spelling out areas where the meeting could be strengthened. Consensus among the group was that the turnout was good and youth were positively engaged in the discussion. Following January's debrief, the group began planning February's meeting and agreed to host a workshop focusing on healthy relationships. Youth determined food options and assigned officers to their roles within the agenda. BSF also provided an update on the Intern program, indicating the deadline was extended beyond January because of vacancies that remained in 4 of the regions.

RYAB Meeting:

February's meeting was convened on the 21st and welcomed a total of 38 individuals (25 youth and 13 staff).

Presentation:

Planned Parenthood of Illinois (PPIL), a nonprofit organization that provides health care information worldwide, provided the presentation on Healthy Relationships. The presentation kicked off with an activity that tested participants' ability to judge healthy vs. unhealthy scenarios and situations and were provided a "card" with three options and the charge to categorize them by healthy, unhealthy, or abusive. Everyone had no problem identifying the healthy scenario, but youth struggled with categorizing the unhealthy vs. abusive correctly. The workshop went deeper on each of the categories to provide in-depth clarity on what defined certain situations as abusive and unhealthy versus healthy. The presentation also detailed additional information on how to identify signs that may flag a situation as potentially unhealthy and abusive and strategies on what to do if they suspect somebody is in a dangerous situation, including themselves.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There was one youth issue and concern submitted. Issue included: caseworker refusing to transport youth to court. All forms were submitted to Lynda Swan McClendon in OETS and Rod Remolina at the advocacy office within the required timeframe.

Director Updates

DCFS updates were provided by Luis Carrion, OETS. Updates included a reminder that the Youth Summit will be held on June 20th. Youth interested in working the summit were urged to sign up and then were given the opportunity to vote on summit themes and colors.

Cook Outreach

In February, flyers were distributed to all agencies in our contact list by email and follow-up calls were made to gather RSVP counts from each agency. Overall attendance has been strong for the Cook region throughout the year.

Northern ILM Call

Northern's ILM was held on February 5th with three participants joining the call. The group debriefed their January RYAB meeting, noting that they thought it was successful and appreciating the participation of their peers. The team began planning for the February's meeting with the idea of a financial literacy workshop being raised. Participants shared specific areas of financial literacy that would be of interest to them with an emphasis on money management. Youth decided to tie their ice breaker into the workshop by playing a game of "Would You Rather" using financial questions. BSF also reminded the youth that the northern region will be hosting the March SYAB and would be responsible for facilitating a peer to peer workshop. Youth discussed some possible workshop ideas and planned to reconvene to confirm topics.

RYAB Meeting:

February's meeting was convened on the 19th and welcomed a total of 30 individuals (22 youth and 8 staff).

Presentation

Laverne Smith, Northern RYAB Coordinator led the February workshop titled "Money Matters". The focus of this workshop was to increase financial literacy skills with a key focus on managing their money. Each youth participant was assigned a job with a weekly or biweekly pay amount. Youth were charged with making responsible choices with their monthly expenses. Participants were given a monthly budget form to complete and challenge to identify "necessities" versus "wants". In many cases, the youth didn't have enough money to make it through the entire month and were forced to eliminate things they could go without such as cable and social activities. This workshop was an eye opener and a great start towards assisting participants in developing good financial habits that will enable them to successfully make, manage, multiply, and protect their hard-earned money. Youth shared positive responses and excitement following the workshop indicating they learned new strategies on budgeting and saving.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were 7 youth issues and concerns submitted. Issues submitted included: stolen money, issues with placement debit card (4), molded food, and falsified documents in file. All submitted concerns were forwards to the advocacy office.

DCFS Updates

The Director's report was presented by Ms. Nutashia Baynes. Ms. Baynes reminded the youth of the upcoming summit asked all youth to vote on the theme and colors for Youth Summit. Also, Ms. Baynes discussed the find your future internship, encouraging youth to apply in advance of the deadline. All Youth Issues and Concerns were submitted to the Advocacy Office within the required timeframe.

Outreach

In February, flyers were distributed to all agencies by email and follow-up calls were made to gather RSVP counts from each agency. Northern Region transitional manager also assisted by posting the flyer on the Dnet. As in January, attendance was strong for the meeting. championing some of their initiatives. On March 4th, a teleconference call was convened for the policy small group team to discuss their presentation at the March . Youth decided to divide the presentation amongst each other (intro, homelessness, sibling visits, and use of restraints), and agreed to let the youth vote on their top two priorities.

March Meeting Summaries / Highlights:

Cook Region

ILM Meeting

Cook's regional ILM was held on March 8th at the SYAB meeting with two officers in attendance. The meeting began by debriefing February's RYAB meeting and discussing February RYAB meeting. Officers discussed possible workshop topics for March, expressing a need for more interactive meetings to keep guests and members more engaged and discussed the idea of having a workshop on the topic of "Boundaries". Responsibilities for the agenda were delegated among the team before adjourning.

RYAB Meeting

March's meeting convened on the 21th welcoming 38 individuals (18 youth and 20 staff).

Presentation

March's workshop "Boundaries" focused on three key topics: physical, mental/emotional, and relational boundaries and the importance of understanding what they are and maintaining them. The workshop broke members into small groups based on those topics and BSF assisted in leading each of those groups. Youth were charged with defining the general term "boundary" before diving deeper into the terms as it relates to their category. Participants discussed a series of questions on the importance of boundaries, consequences for not having them, and what could happen when they are crossed.

Then each category had an associated activity that explored real life examples as to why, how, and when boundaries are important. Following the activity, each small group set boundaries by answering the following questions for themselves:

1. People may not...
2. I have the right to ask for...
3. To protect my time and energy, it is okay to...

Each group nominated a spokesperson to represent their group and each they debriefed to the larger audience. Youth reported enjoying the workshop, especially the small group work because they enjoyed the intimacy of those conversations. Youth also reported enjoying the opportunity to meet new people and feeling comfortable participating and sharing.

Youth Issues and Concerns:

There were two youth issues and concerns submitted. Submitted issues included placement concerns and doors being removed from apartment. All forms were submitted to Luis Carrion in OETS and the Advocacy office within the required timeframe.

Director's Update:

Updates were provided by Luis Carrion who invited participants to make recommendations on workshop topics for the Cook County Youth Summit taking place on June 20th. Luis also provided resources for the youth. The first resource was an employment opportunity with Amazon and the second resource was for Youth Going to Prom program. Chi Unique Finds is providing prom dress for girls going out to prom.

Cook Outreach:

In March, agency outreach was conducted via email and staff created a flyer with the YAB meeting logistics and transmitted to agencies and posted it on the Dnet. We have learned that Thresholds has a new internal advisory council. Officers and BSF staff are planning to attend their internal board meeting in order to generate interest among youth who may also like to be a part of the RYAB. In March, we also did some in person outreach with Child Link, speaking with staff and the board about engaging their youth in care to be a part of the board.

Northern Region:

Northern ILM

The Northern ILM meeting was held on Monday, March 4th with only one member participating. March's RYAB was planned and those on the phone assigned items on the agenda to the other officers. The individual on the call also shared items from the SYAB meeting that would likely need to be brought back to the regional from the statewide meeting which included the output from Loyola's presentation and the LGBTQ presentation.

RYAB Meeting

March's meeting convened on the 19th welcoming 30 individuals (20 youth and 10 staff).

Presentation

In the northern region, the Boundaries workshop was provided as well, but there were some differences. The youth gathered into four different groups (with an adult partner in each group) where they were asked to take a piece of yarn which was a physical representation of their boundaries. Some youth used the yarn to wrap it around different body parts and others to use the yarn as a line to show how close someone is allowed to get to them. This opened the floor for discussion and questions that provided a safe space for participants to express their own definition of boundaries. Expounding on their prior knowledge of boundaries, youth had the opportunity to dive deeper into conversation about why boundaries exist and what happens when people don't have boundaries. This activity allowed them to gain knowledge and effectively communicate what triggers them negatively and positively. Youth reported a very positive experience with this workshop noting that they enjoyed learning about themselves and raising their own awareness about their own, and each others', boundaries. Attendance has had an upswing since January and a lot of new youth are attending the meetings and providing positive feedback on their experience.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There was one Youth Issue and Concern submitted. The submitted concern was regarding graduation expense reimbursement. All Youth Issues and Concerns were submitted to the Advocacy Office within the required timeframe.

