



2002/2003 ANNUAL REPORT  
FACES OF JUSTICE

## UYCA Board Of Directors

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Youth provide high-level organizational guidance by filling half the seats and serving as the executive officers of the UYCA Board of Directors. (Italics designate youth members.)

## President's Letter

*"I got busted, but they just sent me a letter telling me not to do it again."*

*"I just found out that my fifteen-year-old has been caught drinking – for the second time."*

*"I saw another kid shoplifting from my store...why don't they learn their lesson?"*

When communities listen to each other talk about youth crime, they hear youth bragging about getting out of trouble and victims expressing their frustration. They hear that the formal judiciary system can't handle every misdemeanor offense. And they hear that something must be done to fix the problem.

**"To truly listen is to risk being changed forever."**

*– Sakej Henderson, Director, U. of Saskatchewan Native Law Center*

United Youth Courts of Alaska (UYCA) works with communities to train youth and adult volunteers in providing proactive youth-led adjudication for youth offenders. These volunteers understand that youth offenders presented with a chance to take responsibility for their actions get more than a sanction to fulfill; they get an opportunity to build their community and learn important social competencies. They get the chance to change.

And youth offenders who follow through with their sanctions tend to learn their lesson. In Alaska, recidivism rates range between 6% and 9%.\* According to an April 2002 study by the Urban Institute, over a two-year period, youth offenders of the Anchorage Youth Court had a 6% recidivism rate, while youth offenders not participating in the court had a 77% recidivism rate.

As Alaska's youth population grows and further stretches our formal judiciary system, our organization continues to prove that it can contribute significantly to the solution. We encourage greater respect for the law among youth. We provide positive opportunities for both youth court volunteers and offenders to improve their communities. And – to be frank – we save the taxpayer money.

By listening and contributing, please help us provide the steady guidance that allows such changes to thrive.

Sincerely,



Casey Meade, President



Krista Scully, Executive Director

\* True among five Alaskan youth courts with available statistics



## History

When Alaskan communities decide to tackle youth crime—especially the less severe cases that aren't handled by the formal juvenile justice system—they turn to the UYCA for training, resources and support. Beginning in 1998, UYCA has worked with Alaskan communities and the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to:

- Improve existing youth courts through technical assistance
- Increase communication between all youth courts within the state
- Form new youth courts upon invitation from Alaskan communities

The need for a centralized source of youth court expertise led to the creation of the UYCA. Since its foundation, the non-profit corporation has helped over 1,000 youth volunteers in 14 communities to respond to the delinquency of over 10% of all youth offenders in Alaska.

## Accomplishments

This year's accomplishments attest to the enthusiasm and commitment of UYCA's staff, youth-led Board of Directors, 14 youth courts and two associate members. In addition to meeting the UYCA charter, we accomplished the following:

- Developed relationships with nine communities eager to start their own youth courts in 2003
- Supported the youth committee that designed, built, and maintains UYCA web site
- Began production of quarterly UYCA newsletter launched in June 2003
- Celebrated with Kake Circle Peacemaking for winning the Spirit of Youth Foundation's Service to Peers category, and honored the six individual youth court volunteers who were also nominated
- Awarded three scholarships to youth court volunteers attending the National Youth Court Center gathering in Washington, DC.
- Welcomed youth leadership on the UYCA Board of Directors

Because the population and culture of Alaskan communities varies, youth courts take many forms: mediation programs, youth-led and adult-advised courts, and a youth peacemaking circle. This diversity leads to exciting innovations in handling youth offenses, building communities, and even repairing the damage done to victims. While volunteers gain leadership skills, youth offenders learn that their actions have consequences—consequences that can range from writing an apology letter to fulfilling community service or paying a fee. The result? Many communities with youth courts consistently see a 6-9% or lower recidivism rate among youth offenders.



● Jessica Ford, Nome Youth Court President and Chief Judge



● Anchorage Youth Court Judges in front of the court house in downtown Anchorage



## United Youth Courts of Alaska Members

In Alaska, each youth court is led and staffed by youth. Youth fill the roles of prosecuting and defense attorneys, judges, bailiffs, and through their day-to-day volunteer commitment, keep the program running.

