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**STUDY SHOWS U.S. POLICE OFFICERS LACK TRAINING FOR INTERACTING WITH YOUTH
Nonprofit Group Offers Positive Training Nationwide**

Cambridge, MA, September 15, 2014— The death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri has reignited debates about the adequacy of police training for interactions with youth. Strategies for Youth trains police agencies across the United States.

“We must equip officers with the tools and skills to work effectively with youth. To fail to do so is not good for teens and it’s not good for law enforcement,” Lisa Thureau, Executive Director of Strategies for Youth, said. Strategies for Youth, Inc. (SFY), is the only national, 501(c.3) policy and training organization that exists to improve police/youth interactions and reduce disproportionate minority contact.

Thureau cited the organization’s 2013 report, *If Not Now, When? A Survey of Juvenile Justice Training in America’s Police Academies* that indicated that American police academies spend:

- 6 hours on average—less than 1% total academy time—on juvenile justice topics,
- Less than 9 academies train officers in tactics and skills for communicating effectively with youth, including those compromised by mental illness,
- Only 8 academies made mention of the federal obligation for police departments to reduce disproportionate minority contact.

Frank Hall, an expert in corrections who headed state agencies in New York, Oregon, Massachusetts, and Maryland, and an SFY board member, noted that the absence of national law enforcement standards to guide and assess police interactions with youth is another way officers are not adequately equipped.

“While much progress has been made in police training over the last 20 years, SFY’s current study indicates only three states have issued any standards and guidance on the subject of police/youth interactions,” said Hall. Since 2013, SFY has called on the U.S. Department of Justice Offices of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and Community Oriented Policing to address the absence of national standards to guide police/youth interactions.

While the details of the Ferguson incident remain under investigation, what is clear is that national data on police/youth interactions indicate a higher use of force on male teens of color. There are also extreme disparities in arrest and referral to courts compared to police treatment of white youth nationwide.

“The pain of this tragedy for youth, communities and law enforcement should at the very least serve as a wake-up call to make officer training a priority,” said Thureau.

To read the complete report, see www.strategiesforyouth.org.

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