

2025 Impact Report

A Vision for Youth Justice



Strategies **for** Youth

A Vision for Youth Justice

Dear Supporters and Partners,

2025 was a year in which many of our institutions were challenged and long-held assumptions were tested. As adults, we are grappling with this disorienting moment, but our young people are watching closely. While we work to protect our understanding of justice, young people are forming theirs. As in other pivotal moments in history, those in positions of power and those present in children's daily lives are modeling what they believe justice looks like.

As supporters, partners, and friends of Strategies For Youth, you are part of a movement offering young people a better vision of justice. This vision rests on two core principles: that the law must be applied equally, and that interactions with young people require approaches different from those used with adults. It is a vision that invests in specialized training for law enforcement, equipping officers to engage effectively with youth, while also educating young people so they understand both their rights and their responsibilities under the law. It is a vision that welcomes law enforcement as an essential part of our communities, while acknowledging that the failure to fully professionalize youth justice has too often resulted in harm.

Your involvement in the Strategies For Youth community is a powerful statement of purpose. It affirms that protecting young people and, when necessary, holding them accountable, is central to building and sustaining strong communities. How we treat young people today will shape not only the lives they lead, but the communities we all share in the years ahead.

At Strategies For Youth, 2025 also marked a significant transition. After 15 years as our founder and Executive Director, Lisa Thureau shifted her focus



Geordie McClelland
Co-Chair, Board of Directors



Dena Enos
Co-Chair, Board of Directors

to advising SFY on policy. Following a thoughtful, multi-month search we were proud to welcome Anthony Pierro as our next Executive Director.

Like Lisa, Anthony has dedicated his career to juvenile justice. He previously served as Chief Juvenile Attorney at the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office in New Jersey, and brings a bold vision for the future of Strategies For Youth: to lead a national effort to professionalize youth justice in every law enforcement agency in America. As is often said, young people are not miniature adults. Their developmental differences demand professionals with specialized training and policies intentionally designed to ensure equal access to justice.

Strategies For Youth is committed to building systems that respect young people and, in turn, earn their respect.

Thank you for being a part of this effort.

Geordie McClelland and Dena Enos
Co-chairs, SFY Board of Directors

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Where Growth Meets Change

To our friends, colleagues and supporters,

SFY survived 2025! We started the year gripped by fear due to the concern about funding for our work. This question pursued us throughout the year. The credit for our fiscal survival goes to Kristen Wheeler, our Legal Director whose success in developing outstanding versions of Juvenile Justice Jeopardy has boosted its popularity and increased its use across the U.S.A. including in CA, MA, NH, NJ, TX, and VA. Jasmine Bruner, SFY's Operation Director, added her expertise as a former youth worker to partner with Kristen leading to more games played across Massachusetts.

Thanks to support from the Five Together Foundation, Shelley Jackson, SFY's Law Enforcement Policies Attorney, made great strides promoting use of our 12 Model Law Enforcement Policies for Interactions with Youth, and standards with state and national law enforcement accreditation agencies. Shelley also developed a model Juvenile Operations Standard with the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission. Together we worked with the MA POST to develop the first Juvenile Operations Standard for law enforcement agency certification in the U.S. We hope to share the final version soon.

In 2025, we also continued with our Policing the Teen Brain training. Anthony Geraci, a former NY state Chief with expertise in procedural justice and training, continued our work in California and Maine where, despite initial resistance, officers warmly welcomed SFY's training.

In June 2025, I announced my intention to retire in December. Fifteen years since founding SFY, I concluded it was time for new leadership at SFY—new energy, new ideas, new strategies. With the

leadership of our Board co-chairs, Geordie McClelland and Dena Enos, and supported by Board members Lyslynn Lacoste and Sasha Turkovich, we

searched for someone with fire in the belly, commitment to youth, and a proven record of reform efforts to ensure the best outcomes for youth. And the Board chose Anthony Pierro, a former juvenile prosecutor with 25 years focusing solely on youth. Anthony brings knowledge of the juvenile justice system, and fresh ideas for ensuring developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, equitable approaches are used in every part of the juvenile legal system.