Located across the state map and in communities of all sizes and types, Alaska youth courts share their focus on meeting the critical need for youth adjudication and community building. While some youth courts provide mediation or circle peacemaking, others hold court and advise sanctions for misdemeanor offenses. Common offenses include theft, underage consumption of alcohol, criminal mischief, and assault.

The following pages will introduce you to Alaska's 14 member youth courts and two associate members – each of which is active, well trained, and dedicated to improving the youth justice system around the state.

## Anchorage Youth Court

The Anchorage Youth Court was one of three programs acknowledged when Anchorage was honored with one of ten 2002 All-American City Awards. The award recognized the outstanding results of the Anchorage Youth Court's work, made possible through a successful partnership with the Making a Difference program. The results are impressive: over a two-year period, 94% of youth offenders who attended the Anchorage Youth Court did not re-offend within six months, while 23% of those not participating in the court did, according to a recent study by the Urban Institute.

As the need for effective, low-cost youth adjudication grew in 2002, Anchorage Youth Court expanded its services to include 24 younger offenders through a new Pre-Court program.

- Total Referrals: 399 • Referring Charge: 5% alcohol related • 95% other misdemeanor • Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions: 97% • Types of Sanctions: 45 attending substance abuse treatment, counseling, education, or treatment • 24 apology letters • 41 victims contacted • 323 essays written • Hours of Community Service Performed: 9,501 • Total Restitution Paid to Victims: \$6,862 • Gender: 46% male • 54% female • Average Age: 15.4 years • Average Time from Referral to Hearing: 10 days • Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure: 55 days • Community: 269,070 total population • 49,645 students • Volunteers: 405 students • 127 adults • 150 youth trained •

## Delta Junction Youth Court

Members of Delta Junction court look forward to the annual statewide youth court gathering each year – so much so that they raise funds year-round to ensure their attendance. This year, members raised over \$6,800 by hosting bake sales, community dances, service projects, spaghetti dinners and a life-vest safety event. Why are these youth so determined to get to an event that requires 16 hours of travel time? They want to ask questions, share their own court's accomplishments and challenges, and come back with additional training.

- Total Referrals: 4 • Referring Charge: 33% alcohol related • 66% other misdemeanor • Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions: 66% • Types of Sanctions: 1 attending substance abuse treatment, counseling, education, or treatment • 2 apology letters • 2 victims contacted • 3 essays written • Hours of Community Service Performed: 94 • Total Restitution Paid to Victims: NA • Gender: 50% male • 50% female • Average Age: 16 years • Average Time from Referral to Hearing: NA • Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure: NA • Community: 856 total population\* • 1,051 students • Volunteers: 42 students • 9 adults • 20 youth trained •

\* Population does not include the surrounding communities that send students to Delta Junction schools.

## Juneau Youth Court

A member of the Juneau Youth Court spearheaded a youth-led coalition of Alaska's youth court members to establish legislation towards financial sustainability for youth courts. The introduction of HB303 was made possible by the tireless efforts of a steering committee and 100% participation of each youth court. Sponsored by Representative Dan Ogg of Kodiak, it counts among its many supporters the Alaska Conference of Mayors, Alaska Association of School Boards, Alaska Association of Student Government, community leaders and the statewide Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee.

• Total Referrals: 43 • Referring Charge: 100% misdemeanor • Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions: 50% • Types of Sanctions: NA • Hours of Community Service Performed: NA • Total Restitution Paid to Victims: NA • Gender: 56% male • 44% female • Average Age: 15 years • Average Time from Referral to Hearing: NA • Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure: NA • Community: 30,981 total population • 5,506 students • Volunteers: 11 students •

## Kake Youth Circle Peacemaking

Not only have other youth groups shown keen interest in the Kake Youth Circle Peacemaking methods, an independent filmmaker made a documentary about the history of peacemaking and its roots in the small community of Kake. The film focused on local youth using circle peacemaking to address challenges and joyfully support community members.