DCFS Updates

DCFS updates were provided by Nutashia Baynes and included the announcement of the colors for the Youth Summit (pink, white and silver) and the theme "#Livingmybestlife". Baynes also provided employment resources noting that DCFS, Amazon, and Pace have partnered with the department to provide transportation for youth in care in order to work at Amazon in Aurora following a successful interview. Youth were reminded that March 31, 2019 will be the deadline to apply for the DCFS Scholarship.

April Meeting Summaries / Highlights:

Cook Region

ILM Meeting

Cook's ILM meeting was scheduled on April 3rd and BSF staff convened the call at 4:00pm, but the Cook officers did not join the call. When this occurs, BSF prepares the standard agenda for the meeting and confirms a workshop presentation.

RYAB Meeting:

April's meeting was convened on the 18th of the month and welcomed a total of 18 individuals (7 youth and 11 staff).

Presentation:

April's workshop was called **Body Image** and was presented by BSF staff member Takeisha Starnes.

The workshop was about promoting positive self-esteem and assisting youth in appreciating their own unique body image. The workshop began by defining body image “the subjective picture or mental image of one’s own body with the key word being subjective, reinforcing that what we consider beautiful is all based on personal opinions and we are often harder on ourselves because of an inability to live up to the images that are defined as “beautiful” in the mainstream media. The workshop then focused discussions around building one’s own positive body image. Youth discussed and emphasized what made them feel good about their body and physical appearance. As a final activity, youth practiced saying words of affirmation - looking into a mirror and stating three positive things about their body that they love.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were no youth issues and concerns submitted during April’s meeting.

Director Updates

DCFS updates were provided by Luis Carrion from the Office of Education and Transitional Services (OETS). Updates included reminding the board of the upcoming Youth Summit scheduled in June and were able to vote on workshop preferences among topics that included pregnancy skills, pregnancy prevention and legal advocacy. Based on youth feedback the group voted to have one combined workshop on pregnancy skills and pregnancy prevention. John Kaspar from OETS also presented on behalf of the department sharing information on an upcoming employment expo that was occurring at Kennedy King college. An Administrative Case Review (ACR) representative also attended this meeting to get feedback related to sibling visits.

Cook Outreach

In April, flyers were distributed to all agencies in our contact list by email and follow-up calls were made to gather RSVP counts from each agency. This month was the lowest attendance of the year which was unusual and may be the result of unusually poor weather in April, but attendance seemed to correct itself in the remaining meetings that took place.

Northern Region

Northern ILM

BSF staff convened the ILM call on April 2nd and similar to the Cook Region, none of the officers participated on the call. As a result BSF created the standard agenda for the meeting and confirmed the presentation.

Northern Youth Advisory Board Meeting

April’s RYAB meeting was convened on the 16th of the month and welcomed a total of 26 individuals (20 youth and 6 adults).

Presentation

April's presentation was focused on strengthening positive relationships and was delivered by BSF staff members Takeisha Starnes, Laverne Smith and Tiffany Murphy. The goal of the workshop was to assist participants with identifying healthy, positive relationships as well as signs of unhealthy and abuse relationships. The workshop allowed participants to review different types of scenarios that they may encounter in their lives and were challenged to categorize them as positive / healthy or negative / unhealthy. The workshop also allowed time for discussion among the group on the topic and created a safe space for participants to share their own personal stories and experiences with healthy relationships. In addition to the interaction, the topic provided additional tools to assist youth with identifying signs of unhealthy situations or relationships that they should work to avoid as they grow older.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were four youth issues and concerns submitted: medical needs not being met, improper restraints, placement locking youth out, and concerns around visitation. All Youth Issues and Concerns were submitted to the Advocacy Office within the required timeframe.

DCFS Updates

DCFS updates were facilitated by Nutashia Baynes. Updates included an overview of the Northern Youth Summit and incentives / gifts that were being considered for participants. Youth were also updated on a new employment Nutashia also informed youth of a recent employment partnership between DCFS and Schnucks grocery store in the Dekalb area. Tracey Grinberg, ACR Unit Manager also attended and reported that the ACR unit will be overseeing monthly sibling visits. Since they had just started taking over this role, they asked youth to share their feedback on sibling visitation in an effort to include youth perspective, experience and preferences into the new process. Youth were asked to weigh in on several questions that included:

- What distance is considered too far for monthly visits?
- When distance is considered too far, what should be the minimum contact allowed?
- How does the age of a sibling impact the amount of contact you should have?
- How does technology supplement in person contact, if at all?

The youth present shared that they felt phone calls and video chats could be a useful tool to supplement in-person contact, especially when distance is a factor and also suggested that in those situations there could be accommodations made to schedule sibling visits at a mid-point for both siblings to facilitate visits.

Other Highlights:

Three new youth were sworn into the northern board in April.

Outreach

In April, BSF Northern Region Coordinator, Laverne Smith and Northern Region Vice President, Natalie Pierce attended the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Board Meeting. At the meeting they shared

information about the monthly YAB meetings and encouraged participants to share the opportunity with youth in care that they are fostering or come into contact with. BSF also distributed fliers and sent emails to agencies in our contact list to promote attendance.

May Meeting Summaries/ Highlights

Cook Region

ILM Meeting

Cook's ILM meeting was held on Friday May 3rd in person during the SYAB meeting and two officers participated. The group discussed April's meeting and some of the factors that contributed to the lower attendance. Although attendance was low, youth felt the meeting was intimate and productive. The group then planned May's meeting, coming to agreement on the workshop and food options as well as discussing additional outreach strategies to assist with increasing attendance.

RYAB Meeting:

May meeting was convened on the 16th of the month and welcomed a total of 47 individuals (30 youth and 17 staff).

Presentation:

May's presentation was facilitated by local Chicago artist, *Heavy Crownz*, who delivered a workshop called "Using Creative Forms of Art to Cope". The workshop introduced participants to three different forms of art (music, drawing, and poetry) as a outlet / method to assist with dealing with the everyday stressors of life.

The presenter shared his own story with participants and how he uses music to manage stress in his own life. The presentation then used large group discussion for participants to share their thoughts on how they handle daily stress when they are having a bad day. Youth shared some of their outlets when having a bad day which included reading, dancing, praying, writing music, shopping, travelling on public transportation, watching tv and even sleeping. Then participants shared how they deal with stress which included taking walks, smelling the roses, crying, playing cards, music, journaling, and working out to name a few. The discussion was the catalyst towards discussing healthy and creative forms of art that can further assist with combating stress. The presentation shared how music can elevate one's mood, decrease anxiety, and reduce depression. Aside from music, other forms of art such as drawing and poetry was discussed as strategies to assist with releasing emotions, thinking critically, and stabilizing moods. The presentation then broke into small groups, divided by different forms of art and each participant created a piece of art to share with the larger group.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were two youth issue and concern submitted. Concerns included: issues within a TLP with peers and appropriate touching by staff. All Youth Issues and Concerns were submitted to the Advocacy Office within the required timeframe.

Director Updates

DCFS updates were provided by John Kasper from OETS who reminded participants about the upcoming summit on June 20th. The theme and colors were also restated. He shared transportation options for those interested in attending the summit and encouraged them register as soon as possible.

Outreach:

In May, flyers were distributed to all agencies and additional reminders were sent to agency staff and were followed up on. The meeting information was also posted to the Dnet. There was concern with the low attendance in April and so the additional effort was effective in bringing attendance back in May. May's meeting included 30 youth compared to 7 the prior month.