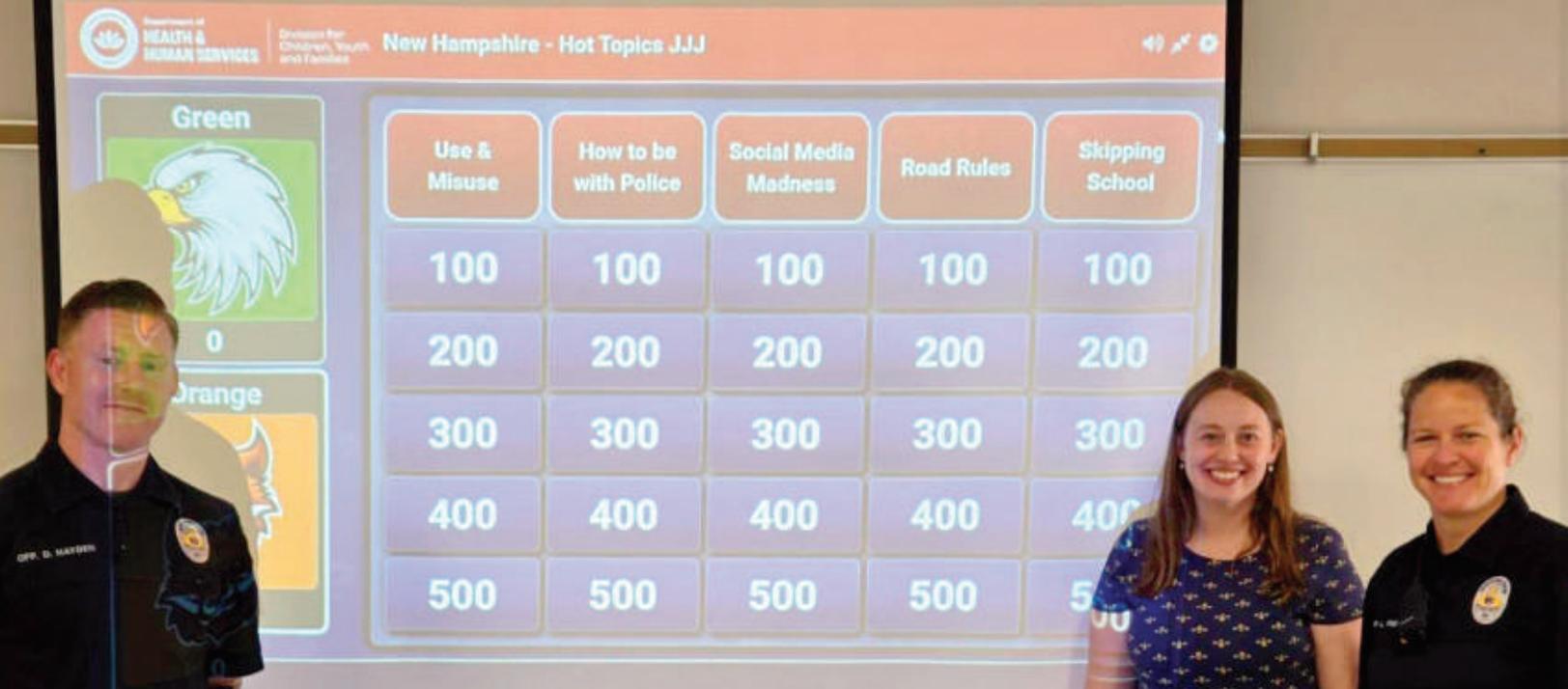
Your support and that of the foundations like the Stifler Family Foundation, the Shaw Foundation, the Island Foundation, and the Marjorie H. Wilson Charitable Trust that provided us general operating support helped us navigate the new terrain. And we thank our many partners and colleagues who champion our work and impacts. Thanks to you, we survived and thrived in 2025.