Kake Youth Circle Peacemaking joined UYCA in late 2002; statistics are unavailable.

## Kenai Peninsula/Homer Youth Court

The Kenai Peninsula/Homer Youth Court is making great strides in its mediation program, an effort aided by their unique partnership with the Center for Mediation and Community Dialogue located in Kenai. Youth mediators are partnered with experienced adult mediators to facilitate victim/offender mediations in the communities of the Kenai Peninsula.

• Total Referrals: 120 • Referring Charge: 69% alcohol related • 31% other misdemeanor • Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions: 56%\* • Types of Sanctions: 4 mediation cases • 12 attending substance abuse treatment, counseling, education, or treatment • 6 apology letters • 68 essays written • Hours of Community Service Performed: 1,610 • Total Restitution Paid to Victims: NA- handled through 3rd party • Gender: 68% male • 32% female • Average Age: 15.5 years • Average Time from Referral to Hearing: 8.4 days • Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure: 98.5 days • Community: 63,074 total population • 12,705 students • Volunteers: 75 students • 6 adults • 45 youth trained •

\* Due to large increase in referrals from District Court under AS 4.16.050 (Underage Drinking law effective 7/3/02), completion checks are not current.

## Ketchikan Youth Court

Ketchikan Youth Court members worked with defendants on a variety of hands-on community-building projects. In 2002, they repaired and painted 10 of the city's bus shelters, and continue to work on the project in 2003. Of all their projects, both members and defendants most enjoyed their roadside clean up days when passing drivers would cheer and honk at the sight of kids picking up litter around town.

Youth volunteers donated their muscle to help the Ketchikan Regional Youth Facility cut, haul, and stack 20 cords of wood, and they donated their time to a variety of local service organizations and community events.

• Total Referrals: 49 • Referring Charge: 26% theft • 54% alcohol-related • 20% other misdemeanor • Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions: 91% • Types of Sanctions: 18 apology letters • 17 victims contacted • 4 projects completed • 37 essays written • Hours of Community Service Performed: 1,195 • Total Restitution Paid to Victims: \$269 • Gender: 57% male • 43% female • Average Age: 15 years • Average Time from Referral to Hearing: NA • Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure: NA • Community: 7,845 total population • 2,334 students • Volunteers: NA •

## Kodiak Teen Court

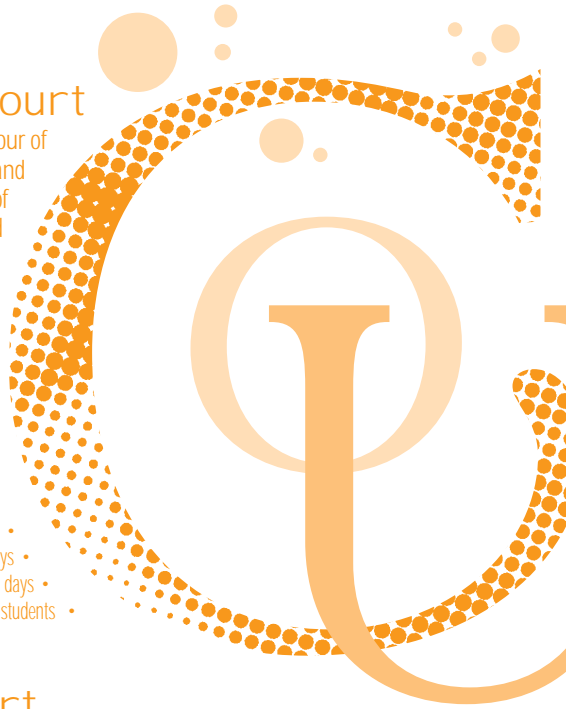
The Kodiak Teen Court focuses on appropriately sentencing offenders who are found guilty. To help youth offenders understand the effect their behavior has had on their victim, the Kodiak court invites victims to attend the hearing, make a victim impact statement, and bring photographs of any damage done. The court has arranged for many of their 17-year-old offenders to attend an adult criminal sentencing to make sure they clearly understand how serious criminal proceedings become once an offender is no longer in the juvenile system.