Northern Region*Northern ILM Call*

Northern's ILM was held on May 7, 2019 and two youth participated. Those on the call debriefed the April meeting and came to the agreement that the officer slate needed to improve their youth engagement skills—creating a welcoming and safe environment for participants when attending. To address this they appointed a greeter for May's meeting to welcome youth as they entered the space. The group then planned May's meeting coming to agreement on the agenda and the items they'd be bringing back to the regional level from May's SYAB. The group discussed and agreed on the workshop topic, ice breaker, and food options and assigned portions of the agenda among the team.

RYAB Meeting:

May's meeting was convened on the 16th and welcomed a total of 24 participants (14 youth and 10 staff).

Presentation

Similar to Cook, May's workshop presentation centered on the power of the arts in . May's workshop, "Expressing One-Self Using Art", was facilitated by Laverne Smith and Letechia Holmes of BSF. The purpose of the workshop was to promote and guide youth towards healthy strategies and self-reflection to assist with combatting stress. The workshop built off some of the successful aspects of Cook's workshop in May and asked participants to brainstorm / explore some of the ways they cope and deal with stress when having a bad day. The workshop also used large group discussion to surface how art can assist with reducing stress and participants broke into small groups based on their interest — drawing, writing, music and the presentation provided information on how these arts forms support stress reduction, improving concentration, and even physical health, like reducing blood pressure. Then participants created their own pieces of art and debriefed with the entire group.

Majority of the youth stated that they listen to music and keep to themselves to deal with life stressors. This conversation leads to a discussion about how art can help with decreasing stress levels. Youth were divided into separate groups according to the form of art in which they most resonated with (Drawing, Writing and Music). During this process youth were educated on a few ways these forms of art can make

life a bit easier such as reducing stress levels, reducing high blood pressure, improve concentration etc. as listed below. Youth had 30 minutes to create something special yet beneficial to help them at their most trying times. After the 30 minutes was up youth gather back to debrief and share their art pieces.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were 2 youth issues and concerns submitted. Issues submitted included: concerns about allocated funds, and medical needs not being tended to. All Youth Issues and Concerns were submitted to the Advocacy Office within the required timeframe.

DCFS Updates

The Director's report was presented by Nutashia Baynes who distributed registration forms for the June summit. Brian Dreher from the Advocacy Office attended the meeting and provided information about the how the Advocacy Office is a resource to youth in care and encouraged youth to call the hotline if they are in an emergency situation.

Outreach

In May, flyers were distributed to all agencies by email and follow-up calls were made to gather RSVP counts from each agency. Northern Region transitional manager also assisted by posting the flyer on the dnet.

June Meeting Summaries / Highlights:

Cook Region

ILM Meeting

The Cook meeting was held on June 6th and two officers participated. The meeting began with a brief discussion of the May where the group reported enjoying the meeting facilitators and the overall energy of the meeting. The group agreed that reducing the number of sidebar conversations should be a priority. The group then discussed some youth summit updates for the event approaching on the 20th. Since the RYAB meeting was scheduled for the 20th as well, the location was moved to Sky High in Niles to facilitate transportation for board members and as a recruitment strategy. The meeting will still contain the same business agenda items, but the location would provide an opportunity to socialize and network. Youth were also reminded that RYAB officer elections were occurring in June and youth planning to run needed to submit election packets as soon as possible. The team also discussed the dates for the FY20 SYAB retreat and reminded them to be mindful of addressing childcare and work obligations. Statewide election packets also needed to be turned in in advance of the retreat.

RYAB Meeting

June's meeting convened on the 20th welcoming 35 individuals (20 youth and 15 staff).

Presentation

The June RYAB meeting was held at Sky High to facilitate transportation to the meeting. Since board members had already attended two workshops at the Summit, that time on the agenda was blocked for

the youth to enjoy the facility and network with their peers.

Youth Issues and Concerns:

There were two youth issues and concerns submitted. Submitted issues included: the need for transportation to court and a youth wanting to return home. All Youth Issues and Concerns were submitted to the Advocacy Office and Luis Carrion with OETS, within the required timeframe.

Director's Update:

Updates were provided by Luis Carrion. For those youth that didn't attend the summit, Luis provided an overview of the day and provided an opportunity for board members who attended to share their experience at the summit.

Additional Highlights:

Before closing the meeting, the officers asked the rest of the board to share what the Youth Advisory Board meant to them. Responses included:

- Has been a family
- Has given me a voice
- Has provided resources and information on college that I otherwise wouldn't know
- Has been a place of comfort—a place where concerns are listened to a place to get advice on handling certain situations.

Northern Region

Northern ILM Call

Northern's ILM was held on June 6, 2019 and only one youth participant joining the call. The meeting included a debrief of May's meeting and a discussion around improving ILM participation before moving forward on planning June's regional meeting. An idea was discussed around rotating meeting locations in the northern region to assist in making the meeting more accessible to youth living in areas of the region that are further from Aurora. There was reflection on the positive outcomes, such as growing the base of youth who attend the meetings, but then also discussed the possibility that it would impact the consistent participation that already exists. The idea of creating a sub-region was raised, but there was agreement that the current board needs to build itself out a little more before branching out into a sub-region.

RYAB Meeting:

June's meeting was convened on the 16th and welcomed a total of 46 participants (24 youth and 22 staff).

Presentation

Be Strong Families facilitated a "Journeys to Vitality" café presentation as part of June's meeting. The theme of this café workshop was Strengthening Social (developing positive meaningful relationships) and Physical Vitality (health and well-being) and participants experienced small group conversations

with their peers on both topics. During the café harvest participants shared their personal experiences and goals for becoming the best version of themselves. As the café concluded board members were invited to make a commitment to themselves in relation to strengthening their physical and social vitality over the summer.

In addition to Be Strong Families café workshop, founder of Traverse Together, Rachel Pruess presented information on her program that provides youth ages 18+ opportunities to travel as a form of therapy and an opportunity to see the world while also developing life long connections with a new-found support system.

Youth Issues and Concerns

There were 5 youth issues and concerns submitted. Issues submitted included: lack of caseworker support (2), placement concerns, assistance with criminal background, theft in placement. All Youth Issues and Concerns were submitted to the Advocacy Office and Luis Carrion with OETS, within the required timeframe.

DCFS Updates

DCFS updates were provided by Nutashia Baynes and included a debrief of the Youth Summit that had occurred the previous week. Board members then shared their thoughts on the summit and which aspects they liked the most, along with areas of improvement.

Outreach

In addition to sharing flyers and following up with agencies on the BSF contact list, additional outreach for June's meeting was done at the youth summit. BSF staff had one on one conversations with youth in attendance, passed out flyers and encouraged new members to attend. The outreach was successful and youth attendance increased to 24 in the month of June (From 14 in May.)

FY19 Statewide Youth Advisory Board Events

The following section provides an overview of SYAB meetings / events by quarter followed by detailed information on each of the statewide meetings that occurred in FY19.

Q1 included the following meetings:

- YAB Annual Retreat (August, 2018)
- SYAB Planning and Debriefing meetings – July, August
- Statewide Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) meeting (September, 2018)
- Quarterly Meeting / Training with the Director's Office (Statewide YAB Youth, DCFS Staff, Primed for Life, Casey Family Programs)

Q2 included the following meetings:

- Statewide Meeting – November
- Loyola Policy Meeting – December

Q3 included the following meetings:

- Statewide Planning call
- Statewide Meeting – March
- Statewide Debrief call
- Loyola Policy Sub-Group Meeting - February, March

Q4 included the following meetings:

- Statewide Planning call
- Statewide Debrief call
- Statewide Meeting – May

Annual YAB Retreat

The FY 19 Retreat took place again at the Lake Williamson Christian Retreat Center in Carlinville, IL. This annual event is the first official SYAB gathering of the year and focuses on bringing the SYAB Executive Team together for networking opportunities as well as skill building opportunities related to Board Development as well as public speaking / communications. Some of the highlights of the weekend included Dr. Lynda Swan McClendon, OETS, providing DCFS updates which included informing the youth about a new project from the Governor’s Cabinet Project to support dually involved youth (Juvenile Justice & DCFS) that was looking for additional youth voice to bring to the table. Other updates were provided on possible legislation that was in the works as a result of 2018’s Shadow Day. Following the updates, the Executive Officer team shared highlights from the previous year and discussed plans for 2019. FY19 planning continued on the second day of the retreat as well through a private workshop session with DCFS Deputy Director Molly Uhe Edmondson.