Lisa Thureau
Founder & Strategic Advisor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa H. Thureau" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lisa Thureau,
Founder & Strategic Advisor



Nashua, NH stakeholders leading JJJ at the local YMCA

Juvenile Justice Jeopardy™

2025 JJJ Highlights

Roll Out Across New Hampshire

In 2025, through a partnership with the NH Department of Children, Youth, and Families and Juvenile Justice Reform Commission, SFY brought two versions of JJJ to communities across the state. From the cities of Concord and Manchester to the Seacoast and North Country regions, stakeholders working with youth were trained to use “*Street*” and “*Hot Topics*” JJJ games. Through 165 trained Game Leaders, young people in NH will now receive critical education about how to safely and lawfully interact with peers and law enforcement, as well as on important topics like truancy, substance misuse, safe driving, and online safety.

Peer Leaders Take the Initiative

The Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office has trained peer leaders in its WeSpeak youth advisory group to lead the important conversations that JJJ prompts. In July, WeSpeak youth presented JJJ at a Youth Violence Prevention Symposium in Pittsburgh, warning young people about the dangers of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.

Peer Leaders in a D.C. medical ascension program were trained to lead a JJJ game designed to prevent opioid use. These young people are bringing critical education to their community members by playing JJJ in community centers around the city.

“ JJJ is such a fun and engaging prevention tool—it not only empowers our young people with information, but it also helps bridge gaps across sectors. ”

– Coos County, NH Game Leader

JJJ Reaches Its 28th State!

Partnering with the Phoenix Office of Accountability and Transparency (OAT) to customize a JJJ game for its youth program, SFY is now in Arizona – its 28th state!

JJJ Impact in Massachusetts

In 2025, SFY partnered with Boston-based youth development programs to provide education on rights and obligations in police interactions to young people engaged in their programs. Pre- and post-game surveys reveal an average knowledge growth of 64% when youth played JJJ, with 100% of Boston-area youth reporting the JJJ game was a valuable use of their time. One young woman, understandably struggling to make sense of some of the more confusing and draconian laws discussed, was exasperated by the information presented during JJJ. She wrapped up our sessions by turning to the group and saying: “this is the best workshop we’ve had,” and then turning to SFY staff and saying: “thank you for being here. Thank you for taking the time to explain this to us.”

100% of Boston-area youth reporting the JJJ game was a valuable use of their time.

SFY is also grateful to the Ludcke Foundation, ‘Quin House Impact Fund, and Boston Bar Foundation, whose support has allowed SFY to bring more JJJ programming to Massachusetts. As part of this funding, youth in Holyoke and Springfield, parts of the Commonwealth that are often overlooked, will now have access to JJJ.



Milford, NH youth play JJJ during a game leader training.



WeSpeak Youth Advisory Group members and Assistant District Attorney, Jordan King, teach gun laws using JJJ at Pittsburgh Youth Symposium.



Phoenix youth discuss the risks of peer pressure during a JJJ game.



526

Youth Played Pilot Games in 10 States



462

Game Leaders Trained



3

New Versions of the JJJ Game Developed



BART Policing the Teen Brain Training, November 2025

Policing the Teen Brain™

2025 PTB Highlights

SFY's Signature Training: Policing the Teen Brain™

SFY's signature law enforcement training, *Policing the Teen Brain*, consistently resonates with participants by translating neuroscience, adolescent development research, and trauma-informed practices into practical, actionable tactics that officers can immediately apply in their daily work.

The program establishes a framework for understanding youth behavior and responding in ways that prioritize safety, dignity, and long-term community trust. By grounding policing strategies in developmental science, SFY equips officers with tools that align enforcement responsibilities with age-appropriate, evidence-informed approaches.

Leadership Engagement and National Reach

In 2025, Strategies for Youth delivered trainings in settings from rural Maine to the East Bay area of California, reaching a wide range of law enforcement professionals. In addition to frontline training, SFY provided formal presentations for regional and state Police Chiefs Associations and municipal executives promoting youth-centered, developmentally informed policing at operational and leadership levels.

SFY also increased its visibility through strategic outreach and representation at major national and state convenings, including the New York State Chiefs of Police Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), and the New York State Public Safety Symposium. These efforts expanded SFY's reach,

strengthened relationships with law enforcement leaders, and advanced the organization's mission nationwide.

