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## **Celebrating Black History Month and Youth Leadership**

This Black History Month, the Department of Youth Development reflected on the incredible power of Black youth-led activism. The [Greensboro Sit-Ins](#) remind us that youth leadership can reshape the course of history and create enduring positive change. Youth leadership has been DYD's guiding light since before our Department launched and we are looking forward to continuing to collaborate with youth leaders and co-create more opportunities for youth leadership this year and beyond.

This month, we want to highlight a few ways Black youth leaders have shaped and continue to shape our vision for the future. Keep reading and visit the links below to learn more.

# CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP



On February 1, 1960, four brave college students walked into a Woolworth's and staged a sit-in at a segregated lunch center in Greensboro, NC. When the young men were denied service, they refused to leave until the store closed. They returned the next day, and for days after that, bringing other students with them. Their protest sparked a youth-led sit-in movement across thirteen states and inspired similar protests against segregation in public spaces ranging from theaters to libraries to beaches. The Greensboro Sit-Ins became a symbol of youth-led activism for civil rights. They remind us that youth leadership can reshape the course of history and create enduring positive change.

**Mentorship for Youth Leadership**

Culturally relevant mentorship is a powerful model for supporting youth wellbeing and nurturing youth leadership.

DYD has a long-standing partnership with [Building a Lifetime of Options and Opportunities for Men \(BLOOM\)](#), a school-based mentorship program for Black and Brown young men ages 12-18 who are or are at risk of becoming involved the juvenile justice system. Supported by the California Community Foundation, BLOOM providers include [Brotherhood Crusade](#), [Social Justice Learning Institute](#), and [Becoming A Man](#), and are now expanding to include others through the BLOOM Alliance. BLOOM cultivates a sense of belonging, empowering students to reach greater academic success. With access to educational opportunities, caring mentors, and positive options, there's no limit to what these young men can achieve.

Other outstanding mentorship partners include the [Anti-Recidivism Coalition](#), [Healing Dialogue and Action](#), [Young Women's Freedom Center](#), and [Alma Family Services](#), who are leading DYD's work in connecting justice-involved youth in Juvenile Halls and Camps with the [Credible Messenger model](#) for transformative mentorship.

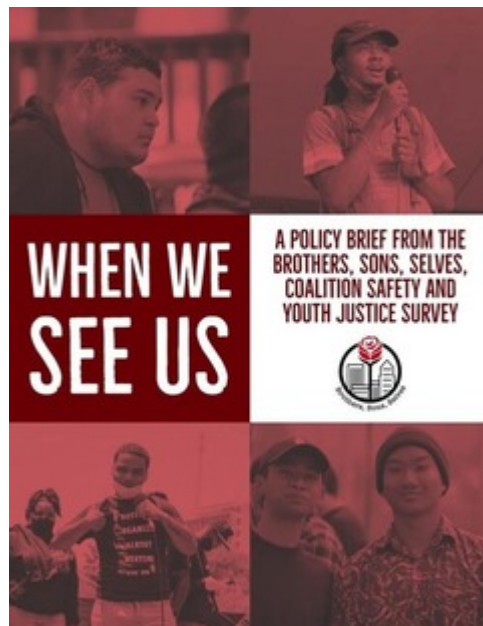


## Youth Participatory Action Research and Co-Design

We are always inspired by youth participatory action research and other examples of youth leaders being empowered to co-design events, programs, and policy priorities.

In 2018, for example, the [Brothers Sons Selves Coalition \(BSS\)](#) developed the [Safety and Youth Justice Survey](#) to capture how safety and justice is experienced by youth of color. The themes covered in the survey ranged from perceptions of law enforcement, how youth experience criminalization, policing, and incarceration, what youth experience in Los Angeles County and their schools, and the ways that youth want to invest public funds.

As the manager of the Brothers, Sons, Selves Coalition, Dr. David C. Turner III co-led campaigns to change school discipline practices, support investments in youth development, and end policies and practices that lead to criminalization in communities of color. DYD has also been able to collaborate with Dr. Turner over the years and make sure his brilliant approach to youth leadership has helped guide our [2023 Youth Development Summit](#) and our regional Youth Development Network community-centered design.



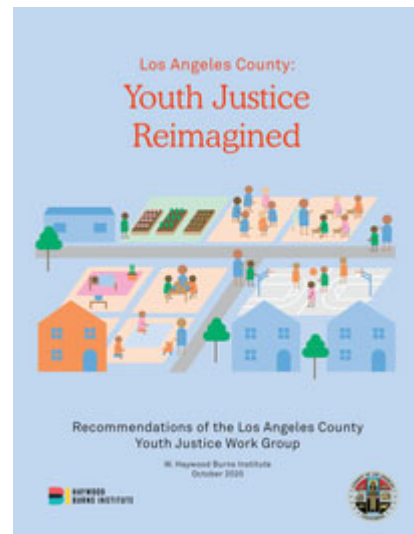
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## Ongoing Investment in Spaces for Youth Leadership

DYD and the Youth Justice Advisory Group host the [Heart of Youth Justice Reimagined](#), a youth-led space for young people to engage with LA County's [Youth Justice Reimagined \(YJR\)](#) efforts. In this space, youth are encouraged to connect with one another in a safe environment; engage with recommendations and plans for youth development, diversion, and reentry services; and inform DYD's long-term strategy for youth engagement.

We value community participation and youth expertise and want to make sure that DYD's and YJR's efforts are shaped by the people, specifically youth who are most impacted. The youth who join the Heart of YJR come from diverse backgrounds and communities. Most are system-impacted and/or formerly incarcerated and collectively advocate to transform the justice system by promoting community safety through alternatives to incarceration.

Stay tuned for future newsletters and follow [DYD's Instagram](#) for more information about upcoming opportunities to get involved in this space.



## Connect With Us

Do you have a favorite example of youth leadership that you want to highlight? Please write us at [info@dyd.lacounty.gov](mailto:info@dyd.lacounty.gov) and let us know!



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