Board Development skill-building was the primary focus of the second day which included presentations and small group discussions on officer roles and responsibilities. Some of the topics discussed included the officer code of conduct, officer expectations, and stipends. There was also a workshop on documentation and the importance of detailed / accurate documentation and submission of board documents within agreed upon time frames. The third day of the retreat began with public speaking practice, with participants working on their own elevator speeches and SYAB elections followed the public speaking workshops. Officers then learned about Roberts Rules of Order and how to properly conduct a meeting and reviewed the YAB Bylaws.

The retreat closed with regional groups breaking apart to come to agreement on the elements of the retreat to bring back to the RYAB. Each region developed presentations on reported to the group how they intended to bring it back. Youth were also provided an opportunity for final reflections to share what they enjoyed most about the retreat and where they could improve the agenda.

September SYAB Meeting:

The Cook Region hosted September SYAB meeting and elements of the meeting included activities that

promoted officer roles and responsibilities, regional report-outs, review of the YAB By-Laws, advocacy planning and discussion of outreach strategies. Staff from Loyola were in attendance to help assist youth with identifying policy or procedures and other troubling issues that are impacting youth in care to research as part of the FAQ document. The additional research is intended to take a deeper dive into some of the sections that are referenced in the FAQ. Loyola agreed to compile these details and provide youth with a report on procedures already in place or what may need to be developed. TRPMI staff also participated in the meeting and sharing an activity to assist youth in responding to challenging situations. Officers in good standing will be partnering with TRPMI to respond to the youth experience in care survey. This will allow youth to visit agencies and talk to youth about their individual experience in addition to promoting RYAB meetings statewide.

Director's Office Meeting / Casey Family Programs training

On September 17th, YAB officers from across the state convened via video conference in Chicago and Springfield to participate in a working session with Casey Family Programs that addressed the demographics and composition of the YAB in Illinois and provided additional insight into Adult-Youth Partnerships and best practices for a creating an environment that encouraged them. DCFS Director Walker welcomed the group by teleconference and BSF and Primed for Life staff transported officers and participated in the meeting with DCFS staff and representatives from Casey Family Programs. The session included small group work which modeled an Adult-Youth Partnership frame and gathered input and outside of the box ideas from RYAB officers to help diversify the placement types involved in the YAB and other roles the RYAB can play in ensuring youth voice is brought to the table in authentic partnership. The outcomes from this meeting were used to help shape the development of updated program plans from both BSF and Primed for Life for the rest of the year.

November SYAB

The Statewide Youth Advisory Board met in the second quarter November 2 – 4 in the Central Region at the Courtyard Marriott in Normal, IL. The weekend long event began with a welcome and introductions and the SYAB president provided an overview of the agenda. Participants also reviewed meeting agreements for the weekend and rules of behavior for everyone in attendance. The focus of the first night centered around looking back and moving forward — participants reflected on the past, while setting positive intentions for the future. Lynda Swan McClendon provided an update on behalf of the Governor's Cabinet and SYAB members who attended the Youth Solution Summit (From the first quarter) shared their experience at the event, describing their accomplishments over the two days. Lynda later shared that Phase 4 of the project would be starting in the near future and that the SYAB members should expect to hear from the committee regarding their participation.

Day two began with a presentation / video conference with representatives from the Loyola project who provided an update on the FAQ document created in partnership with the youth and additional topics that included, teen parent services, DCFS support expectations, and secondary education resources available to youth, which was a topic raised at September's meeting. The group agreed on next steps

which included the creation of a small work group with the purpose of developing a policy agenda for the board.

Following Loyola's presentation, the DCFS Advocacy Office led a discussion among members on the youth issues and concerns from submission process. Youth raised several concerns about the level of treatment they received when making a hotline calls. Issues raised included:

- Youth expressed that when calling the Advocacy Office and the hotline, they are asked demographic information (race, age, etc.) before they have an opportunity to describe their reason for calling which is off-putting (& perhaps unnecessary because if they are youth in care, the department has that information). The response of the Advocacy Office was that the hotline receives 2500 calls a day and need to expedite them and are required by federal law to obtain demographics. BSF advocated for the youth with the advocacy office, asking if they could follow up on the concern or how the youth could proceed with advocating for change in this area and the advocacy office rep indicated that the issue would be raised.
- One young mom said she and her baby had been locked out of her placement when it was cold outside as punishment. She reported this to both the Advocacy Office and the hotline and there has been no follow up.
- When told about them having a GAL — several youth expressed that the GALs have not been responsive. The response of the Advocacy Office was that the Cook GALs were good and they were working on downstate. A youth said she lived in Cook and her GAL would not return her calls. The response was a statement to the effect of "this must have been one of the bad ones."
- Several youth reported that their placements would not allow them to call the Advocacy Office or the hotline. The Advocacy Office acknowledged that this was an issue and was "not right" but there was no clarity about how it could change.

In response to the issues raised, the Advocacy Office indicated they would investigate the concerns raised. The topics are expected to be followed up on.

Next on the agenda, BSF presented an option for future decision making at SYAB called Martha's Rules of Order. The process simplifies voting procedures and requires items needing a vote to be researched and presented to the board for a straw poll before bringing to a full vote. It gives voting members the opportunity to ask more questions or request additional detail before calling a formal vote. Overall, the board expressed preference with Roberts Rules of Order, but are open to consider it in the future.

The board discussed the standing committee structure and whether it needed to be updated or changed. They reviewed the current standing committees and opted to continue with Employment, Education and Legislation. They also moved LGBTQ and Teen Parenting into the standing committee list where previously they were considered ad-hoc committees / sub-groups. Communications which was formally a standing committee was moved to the ad-hoc category and they also developed a new ad-hoc Health and Wellness Committee. Participants then joined their committees of preference.

Illinois Courts closed out Saturday's business agenda items with a presentation on the results of the youth focus group that took place statewide within each of the regional boards. Ms. Dorsey provided the presentation and shared the focus group report with the board. They presented an idea for a mobile friendly app specific to each youth's case and youth were provided the opportunity to participate on a subgroup. Those interested were able to sign up with Illinois Courts and are expected to be contacted in the late spring / summer.

The second half Saturday's meeting was spent in Champaign, IL supporting an annual alumni Thanksgiving Dinner sponsored by the IL Chapter of the FCAA. Following the Thanksgiving dinner, youth enjoyed recreational time at Adventures in Time and Space. While at Adventures in Time and Space, youth and adult partners worked together to escape a fictional location using problem solving and consensus building skills.

Sunday's agenda included a peer to peer life skills presentation on civic responsibilities facilitated by the Central Region Officer slate. A major topic of the presentation included the importance of voting and how it can make a difference in their community. The presentation also addressed the privileges a "voter" has over a "non-voter".

The meeting closed out which each of the regional officer slates breaking into groups to develop presentations to share with their regional boards that addressed the content and outcomes of the SYAB meeting.

March SYAB

The Statewide Youth Advisory (SYAB) met March 8 - 10 at the Hilton Garden Inn, in Oak Brook Terrace with the Northern Region hosting. This was the 3rd SYAB meeting of the year. Northern Region Officers kicked off the meeting by welcoming the other board members with an ice breaker that had them report their name, age, and one thing they were looking forward to in the summer. This was the first statewide that included the new downstate partners from the Advocacy Office / OETS who are supporting Regional efforts for the boards in Central and Southern regions as well as BSF's new Program Coordinator in the northern region who started in December. Participants then were part of an exercise called Looking Back and Moving Forward which allowed an opportunity to reflect on the past history with the board and their favorite SYAB moments. Other business that occurred was the review and approval of November's SYAB minutes and a taped video farewell from former contract monitor Lynda Swan McLendon who retired at the end of February. The group then set intentions for the meeting and future meetings followed by updates from the DCFS Advocacy Office. In addition to describing their role in supporting the downstate RYAB's Dena also addressed some concerns that were raised by the youth at the November SYAB meeting. Specifically they reported welcoming feedback on how to improve the call-in process to make it more inviting for youth who are in a position to make hotline calls.