Building Forward Momentum

SFY's work reinforced the importance of investing in training that empowers law enforcement professionals to engage youth with understanding, confidence, and purpose. Across regions and agencies, officers demonstrated a genuine commitment to improving relationships, building trust, and co-producing public safety in partnership with the communities they serve.

Overall, the year reflected growth and deepened national impact for SFY. Through strategic outreach, high-level engagement, and evidence-based training, the organization continued to strengthen communities nationwide by advancing youth-centered policing practices grounded in science and collaboration.

SFY lead comprehensive trainings in the states of California and Maine. The 10 trainings included 2-day PTB trainings, train-the-trainer courses and coached trainings.



Youth engaging in skits with police officers in Houlton, Maine, October 2025.



Psychologist, Dr. Linda Watt presenting *Policing the Teen Brain* in Auburn-Lewiston, Maine, September 2025.



Director of Law Enforcement Training, Anthony W. Geraci, addressing Council of Mayors in Contra Costa County, California, August 2025.



145
Law Enforcement
Officers Trained



83
Service Providers &
Crisis Intervention
Specialists Trained



6
Probation
Officers Trained

2025 Policy Reform Highlights

In 2025, SFY's focused efforts to promote and implement our [12 Model Law Enforcement Policies for Youth Interactions](#) by working with national and state accreditation agencies, advocacy with the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (MA POST), continued outreach, and site-specific advocacy.

National Leadership

SFY worked with a national accreditation agency to suggest revisions and expansion to its youth-related standards, including in such areas as arrest alternatives and decisions, contacts with youth, custodial interrogations and non-custodial interviews, handcuffing of youth, interactions with students, law enforcement actions in the presence of children, officer training, policy input, and procedures for custody. These revised policies are now under review by the accreditation agency's leadership. In May 2025, we also presented to accreditation directors of all 50 states participating in AccredNet, to promote adoption of law enforcement agency standards.

State Advocacy with MA-POST

In 2025, we were able to increase our advocacy with the MA POST, which must develop a mandatory "Juvenile Operations" standard. Once issued, all Massachusetts law enforcement agencies must comply with this standard to be certified by the POST. SFY monitored the POST's monthly meetings, submitted detailed comments about the draft Juvenile Operations standard released in June and provided comments on other standards that impact youth. We frequently reached out to POST legal counsel to share our views and concerns. SFY's

Model Policies provided the substantive basis for this work. Why this matters: Massachusetts will be the first state in the nation to issue mandatory certification standards on agencies' interactions with youth. We hope this will become a national model for POSTs in other states.

Outreach Presentations to NACOLE

We continued to engage in outreach, including speaking twice to the National Organization for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE), which works to support independent civilian oversight for law enforcement, jails, and prisons. In March, we gave a webinar presentation to the NACOLE Training, Education, and Standards Committee. In November, accompanied by a local advocate, we spoke at NACOLE's Annual Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Both presentations focused on key legal issues and common interactions between law enforcement and youth, and the importance of civilian oversight.

Jurisdictional Consultations in Minneapolis and Phoenix

Finally, we worked in two jurisdictions to promote policies consistent with our Model Policies. In January, we consulted with Minneapolis advocates in their review of draft Minneapolis Police Department youth interactions policies. In November, we provided comments to the Phoenix, Arizona Police Department on its draft policies on interactions with youth. We hope to be working, as needed, in these and other jurisdictions throughout 2026.

Foundation Sponsors

Strategies for Youth would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous support in 2025.



Gardiner Howland
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Executive Director Lisa Thureau, presenting at CALEA conference November 2025.





SFY staff member, Jasmine Bruner, leading JJJ at More than Words in Boston, MA.

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SFY's 990 Forms are available online at: strategiesforyouth.org/annual-reports.

Board Members are listed in bold. Donors listed here have made a commitment as of December 31, 2025. We have made every effort to include donors in the appropriate lists and by their preferred names. For questions or concerns, please contact Anthony Pierro at apierro@strategiesforyouth.org.