• Total Referrals: 58 • Referring Charge: 84% alcohol-related • 16% other misdemeanor • Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions: 20% • Types of Sanctions: 40 attending substance abuse treatment, counseling, education, or treatment • 4 apology letters • 27 essays written • Hours of Community Service Performed: 597 • Total Restitution Paid to Victims: NA • Gender: 57% male • 43% female • Average Age: 17 years • Average Time from Referral to Hearing: 30 • Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure: 118 • Community: 6,544 total population • 2,252 students • Volunteers: 45 students • 18 adults • 57 youth trained •

## Kotzebue Youth Court

Kotzebue celebrated the graduation of four of its original members from youth court and high school in the same year. Three of the students are proudly college bound and credit their leadership development and academic success to their experience with youth court.

- Total Referrals: 16 • Referring Charge: 42% theft • 58% alcohol-related • Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions: NA • Types of Sanctions: 6 essays written • Hours of Community Service Performed: 147 • Total Restitution Paid to Victims: \$0 • Gender: 67% male • 33% female • Average Age: 15 years • Average Time from Referral to Hearing: 24 days • Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure: 90 days • Community: 3,107 total population • 832 students • Volunteers: 18 students • 2,150 total hours •



## Mat-Su Youth Court

Mat-Su Youth Court's typically college-bound members retain strong ties to their program even after high school graduation. During college breaks it's common for Mat-Su Youth Court graduates to volunteer for their former program. In fact, two former members with lasting influence on the court were recently awarded the Jim Messick Memorial academic scholarship to further their professional academic studies.

- Total Referrals: 141 • Referring Charge: 100% misdemeanor • Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions: 56% • Types of Sanctions: 13 mediation cases • Hours of Community Service Performed: 1,527 • Total Restitution Paid to Victims: \$2,253 • Gender: 54% male • 46% female • Average Age: 15 years • Average Time from Referral to Hearing: 25 days • Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure: 71 days • Community: 65,241 total population • 13,733 students • Volunteers: 47 youth trained •

## Nome Youth Court

In a recent Nome Nugget newspaper article, an active Nome Youth Court member was interviewed about her experience with the court. According to Megan Baker, "It is a lot of work. It's a lot of fun, too, and you learn so much. It's to help the community." She looks upon her youth court experience as "a first step to my goal of becoming a lawyer." In the same article the court's adviser mentioned the tangible rewards that each youth volunteer gains: new opportunities, the chance to improve the community, and an impressive item on resumes and college and job applications.

Fundraising is a challenge in this small community, but the Nome Youth Court's savvy methods have enabled them to send members to each annual youth court gathering.

- Total Referrals: 15 • Referring Charge: 80% alcohol related • 20% other misdemeanor • Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions: 67% • Types of Sanctions: 8 attending substance abuse treatment, counseling, education, or treatment • 9 apology letters • 4 victims contacted • 8 essays written • Hours of Community Service Performed: 156 • Total Restitution Paid to Victims: NA • Gender: 93% male • 7% female • Average Age: NA • Average Time from Referral to Hearing: 21 days • Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure: 93.8 days • Community: 3,493 total population • 739 students • Volunteers: 39 students • 10 adults •

## North Star Youth Court

2002 welcomed a profound addition to the North Star Youth Court: Victim/Offender mediation. Built through community efforts, partnerships with local mediators and expert training by Horizon Mediation Services, this program continues to grow and build upon the communication/peacemaking skills of youth court members.

