

I write to you today with a heavy heart as we remember the life of Bryan Diaz, who tragically passed away at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall earlier this month. Our love and condolences go out to his family, friends, and all those affected by this devastating loss. We recognize that this tragedy was both foreseeable and avoidable, and commit to reducing harm and increasing developmental opportunities for the youth in custody at the camps and halls. In these challenging times, we will continue working tirelessly to support the wellbeing of youth in Los Angeles County.

I want to take a moment to reflect on the transformative work being carried out by our dedicated teams. The testimonials below represent a small sample of the impact we are already making. We remain unwavering in our commitment to ensuring that the voices of youth are heard, their potential realized, and their lives shaped by compassion, understanding, and opportunity.

A formerly incarcerated youth who worked closely with DYD's Credible Messenger Program recently shared:

"Working with DYD and the Credible Messengers has been an honor. They have been very inspiring and a light of hope at times when I felt like giving up because life was throwing curveballs at me. But they always took the time to invest in me and give me that individual space with them to talk to me and help motivate me again to remain focused and that life will be hard but it will also get easier. They share real-life experiences that I may go through but can prevent because they share knowledge with young people so we can grow and not make the same mistakes!"

Feedback from young people who've participated in DYD's Youth Diversion and Development Program highlights the positive impact of community-based alternatives to arrest:

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"It really supported my mental health. I felt like I had ruined so many opportunities for myself, and they helped me see the light at the end of the tunnel." Youth also expressed their appreciation for the non-judgmental and supportive environment created by our incredible community-based providers: "The fact that they didn't judge you, they were there to support you, they were there to help you grow as a better person."

In a recent community leadership meeting our team held in partnership with the Youth Justice Advisory Group, a young person who is part of the Planning Committee for our upcoming Youth Development Summit shared their experience:

"It has been a pleasure to be part of the planning process for the Youth Summit, especially for me as a formerly incarcerated youth. I never thought I would be a part of this type of work, let alone plan a summit. I feel proud to be able to make systemic change for our future!"

We are incredibly proud of the young people we've had the honor of engaging with so far and are looking forward to uplifting their stories even more in the coming months. As always, thank you for your partnership!

David Carroll, Director