The second day of the meeting included collaboration with statewide partners throughout the day and also included a visit from the interim Director. The agenda began with a presentation from Loyola who

co-presented with the youth serving on the Legislative and Policy small group. The youth members provided an overview of their progress over the last three months and presented legislative topics for the SYAB large group to consider as priority initiatives. Three topics were presented: homelessness, use of restraints, and sibling contact. The group agreed to focus on two—homelessness and restraints—as legislative initiatives. The group broke into small groups to brainstorm the topics and areas that could be improved. Loyola then took the group through an exercise / game to assist them in understanding the legislative approval process. It was presented as a board game which effectively engaged the board in understanding some of the challenges of the process and to understand that it takes time and perseverance to affect change. Loyola also shared a checklist to assist them in making decisions on policy or legislative changes. This included questions to help them explore not only the positive, but examine a new bill from a 360 degree perspective. The attendees from Loyola then joined participants in their committee breakouts to support the discussion and assist the youth narrowing down the goals they identified. Each of the committee identified goals and standing meeting times to follow up on the work outside of the SYAB.

Deann Muehlbauer with TRPMI presented in the afternoon, providing an update on the Youth Experience of Care surveys administered to youth in care placed in residential facilities across the state. The group reviewed the survey respondents and identified areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement.

The following questions had the lowest average scores and were focal points for the board which:

1. I feel safe from physical, mental, sexual, or emotional abuse from other youth or staff.
2. I am supported in locating people from my past and could support my goals for my future.
3. The residential program staff help me with my homework
4. The program rules are clear and fair, and explained to me.
5. Program staff treat me with respect
6. I am able to make and have friends in the community (e.g phone calls, with emails, hang out with peers in the community).

The SYAB developed the following recommendations based on those results.

1. Develop internal advisory councils within all placements to ensure youth can regularly express themselves. Internal board are made a right and not a privilege
 - a. YAB Officers to assist with training and implementation of running a board meeting and provide support as needed.
2. Identify YAB Officer for peer to peer support within agencies
 - a. Officer to have specific office hours within placements
 - b. Officers to review placement rules
 - c. Assist youth with understanding the rules
 - d. Follow-up on rules quarterly
 - e. Explain options available to youth

f. Assist with grievance for agencies

Following TRPMI, the board discussed sibling visits with Julie Barbosa from DCFS. Participants discussed the minimum required in person / contact between all siblings that is outlined in the Aristotle P. Consent Decree. Amongst the discussion, the group weighed in on the following questions:

- What distance is considered too far for monthly in person visits?; and
- When the distances are exceeded, what minimum requirements need to be put into place to maintain contact?

Next on the agenda, Dr. Kirsten Simonton a doctor from Lurie Children's Hospital and Ghirlandi Guidetti from American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), presented on their partnership with DCFS and the work that is being done around supporting LGBTQ youth and the issues impacting them. Ghirlandi explained that the ACLU sought to improve the conditions of DCFS for decades and currently acts as the lawyers for the children in Illinois' child welfare system. LGBTQ issues for youth in care are amongst many issues that the ACLU advocates for and explained that the DCFS LGBTQ policy is in place to support the well-being of youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning. Dr. Kristen shared further how Lurie is partnering with DCFS. Dr. Kristen and her team are conducting interviews with youth in care across the state of Illinois that identify as LGBTQ. The purpose of these interviews is to understand how DCFS can assess gender and sexual identity in a safe and supportive way from a youth's perspective.

There was then a regional report out and board members practiced public speaking skills as they formulated presentations on activities that had taken place in each region since September. Staff and peers took a strength-based approach in providing constructive feedback on their presentations. Following Regional report outs, the northern region officers presented a peer to peer life skills workshop called "Be True to You". Northern Officers paired everyone up and asked them to sit back to back. Partner A stated a negative trait about themselves, while partner B was charged with reframing the negative into something positive. The purpose of this peer to peer life skills was to help youth develop positive self-awareness and realize that there's good and bad in everything and the importance of ensuring that the negative didn't receive all of the focus. Saturday's meeting ended with a fun activity at Dave and Busters where the board enjoyed dinner and recreational time with each other.

Sunday's agenda was a half day and included a presentation by Foster Care Alumni Association (FCAA) Illinois Chapter on Strategic Sharing and legislative priorities for the agencies. April Curtis from FCAA, led the presentation on strategic sharing, preparing for shadow day, emphasizing the importance of protecting oneself with regards to their story. Being mindful of the level of detail when sharing so that they did not trigger themselves. Youth were able to understand the methods of telling their story safely and effectively. James McIntyre, FCAA presented on aspects of their Legislative agenda and took questions from youth on their priorities. Overall the session went well, but there were some issues with timely preparation and quality of materials shared initially at the training. Agendas were not provided ahead of time as promised and printed materials were faded. They were able to make additional duplications at the meeting site.

The meeting closed out which each of the regional officers breaking into groups to develop presentations to share with their regional boards that addressed the content and outcomes of the SYAB meeting.

Overall the meeting went very well and BSF and the department debriefed the meeting the following the week. In the debrief meeting, we agreed to make adjustments to the agenda so that there was more opportunity for down time for youth to enjoy some of the amenities of the lodging as well as ending at an earlier time. The planning team used this feedback in planning May's event. The group also discussed hosting SYAB at one location each year to create some consistency for transportation and next fiscal year, we will explore hosting each meeting at one location.

May Statewide Youth Advisory Board Meeting

The fourth statewide meeting was held May 3rd through 5th and was hosted by the Southern Region in Mount Vernon, IL at the Drury Lane Hotel. The meeting welcomed a total of 22 participants (11 youth and 11 adult partners). This meeting agenda reflected some changes to the schedule designed to reduce some of the long meeting hours on Friday and Saturday.

Friday night started with the acting President welcoming the group and reviewing the meeting agreements/ground rules. Youth gathered for a segment called "looking back and moving forward" which provided space for the group to reflect and document some of the positive memories they have as a result of attending the Youth Advisory Board. The group also identified a list of goals to accomplish over the weekend. Following the introduction, the board read through, suggested modifications, and then approved the March SYAB meeting minutes. The evening's business closed with the board having a large group reflection and adjourning in preparation for Saturday's business.

On Saturday, following an interactive icebreaker designed to get the positive energy flowing at the start of the day. The first major agenda item included a presentation on the use of restraints in residential facilities which was facilitated by Deann Muelhbauser from TRPMI and Dr. Alan Morris of UIC and TRPMI. The presentation gave an overview of Rule 384 – Behavior management, which outlines when a restraint should be used, the 6 approved models, and residential program plan requirements. The presenters also shared information on how staff are trained on the process and get approved /qualified to administer restraints, reporting responsibility of the residential facility / staff, and also provided additional data on how restraints were being used.

Overall, the presentation and topic carried with it a lot of emotion for the youth, who had strong opinions on the use of restraints. The board was provided the opportunity to share their recommendations on the use of restraints moving forward. These recommendations included:

1. The termination of or bringing of formal charges to staff when improper use of restraints occurs that results in injuries to youth.
2. Calling Police in instances where restraints are used.

3. Identifying other solutions when possible and that restraints only be used as a last resort.
4. Allowing youth to sit in on at least one restraint training.
5. Posting a restraint diagram in every facility, illustrating the proper way to restrain someone.
6. Providing training to staff on understanding the impact of Trauma training
7. Reviewing rule 384, perhaps in consultation with Loyola.
8. Consistently enforcing the existing policy on restraints for young kids and those with special needs.
9. Providing on-going training for staff on proper use of restraints.
10. Requiring same sex staff to be present when a youth is restrained.
11. Exploring a “point” or “level” system related to the use of restraints.