• **Total Referrals:** 115 • **Referring Charge:** 100% misdemeanor • **Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions:** 78% • **Types of Sanctions:** 15 attending substance abuse treatment, counseling, education, or treatment • 13 mediation cases • 26 apology letters • 17 victims contacted • 96 essays written • **Hours of Community Service Performed:** 2,100 • **Total Restitution Paid to Victims:** \$800 • **Gender:** 63% male • 37% female • **Average Age:** 15 years • **Average Time from Referral to Hearing:** 32 days • **Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure:** 109 days • **Community:** 84,791 total population • 15,251 students • **Volunteers:** 110 students • 19 adults • 3,500 total hours • 1,250 hours training completed •

## Sitka Youth Court

Using their confidence and leadership skills, the Sitka Youth Court provided weekly training for students of a unique, hands-on public safety class held at Mt. Edgecumbe High School. Court members trained students in hearing and trial procedures and in court etiquette. Many of the students became certified for the Sitka Youth Court at the end of the class.

• **Total Referrals:** 20 • **Referring Charge:** 24% theft • 24% drug use/distribution • 52% other misdemeanor • **Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions:** 48% • **Types of Sanctions:** 4 attending substance abuse treatment, counseling, education, or treatment • 14 apology letters • **Hours of Community Service Performed:** 155 • **Total Restitution Paid to Victims:** NA • **Gender:** 60% male • 40% female • **Average age:** 13.6 years • **Average Time from Referral to Hearing:** 55.1 days • **Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure:** 125.6 days • **Community:** 8,894 total population • 1,545 students • **Volunteers:** NA •

## Valdez Youth Court

When the Valdez Youth Court heard that there were an unusually high number of youth citations for improper use of snowmobiles, they took the initiative in finding a solution. The court collaborated with the Valdez City Council and the Valdez Police Department to have all offenders directly referred to them, enabling them to increase their caseload while easing the burden on the formal judiciary system. The Valdez Youth Court hopes to work with Parks & Recreation to implement a speaker's bureau that will present the laws pertaining to trail riding and increase awareness among youth within the school district.

The Valdez court also planned and co-hosted the 2002 Annual Statewide Youth Court Conference. The event brought over 150 students from all over Alaska for unique training opportunities relevant to youth courts and restorative justice.

• **Total Referrals:** 27 • **Referring Charge:** 30% alcohol related • 70% other misdemeanor • **Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions:** 77% • **Types of Sanctions:** 6 attending substance abuse treatment, counseling, education, or treatment • 3 apology letters • 3 essays written • **Hours of Community Service Performed:** 275 • **Total Restitution Paid to Victims:** NA • **Gender:** 52% male • 48% female • **Average Age:** 14.4 years • **Average Time from Referral to Hearing:** 34 days • **Average Time from Arrest to Case Closure:** 155 days • **Community:** 4,171 total population • 979 students • **Volunteers:** 72 students • 16 adults • 910 total hours •

## Wrangell Youth Court

National Youth Service Day grant recipient Wrangell Youth Court sponsored a bicycle safety event for young citizens of the community. Volunteers inspected bikes for safety, copied bike serial numbers to discourage theft, sized youth for helmets, and taught the importance of wearing bike helmets. Fifty youth courts around the country received grants from the U.S. Department of Justice to support their National Youth Service Day projects.

• **Total Referrals:** 23 • **Referring Charge:** 72% alcohol related • 28% other misdemeanor • **Youth Completing Assigned Sanctions:** NA • **Types of Sanctions:** 4 essays written • **Hours of Community Service Performed:** 568 • **Total Restitution Paid to Victims:** \$321 • **Gender:** 78% male • 22% female • **Average age:** 15 years • **Average time from referral to hearing:** NA • **Average time from arrest to case closure:** NA • **Community:** 2,144 total population • 437 students • **Volunteers:** NA •



● Anchorage Youth Court swearing-in ceremony



## Potential Members

In addition to over 950 youth courts now operating in 47 states and the District of Columbia, representing a 1,500% growth rate in eight years, there are now 537 additional communities in various operational stages of implementing a youth court, according to a Department of Justice study.

The extreme growth trend seen on the national level hints at the activity in Alaska: of the 17 additional communities currently preparing to implement a youth court, nine are eager to begin operations in 2003.

