



# THE ADVOCATE MODEL

## Mentors + More!



YAP's Advocate Model represents a form of culturally and linguistically competent paid mentoring that is unique and distinct from traditional mentoring models. In the context of engaging high risk and/or complex need system-involved youth and families, Advocates are mentors... and much more!

YAP Advocates' work with youth and families is formal, intensive and structured, yet it includes the flexibility to provide services specific to each youth and family and to meet at times and places most needed (such as evenings and weekends). Plus, YAP's "No Eject, No Reject" policy means that each and every youth referred will receive Advocate support promptly, and historical or current behavioral challenges will not preclude OR remove them from services.

Advocates are recruited from the same neighborhoods as the youth and families they serve. They are highly trained, receiving monthly training in addition to completing YAP's Basic Advocacy Training (a 9 course national orientation curriculum accredited by Rutgers University). They also receive weekly supervision with their Director.

### MENTORS + MORE

- ▶ Available 24/7 to youth and families
- ▶ Work with the youth AND the youth's entire family
- ▶ Meet youth from within their home, school and the community
- ▶ Provide intensive, frequent weekly face-to-face contact
- ▶ Activities targeted to address their needs and build strengths guided by an Individualized Service Plan



**A COMMUNITY'S RESIDENTS ARE ITS BEST ASSETS.** Take for instance the West Baltimore neighborhood of Sandtown-Winchester, which struck national attention last year due to protests and outrage sparked by the death of Freddie Gray. Thirty percent of YAP's Baltimore youth live in Sandtown-Winchester, as do YAP's Baltimore Director Craig Jernigan and a number of his Advocates. Because Craig and his team know how to recognize their community's strengths and how to navigate through its challenges, they were able to help keep our young people safe during the protests, support young people who wanted to speak out and organize YAP youth and other residents to help restore peace to the neighborhood.

**"Living in Sandtown during the unrest... allowed us to help heal the community from the inside out."**

*- Craig Jernigan, Baltimore Program Director*

## A CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY COMPETENT APPROACH TO MATCHING

A 2013 survey of over 300 juvenile justice involved YAP youth found that trust was identified as more important to youth than any other attribute or characteristic in their Advocate. In the same survey, 98% of youth reported that they trusted their Advocate.

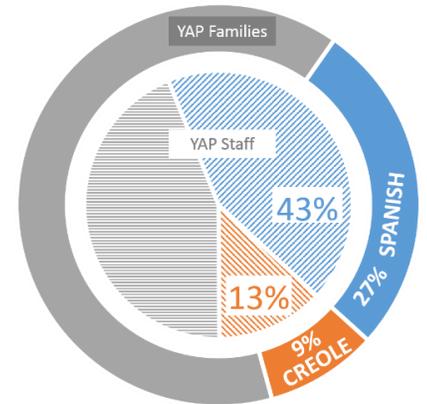
YAP's forty years of experience shows that trust is established through carefully matching youth and families with Advocates who come from the same communities and share the same language, ethnicity, and gender.

### ► ORLANDO

YAP opened our first office in Florida in 1999 and works with justice-involved and child welfare-involved youth in 4 counties. In Orange County, one quarter of the residents are native speakers of a language other than English. In YAP's Orlando-based program, that percentage is higher: for 36% of our youth and families, English is a second language. YAP Advocates in this program reflect a similar trend.

**"Being bilingual is helpful in order to develop relationships of trust that are critical to affecting change."**

*- Peterson Tavit, Creole-speaking Advocate*



## ADVOCATES AS CREDIBLE MESSENGERS: ZIP CODE RECRUITMENT

As an Advocate, credentials aren't as important as zip code. When working with high and complex need youth and families, many of whom reside in high poverty and crime communities and who are mandated to participate in programming, careful matching becomes critical to youth engagement and success. YAP's "zip code recruitment strategy" plays a significant role in forging trust with youth and families, as well as with the broader community: Advocates share culture and are familiar with the neighborhood's history, strengths and needs. These shared attributes help youth and families relate well to the Advocate. Moreover, the Advocate's 24/7 availability, willingness to be flexible and do "whatever it takes" to assist the young person (e.g., play multiple roles such as transporter, conflict intervener, life skills trainer, respite provider, tutor), and belief in the youth and their potential enhances acceptance and youth engagement. Advocates also implicitly model for youth and families that they, too, can achieve their goals and enjoy quality of life despite the barriers and challenges that they may face.

### ► NEW YORK CITY

YAP works with justice-involved youth in the South Bronx of New York City, the poorest Congressional District in our country: 38% of the total population lives under the poverty line; worse yet, 49% of the children in the district live under the poverty line. The South Bronx is also a diverse community, with over 85% of its population people of color. YAP Advocates reside in the South Bronx, many within a mile of their youth and families' homes, and reflect the same ethnic and racial diversity as our kids and families and are matched accordingly.