Transitioning from the restraint discussion, Be Strong families led a *Wake Up To Your Potential: Leadership Skill Development and Public Speaking* workshop. The training was well received and youth gained insight into their own leadership style and how it was different from their peers. A part of the training allowed participants to identify their own theme song that helped them to be the best version of themselves while also learning to communicate effectively as leaders.

Following the presentation youth broke into their small group committees (LGBTQ, Education, Teen Parent, Legislative) to review and discuss updates, set new goals, document recommendations and next steps to present to the board.

Following the committee breakouts, the SYAB Education and Legislative Committees made the following recommendations:

1. DCFS should further assist fathers in care establish their parental rights.
2. DCFS should conduct a financial service review for mother’s, considering the modern-day cost of taking care of a child.
3. DCFS should investigate programs that offer more emotional support services for mothers in TLP’s or mothering projects.
4. DCFS should assign a temporary placement for youth returning home from college break.

Youth then put their public speaking skills to the test while providing regional reports to the group. After each report staff and other board members providing positive feedback and constructive criticism to assist with strengthening their presentation skills. After a full day of board business, the meeting adjourned and participants gathered for dinner followed by a movie.

Sunday’s agenda kicked off with the Southern Region hosts facilitating a peer to peer activity with the group where each participant wrote down 10 traits about themselves and turned them in. Then the traits were mixed up and then read aloud while the group identified who they thought the trait belonged to. Following the activity, regional officers broke into small groups to develop presentations to bring back to the regional level. Before adjourning, youth announced plans to run for FY20 statewide officer positions. These will be voted on at the FY20 retreat.

Other Program Initiatives / Highlights

Promoting Civic Engagement / Policy Advocacy

As part of the newly revised program plan in the 2nd quarter, BSF introduced new opportunities for RYAB members in Cook and Northern Region to attend and participate in Internal Advisory Council meetings with the intent of bringing information back to the statewide YAB to review and make recommendations on issues that impact youth in care. This was in addition to the other small groups and initiatives they were participating in.

Through this effort, RYAB/ SYAB Members actively participated and were represented at the following councils throughout the year.

- Child Welfare Advisory Council
Attendance / Participation in (October, January, March, April, June)
- IL Adoption Advisory Council
Attendance / Participation (November, March)
- Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
Attendance / Participation (November, March, April, June)

YAB Intern Program

In FY19 the YAB program introduced a new intern program with the goal of having one intern in each of the 6 regions/sub-regions. The program was promoted near the end of the second quarter and there was not a large response. There were 4 applications submitted, but two were dismissed for not meeting the qualifications (e.g. age, DCFS youth in care). Two interns were approved, one female (E. St. Louis-Sub Region) and one male (Champaign-Sub Region) and they began participating in the third quarter.

Based on performance and attendance issues, the male intern was dismissed from his responsibilities with the Champaign regional board. The female intern remained active participating on behalf of the East St. Louis sub-region in April and May, but unfortunately due to personal issues she was unable to attend May's SYAB meeting and due to a transportation mix-up she was unable to participate in June's RYAB meeting. Although she was unable to actively participate in those two meetings, she has received positive reports from the Southern Region coordination team.

The program is continuing in FY20, but there will need to be additional effort to promote the opportunity to candidates who meet the qualification criteria. As we entered the year, there had not been any applications submitted in advance of the June deadline.

Active Membership Incentive

Similar to the intern program, the YAB program implemented a statewide Active Membership Incentive program with the goal of increasing the consistency of attendance of registered members in order to solidify teamwork, expand the knowledge of youth in order to have a positive impact on the RYAB's ability to advise and make recommendations. The incentives are tiered to reward continuous

participation over the course of an entire year and BSF has been working with its downstate partners to administer the program. In Cook, there were a total of 14 youth that reached tier one and 4 who reached tier two. In Northern, 12 youth reached tier one, of those 12, 4 youth went to tier two, and of those 4, 2 moved into the tier three level. In Southern-MTV 22 youth reached tier one and 4 of those youth went on to reach tier two. In Southern-ESL 22 youth achieved tier one and 4 went on to reach tier two. In Central-CHP 15 youth reached tier one and 4 of those youth reached tier two. In Central-SPF 13 youth reached tier one and 3 of those went on to tier two. Due to the late start of the program during the year, there are additional incentives remaining that will be carried over into FY20. A chart reporting the outcomes of the Active Membership program is included in the metrics and outcomes section of this report.

Staff Development Trainings

BSF staff participated in four staff development trainings during the year to increase their capacity in supporting and partnering with the youth as part of this program.

- Trauma 101 took place on Thursday, February 28th and was facilitated by Illinois Collaboration on Youth (ICOY).
- Innovative Change Leadership Summit - March 25th – 27th. This summit, presented by Alia, was focused on creating new ideas in the workplace and making connections to further life ambitions.
- Youth Mental Health First Aid – March 29th was facilitated by the Northwestern Medicine, the Dekalb County Mental Health board, and the Dekalb Regional Office of Education on March 29th.
- Understanding Trauma Related Needs and Strategies to Support Transition Age Youth was facilitated by Northwestern University on May 8th, 2019

Staff and other consultants who support the program were also able to participate in internal Staff Development opportunities in December and May to continue growing and building their skills around the protective factors and leadership development trainings offered through BSF.

Loyola Policy Small Group

In FY19, Loyola partnered with the SYAB to support youth in developing policy recommendations and a report to the General Assembly. Through this collaboration, Loyola has also assisted in the development of an FAQ guide for youth in care that highlights services and rights for youth in care on a variety of issues such as: sibling rights, DCFS Scholarship programs, housing services. The FAQ in addition to facilitating youth's understanding of their rights, has assisted youth with finding and understanding the multitude of services and support provided by the department

One of the outcomes from November's SYAB meeting was the development of a small work group to assist with the development of a policy agenda based off of the FAQ guide. The first in-person meeting of the small group was held on December 7th and the group discussed specific topics that had been raised over the past year and reviewed the legislation connected to each of those topics. Following the legislation review participants identified issues they felt were priorities. In some cases, there was no

current legislation and the discussion centered around whether legislation needed to be created or if the issues could be addressed directly by working with the Director and DCFS leadership.

The work with Loyola has continued throughout the third quarter and the small group met multiple times to finalize steps towards developing a policy agenda for the board. On February 22nd, they met to discuss policy priorities with youth prioritizing policies with both the board and 17,000 youth in care in mind. Priority issues included homelessness, sibling contact, and use of restraints. Although they couldn't prioritize all issues, Loyola informed the group of other agencies focusing on some of the issues that the YAB couldn't get to and there would be opportunities to partner with some of them to assist in their efforts. The group also reviewed FCAA IL's legislative agenda and considered championing some of their initiatives. On March 4th, a teleconference call was convened for the policy small group team to discuss their presentation at the March. Youth divided the presentation amongst each other (intro, homelessness, sibling visits, and use of restraints), and agreed to let the youth vote on their top two priorities during the SYAB meeting.

The Loyola Policy group met once in the last quarter formally, but communicated often to prepare for the May Shadow Day. Loyola prepared a list of legislative priorities that YAB members and other youth could distribute to legislators to communicate the priorities for the board. These discussions occurred via email and youth utilized the material when attending the Shadow Day.

On June 6th BSF convened a call with the Loyola policy small group youth to discuss moving the initiative forward into FY20. BSF provided an update on the transitioning age youth bill (senate bill 1808) which was signed in both the house and senate. Youth discussed possible next steps and asked questions about long the bill will cover youth that have transitioned out of care. Youth raised concerns about having only one liaison (as listed in the bill) representing thousands of youth who are at risk of facing outcomes such as homelessness, unemployment, and/or incarceration is not enough to meet the demand for support. As a next step, the youth shared their interest in reviewing the bill and providing feedback on how it should be implemented. Following this discussion, the conversation transitioned to restraints, with youth expressing eagerness to review rule 384 and attend TCI training to gain knowledge on the proper use and utilization of restraints.