## Associate Members

While formal youth court members like the 14 described must meet both the State of Alaska and/or the UYCA guidelines for membership, the two associate members operate in a more informal manner. Associate members include the Alaska Native Justice Center and Volunteers of America, Alaska Youth Restitution Program. These groups are community organizations that support UYCA's mission and are deeply involved with and committed to addressing juvenile justice issues.

UYCA also works with other organizations in the community to develop prospective new associate members. Potential associate members could be in the early phases of formation, so they benefit from UYCA's support and networking capabilities.

## Community Involvement

From small towns miles from the nearest road to Alaska's largest cities, dedicated justice workers, parents, educators, and business owners listen to their communities and then share their knowledge and time to solve their problems.

Behind every successful youth court is a generous group of justice experts. In 2002, among just eight of the youth courts, 147 attorneys and judges volunteered 2,667 hours. They provided youth volunteers with basic and advanced law training, legal advice before and during court hearings and sentencing, tours of local courthouses, and leadership on youth court boards and for swearing-in ceremonies. Juvenile probation officers, police officers, and professional mediators also provide critical support for the program.

Daily tactical support comes from educators and school administrators, parents, and local businesses. These individuals provide meeting spaces, volunteer opportunities, transportation, food, and non-stop encouragement. And when they hear of a specific challenge, they respond:

- When the Valdez community recreation center was closed, the Valdez Youth Court was left without a home. A local attorney heard about the problem and soon discovered the Fairbanks-based accounting firm of Robinson & Enerson, P.C. Because the firm only occasionally uses their Valdez office, they warmly invited Valdez Youth Court to share the space at no cost.
- On the hunt for a good fundraising opportunity, Mat-Su Youth Court's student resource secretary visited every pizza business in town. At Papa Murphy's Pizza of Wasilla, she found the answer: fundraising cards that give a portion of sales to the court. The resulting \$1,200 is their largest fundraiser to date.

While local fundraising supports special events, the daily work of UYCA and our 14 member courts relies solely on the generosity of our grantors and donors. We're honored that our two grantors, the State (Division of Juvenile Justice) and the Alaska Bar Foundation, have financially supported UYCA since its inception. And our diverse group of donors proves that everyone can make a difference.

## Donors In the Community

- Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. • Beaver Sports • Harbor General Store • Harbor's Edge Restaurant • Ketchikan CHARR • Mad Dog Graphx • Muldoon Weed & Seed • No Name Pizza • North East Community Center • Prince William Sound Community Center College • Prince William Sound Cruises and Tours • SeaAlaska Timber Corporation • Sugar and Spice • Valdez Teen Center • Valdez Visitor's and Convention Bureau • WalMart • WISH (Women in Safe Homes) •





## 2002 Financials

### INCOME

Grantors	\$64,782
Donors	\$25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$89,972</b>

### EXPENSES

Administration	\$41,722
Program	\$48,250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$89,972</b>

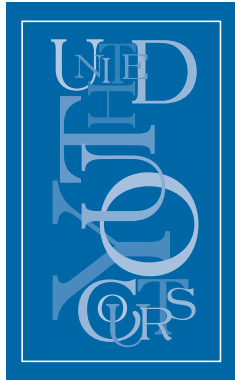
## Budget Need

Next year's budget sustains support of youth accountability and low recidivism rates in the 14 members' communities, as well as in the communities of UYCA's nine potential members. With a full operating budget, however, UYCA will additionally:

- Improve the technical and networking support system that helps youth courts process more referrals faster
- Help communities create partnerships with other non-profit organizations to tackle increasingly problematic minor consumption rates
- Host teleconferences for member youth court directors about critical topics
- Host quarterly online chats between justice workers and youth volunteers
- Introduce annual director's meeting so that key issues can be discussed in depth and in person
- Support full time UYCA director who would work to fulfill the organization's original charter: achieving financial stability and sustainability for all the member courts



● Youth Court swearing-in ceremony



United Youth Courts of Alaska  
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Anchorage, Alaska 99521

## Contact Information

For more information on how you can support UYCA through funding, membership, or by volunteering, call toll free in Alaska 1.877.278.1165.

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