

YAP's LaCoss
presents
YAPTalks

For YAP's Dana LaCoss, delivering Trauma-Informed services is personal.

LaCoss, the New York State Regional Director, was among the organization's first presenters of YAPTalks, a series featuring people who deliver or benefit from programs provided by YAP, an alternative to youth incarceration and out-of-home placement. LaCoss' story focused on childhood trauma as a 17-year-old girl suffering from drug abuse, years of domestic violence from her stepfather and more and how, now, she and her team of YAP Advocates and other professionals are dedicated to working with children ages zero to five and their parents to reduce their trauma exposure.



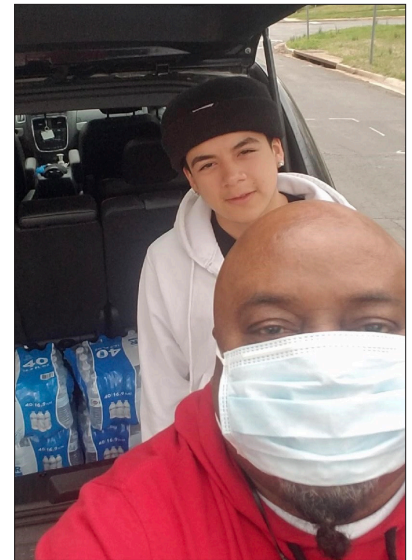
Dana LaCoss

"Kids have behaviors for a reason," she said. "I know why I was using, partying, because I was asking for help in dealing with my trauma. We need to become aware of how to give kids tools to rebuild from their trauma so they, too, can be resilient."

Learn more about people who benefit from and deliver YAP's services and see LaCoss' YAPTalk at www.TheNeighborhoodAdvocate.org.



Left: Delaware YAP Advocate Anthony Stanziale uses Zoom to provide services to youth and families. **Right:** Maryland YAP Advocate Patrick Nowmonoh and participant Eric deliver emergency supplies to those in their communities. **Below:** Another YAP participant helps deliver to families.



Amid global pandemic, Advocates stay focused on keeping youth safely home

Employing technology and practicing social distancing, Youth Advocate Programs (YAP), Inc. remains focused on its mission to provide community-based support to young people who would otherwise be incarcerated or placed into congregate facilities.

Since the onset of the coronavirus crisis, YAP Advocates have been more in tune than ever with the needs of program participants.

"We're now using FaceTime and Zoom to support the young people in our programs and their families. That includes working with parents to support their technology needs so they can be actively involved with their child's individualized service plan," said Delaware YAP Advocate Anthony Stanziale.

In Clark County, Nev., Advocate Leticia "Tee" Ward works with two younger program participants, with whom she created an age-appropriate conversation starter.

"I planned an activity for them to create a canvas of a flower that represents them," she said. "We always discuss ways to change their thought process and help them blossom from the darkness that surrounds them. They both drew their flowers, and so did I," she said.

The pandemic has also created an organic opportunity for older program participants to give back to their families and neighbors.

Erick, a YAP program participant from Maryland, and his Advocate, Patrick Nowmonoh, were among a group of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties teams that have been distrib-

uting food, hygiene products and cleaning supplies in their communities.

"This is YAP's mission, to help and serve, especially during crucial times," said Metro YAP Program Director Syl Parson.

If your family needs assistance during this time, contact your Advocate.