TRPMI

TRPMI was an opportunity for youth to serve as leaders. Youth partnered with TRPMI staff throughout the year to visit residential facilities to speak with youth and promote YAB services. Youth have been asking to visit residential facilities to speak with youth and promote YAB services and for their participation received payment incentives of \$25 per agency visit.

During the year TRPMI partnered with the board officers cross the state to administer youth experience of care surveys to youth placed in residential facilities. TRPMI has compiled the survey data and are looking to further partner with SYAB on developing the best practices towards disseminating the findings to a broader youth audience. Moving forward, SYAB members will also be assisting TRPMI with

administering surveys to kids under 12 and to the developmental delayed population.

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

The board had discussed collaboration with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) at February's SYAB meeting to address the issue of homelessness among youth who age out of care. A focus group was scheduled for May 10th with the board. Although there were RSVPs, on the day of the meeting, those who had confirmed did not arrive and the focus group was cancelled.

Although the focus group didn't occur, on June 3rd, board members decided to do one of the following: review the transitioning age youth bill with the possibility of drafting a memo with information on what's been learned about transitioning age youth and areas to consider when implementing the bill or address a smaller issue such as housing for youth when on break from college which has been an issue raised on multiple occasions.

On June 5th, BSF convened a call with Chicago Coalition for the homeless and DCFS to discuss the cancelled focus group in May. Although the initial meeting was unsuccessful, the group did discuss that the topic was a priority that continues to be raised and there was consensus around scheduling a follow up opportunity which is expected to occur in the next fiscal year.

Annual Shadow Day

On May 14th- 15th, DCFS and Foster Care Alumni Association, Illinois Chapter hosted the 4th Annual Shadow Day in Springfield, IL on May 14th -15th. BSF was not directly involved in the planning or implementation of this event, but we supported efforts to secure attendance among members of the Youth Advisory Board. 12 current and former board members participated, and two of those individuals were members of the Northern and Cook Regional Boards. As referenced above, one of the key informational pieces that YAB members used was the 2019 SYAB Policy Priorities handout developed in collaboration with the Loyola Policy small group. Youth in attendance had the opportunity to meet and hear from the new Acting DCFS Director about his plans for improving the child welfare system experience for youth in care and participants were able to do a question and answer session as well.

Program Metrics**1) Convene 24 Regional Youth Advisory Boards**

100% (24/24)

BSF convened 24 Regional Youth Advisory Board Meetings; 12 in the Cook Region and 12 in the Northern Region. Meetings occurred monthly on the third Tuesday (Northern) and third Thursday (Cook).

2) Convene 5 Statewide Youth Advisory Meetings / Retreats (4 SYAB, 1 Retreat)

100% (5/5)

BSF convened 5 statewide meetings a planned:

- Annual Retreat – August 2018 – Carlinville, IL
- SYAB meetings:
 - September 2018 – Oak Brook, IL
 - November 2018 – Normal, IL
 - March 2019 – Oak Brook, IL
 - May 2019 – Mt. Vernon, IL

In FY20, Statewide Youth Advisory Board Meetings will be convened at one central location throughout the year.

3) Convene a quarterly meeting between the Director's office and the Executive Board

100% - 4/4

4 meetings were convened through the year between the Director/Director's Office and the Executive Board.

- August 2018 - Meeting convened via teleconference with Regional Presidents
- September 2018 – Meeting convened at James R. Thompson Center and Springfield (Video Conference) w/ Executive Board. Meeting / training that focused on Youth / Adult Partnerships and Program Plan development.
- October, 2018 – Meeting convened at Governor's Mansion in Springfield, IL with Director's Office and Governor's Cabinet. The Youth Solution Summit discussed solutions to engaging dually involved youth in care.
- March 2019 – Acting Debra Dyer-Webster attended a portion of the Statewide Youth Advisory Board Meeting.

Program Outcomes:

- 1) 100% of youth issues and concerns identified during Cook and Northern regional meetings and SYAB meetings will be submitted to DCFS Advocacy staff within 24 hours of the meetings adjournment.**

100% - (94 / 94)

Youth Issues and Concerns were collected at each RYAB meeting in Northern and Cook regions and submitted to DCFS Advocacy Office within the required time frame.

- 2) 100% of active DCFS policy transmittals from the Office of Child and Family Policy will be shared and reviewed by RYAB members at regional meetings. Regional boards will suggest revisions or make recommendations when pertinent.**

100% (2/2) - There were two active policy transmittals related to youth in care

- July: Administrative Procedure #30 (communicating with youth, instructions for addressing youth issues and concerns, data tracking, and a proposed youth issue and concerns form)
- December: procedure 309.170 (adoption and guardianship services), procedures 302 (transition planning for adolescents).

- 3) The Statewide Youth Advisory Board demonstrates capacity to advocate for the needs of youth in care measured by reports, testimony, representation at meetings and events**

In Fy19 Youth participated in the following initiatives with Loyola and Therapeutic Residential Performance Management Initiative (TRPMI)

- Loyola University Legislation and Policy Clinic (LULPC): SYAB Youth participated / collaborated at the September and November SYAB meetings on the development of an FAQ for youth in care to assist in accessing resources and addressing common questions. The SYAB Youth have also partnered to create a legislative agenda.
- SYAB members participated in the 2019 SYAB Legislative Shadow day. To assist with advocacy needs, a list of policy priorities was co-created by Loyola and SYAB members for use with Legislators.
- Therapeutic Residential Performance Management Initiative (TRPMI): a pilot initiative in 18 residential programs that captures youth and family voice to help ensure safe residential programs and decrease time that youth are in them, to develop safe programming in partnership with youth, increase youth connections with family and other adults, and support creative discharge and wrap plans for youth in care. Youth assisted with administering youth experience in care survey's to youth in residential care. A report of the survey findings was generated.

SYAB members were represented and are actively participating in the following councils:

- Child Welfare Advisory Council
- IL Adoption Advisory Council
- Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council

4) The Cook and Northern Regional Youth Advisory Boards demonstrates capacity to advocate for the needs of youth in care measured by reports, testimony, representation at meetings and events.

Cook and Northern Regional Youth Advisory Board members were represented and are actively participating in the following:

- Child Welfare Advisory Council
- IL Adoption Advisory Council
- Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council

Another example includes the following testimonial from a Northern Region Board Officer in response to HB2649 - In Children of Incarcerated Parents, advocating for the rights of children and parents.

“As the child of an incarcerated parent, I've never known what rights I have, and haven't gotten to visit with my mother in a long time. Trying to rebuild the relationship after long periods of not seeing her has been hard. It feels like trying to build a relationship with a new friend instead of with a mother. Although my mom will be released this April, I'd like this opportunity to be there for others in my shoes. I'd really like to see other kids in DCFS care able to visit with their incarcerated parents, even if there's a distance between where they're located. It's such an important relationship that being far apart shouldn't mean you never get to see each other. Children should also be able to see their incarcerated parents starting at a young age, not just as teenagers, so they don't have to build a new relationship when they're already grown up. Currently it feels like other kids in foster care whose parents are not incarcerated get to visit with their parents much more than I do, and that feels unfair. I should have equal rights to visit with my mom, just like other youth in care do. I hope that you vote yes today to help other children in the same position as me to build strong and loving relationships.”

5) The Statewide Youth Advisory Board will have substantial links to divisions of DCFS and advisory councils associated with DCFS and advocates for youth in care as measured through a report on representation, meetings, reports, communications, and workshops that occur.

Divisions of DCFS actively linked with SYAB activities include

- DCFS Advocacy Office - March, May
- Office of Education and Transition Services - August, September, November
- Director's Office - August, May
- Therapeutic Residential Performance Management Initiative - September, March, May
- Administrative Case Review Unit (ACR) - March

SYAB members are linked to and actively participated in the following councils in FY19:

- Child Welfare Advisory Council - Attendance / Participation in (October, January, March, April, June)
 - IL Adoption Advisory Council - Attendance / Participation (November, March)
 - Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council – Attendance / Participation (November, March, April, June)
- (*The IL Adoption and Statewide Foster Care Advisory Councils do not meet regularly every month.)

6) The Cook and Northern Regional Youth Advisory Boards will have substantial links to divisions of DCFS and advisory councils associated with DCFS and advocates for youth in care as measured through a report on representation, meetings, reports, communications, and workshops that occur.

Divisions of DCFS actively linked with RYAB activities in Cook and Northern Region include

- DCFS Advocacy Office
 - Cook: October and November
 - Northern: August, December, November, May
- Office of Education and Transition Services
 - Cook: August, September, December, January, February, March, April, May, June
 - Northern: July - June
- NIU Education Advisors
 - Cook: July, August, October, December, January, February, March, April, May, June
- Director's Office
 - Cook: August, September, March
- Therapeutic Residential Performance Management Initiative
 - Cook: July, August, September, October, November, February, March, April, May, June
 - Northern: September, October, November, December
- Administrative Case Review Unit (ACR)
 - Cook: April
 - Northern: April
- Guardian Ad Litem Office
 - Cook: July, September, October, November, December, February, March, May, June
- Illinois Courts
 - Cook: October
 - Northern: October
- Discharge clinical intervention placement preservation
 - Cook: January, Feb
 - Northern: June
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
 - Northern: June

Additional linkage to DCFS occurs through the following:

- Child Welfare Advisory Council
Attendance / Participation in (October, January, March, April, June)
- IL Adoption Advisory Council
Attendance / Participation (November, March)
- Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
Attendance / Participation (November, March, April, June)

7) Northern RYAB meetings and submit them on a quarterly basis

Leadership Development workshops:

- November – Northern and Cook - Human Trafficking
- January - DCFS Educational Resources *(No Evaluation Available)*
- February Cook – Healthy Relationships / Northern - Financial literacy *(Money Matters)*
- March – Northern and Cook - Boundaries
- April - Cook – Body Image / Northern – Healthy Relationships
- May – Northern and Cook - Coping Skills
- June - Northern- Vitality Café (Social and Physical vitality)

Full evaluation summaries are included as report appendices

8) SYAB Youth trained in public speaking will demonstrate an increase in public speaking skills and confidence presenting in front of an audience as measured by administration of a pre- / post- survey and staff completing an observation checklist

SYAB youth had specific opportunities for practice and training at each of the Statewide meetings / retreat.

SYAB Retreat: 3 hours

- SYAB September: 2 hours
- SYAB November: 2 hours
- SYAB March: 2 hours
- SYAB May: 2 hours

BSF provided a retrospective analysis and observed youth at the May SYAB, making assessments / recommendations using an observation checklist.

Outcome from Program Plan	Data source	Result	
Increased public speaking skills	Observation Checklist rated “Good” or Excellent”	50%	of Participants scored Good or Excellent on Public Speaking Observation checklist completed by staff
Increased confidence presenting in front of an audience	Retrospective Evaluation Q5; change in % responding Agree and Strongly Agree, Before SYAB and Now	82%	of participants reported that they are a confident public speaker before SYAB compared to
		90%	reported that they are a confident public speaker after SYAB

(*See appendix for Full Data set)



FY19 Year End Report
Regional & Statewide Youth Advisory Boards

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9) BSF will prepare a year-end report on the FY19 Active Membership stipend / incentive program:

Region	Tier 1 Incentives Distributed	Tier 2 Incentives Distributed	Tier 3 incentives Distributed
Cook	14	4	
Northern	12	4	2
Central – Champaign	15	4	
Central – Springfield	13	3	
Southern – Mt. Vernon	22	4	
Southern – E. St. Louis	22	4	
TOTAL DISTRIBUTED	98	23	2
<i>Card Balance Remaining</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>10</i>

10) Youth Advisory Board officers will have attended at least two of the following internal advisory councils / sub-committees:

SYAB members attended the following council meetings:

- **Child Welfare Advisory Council**
Attendance / Participation in (October, January, March, April, June)
- **IL Adoption Advisory Council**
Attendance / Participation (November, March)
- **Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council**
Attendance / Participation (November, March, April, June)

DEMOGRAPHICS

Northern and Cook Regional Youth Advisory Board
Youth and Young Adult Participation

Table 1 – Age Demographics

Age Range	(14-15)	(16-18)	(19-21)	(unknown)	Total
Quarter 1	16	68	26	0	110
Quarter 2	30	78	27	0	135
Quarter 3	31	76	23	0	130
Quarter 4	27	68	18	0	113
TOTAL	104	290	94	0	488

Table 2 - Racial Demographics

Gender	White	Black	Hispanic	Biracial/ Other	Total
Quarter 1	35	59	10	6	110
Quarter 2	35	73	17	10	135
Quarter 3	26	70	15	19	130
Quarter 4	31	60	6	16	113
TOTAL	127	262	48	51	488

Table 3- Gender Demographics

Gender	Female	Male	Transgender	(unknown)	Total
Quarter 1	60	49	1	0	110
Quarter 2	72	63	0	0	135
Quarter 3	77	52	1	0	130
Quarter 4	63	48	2	0	113
TOTAL	272	212	4	0	488

Table 4- Adult Participants (21 and above).

	Not including Coordinator/ Manager	Including Coordinator/ Manager (16-18)
Quarter 1	58	70
Quarter 2	71	80
Quarter 3	82	61
Quarter 4	77	87
TOTAL	288	298

Statewide Youth Advisory Board
Youth and Young Adult Participation

Table 1 – Age Demographics

Age Range	(14-15)	(16-18)	(19-21)	(unknown)	Total
Quarter 1	2	24	13	0	39
Quarter 2	3	7	10	0	20
Quarter 3	0	9	6	0	15
Quarter 4	0	8	3	0	11
TOTAL	5	48	32	0	85

Table 2 - Racial Demographics

Gender	White	Black	Hispanic	Biracial/ Other	Total
Quarter 1	11	26	2	0	39
Quarter 2	7	9	2	2	20
Quarter 3	2	11	0	2	15
Quarter 4	2	6	1	2	11
TOTAL	22	52	5	6	85

Table 3- Gender Demographics

Gender	Female	Male	Transgender	(unknown)	Total
Quarter 1	20	19	0		39
Quarter 2	15	5	0		20
Quarter 3	10	5	0		15
Quarter 4	7	4	0		11
TOTAL	52	33	0		85

Table 4- Adult Participants (21 and above).

	Not including Coordinator/ Manager	Including Coordinator/ Manager (16-18)
Quarter 1	11	12
Quarter 2	8	9
Quarter 3	20	22
Quarter 4	7	4
TOTAL	46	47

Northern and Cook Regional ILM Meetings
Youth and Young Adult Participants

Table 5- Age Gender Demographics

Age Range	(14-15)	(16-18)	(19-21)	(unknown)	Total
Quarter 1	3	13	3	0	19
Quarter 2	0	9	4	0	13
Quarter 3	0	3	9	0	12
Quarter 4	0	2	4	0	6
TOTAL	3	27	20	0	50

Table 6 - Racial Demographics

Race	White	Black	Hispanic	Biracial/ Other	Total
Quarter 1	6	12	1	0	19
Quarter 2	4	9	0	0	13
Quarter 3	1	11	0	0	12
Quarter 4	2	4	0	0	6
TOTAL	13	36	1	0	50

Table 7 - Gender Demographics

Gender	Female	Male	Transgender	(unknown)	Total
Quarter 1	15	4	0	0	19
Quarter 2	10	3	0	0	13
Quarter 3	7	5	0	0	12
Quarter 4	6	0	0	0	6
TOTAL	38	12	0	0	50

Table 8 - Adult Participants (21 and above)

	Not including Coordinator/ Manager	Including Coordinator/ Manager (16-18)
Quarter 1	0	5
Quarter 2	1	7
Quarter 3	2	6
Quarter 4	0	4
TOTAL	3	22