



# Neighborhood Justice

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Newsletter of the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office Youth Aid Panels  
R. Seth Williams - District Attorney

## The 26<sup>th</sup> Training Class

On April 15, 2014, the District Attorney's Office began training a new class of Youth Aid Panelists. Training consisted of five two-hour evening sessions, the final session being graduation.

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The first training session consisted of introductions and an overview of what it means to be a Youth Aid Panelist. Deputy District Attorney George Mosee, Assistant District Attorney Lisa Pema Harvey, Director of Juvenile Diversion Programs and Assistant District Attorney Mike Stackow, Chief of the Juvenile Unit all were present and spoke about the juvenile court system.

The second training session focused on "What is the role of a Youth Aid Panelist?". We had guest panelists and officers speak with the new panel members on how they handle difficult cases. They also answered any questions from the new panelists. After the second training session, the panelists were able to go out and visit panels.

The third training session consisted of how to explain the process and content of the contracts given to each YAP participant. Agencies, such as Good Sheppard Meditation Program and Don't Fall Down in the Hood, came in and spoke with the new panelists about their programs. The third training session also focused on the victims. This included sensitivities toward the victim and understanding the victim's needs.

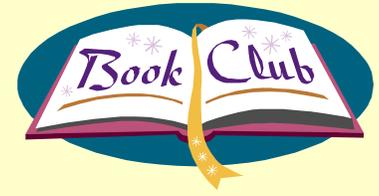
The fourth training session consisted of reviewing the various paperwork used in the hearings. In addition we conducted mock panel sessions. The new panelists were ready and eager to start their journey as YAP panelists.

On May 13, 2014, The District Attorney of Philadelphia, R. Seth Williams was present to graduate our 51 new Youth Aid Panelists who will join 158 sitting panelists. The new panelists will be joining many of your panels, so please make them feel welcome and share your knowledge!



## Book Club

### Youth Aid Panel Book Suggestions:



### *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers

This *New York Times* bestselling novel and National Book Award nominee from acclaimed author Walter Dean Myers tells the story of Steve Harmon, a teenage boy in juvenile detention and on trial for a robbery that ended in a murder. Presented as a screenplay of Steve's own imagination, and peppered with journal entries, the book shows how one single decision can change our whole lives.

### *Shattering Glass* by Gail Giles

"Simon Glass was easy to hate....I guess, really we each hated him for a different reason, but we didn't realize it until the day we killed him."  
 Fat, clumsy Simon Glass is a nerd, a loser who occupies the lowest rung on the high school social ladder. Everyone picks on him -- until Rob Haynes shows up. Rob, a transfer student with charisma to spare, immediately becomes the undisputed leader of the senior class. And he has plans for Simon. Rob enlists the help of his crew -- wealthy, intellectual Young, ladies' man Bob, and sweet, athletic Coop -- in a mission: Turn sniveling Simon from total freak to would-be prom king. But as Simon rises to the top of the social ranks, he shows a new confidence and a devious side that power-hungry Rob did not anticipate. And when Simon uncovers a dangerous secret, events darken. The result is disquieting, bone-chilling...and brutal.

### *Make Lemonade* by Virginia Euwer Wolff

**PLOT SUMMARY:** LaVaughn, a high school student gets a job babysitting after school to earn money for her college savings fund. She ends up babysitting for Jolly, a 17 year-old single mother of two, who has problems supporting herself and her two children. With no family to speak of, Jolly takes the advice of 14 year-old LaVaughn and enrolls in a class at her high school that provides daycare for single mothers while helping them to earn a high school diploma. Because Jolly refuses to get financial help from the government, LaVaughn often babysits and cleans house for free and basically finds herself being a mother to both Jolly and her children.

**JOLLY:** Jolly is a 17 year-old mom who is, for the most part, illiterate. Having been fired from her last job for refusing her boss's sexual advances, she is having a hard time finding another job she is qualified to do. Helpless and alone, she meets 14 year-old LaVaughn, who is her lifeline. With the help of LaVaughn, Jolly struggles to get back on her feet.

**LAVAUGHN:** LaVaughn is the 14 year-old daughter of a single mother and is struggling to earn money for college. She takes a job babysitting for Jolly but is so compelled by Jolly's situation that she continues to help even when the money runs out and even spends part of her own money to clothe the children. She becomes so involved in the lives of Jolly and her two children that she almost loses sight of her own goals.

## STAMP Program

The STAMP program is a program that will now offer teens and any other high-school aged teenager living in Philadelphia one year of free admission to 12 of the city's top museums and attractions. Students who enroll in STAMP (Students at Museums in Philly) receive the **STAMP Pass**, a card that they can present to get free out-of-school-time admission to some of the city's top museums and cultural venues, which is available at no charge to teens age 14 to 19 who live in the city of Philadelphia. Teens can register for the STAMP Pass by visiting [www.phillystampass.org](http://www.phillystampass.org). Passes expire a year from the application date.

### Participating museums and cultural institutions:

African American Museum in Philadelphia	National Constitution Center
Barnes Foundation	National Museum of American Jewish History
Eastern State Penitentiary	Penn Museum
Fabric Workshop and Museum	Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
Institute of Contemporary Art	Philadelphia Museum of Art
Mutter Museum	Philadelphia Zoo

## Community Service

Summer time means there will be more community service options available for juveniles. The STAMP program also has volunteer programs that can be used as community service suggestions as well. Some ideas for community service are cleaning the parks; helping at the many racing events in Philadelphia (examples: hand out water bottles or cleaning up after the event). It might not be glamorous, but this volunteer work is actually really helpful to non-profits! Volunteer at a homeless shelter where there are numerous volunteer options, such as preparing and serving food to people in need.

### From the Juveniles

*By A Youth Aid Panel Juvenile - Don't do Drugs*

1. Mind corruption
2. Failure to breathe and see
3. And how you feel knowing that you can no longer speak
4. this is your own fault
5. Do you know what's right from wrong?
6. You are influential and a lot of people been led on
7. And when you got caught
8. I swear the whole world shook
9. Man everybody got they faults
10. But this isn't getting overlooked
11. Critical the way we thinking
12. But you know you can't explain it
13. Jail cell snapping
14. Realizing but still relaxing
15. How could this happen
16. My parents they think I'm tragic
17. It's socially awkward and in my mind I'm always snapping
18. My dad gives me money and says don't spend it in one place
19. I know what he means so I just shake my head in shame
20. I'm down with the games
21. See I'm not getting overpaid
22. But I brought this on myself so they consider me as a lame
23. I don't get no school fame, I don't brag about this
24. And every time I think about it, I just ball up my fist
25. I had a person say, I was addicted to drugs
26. I had my best friend show me, some emotional love
27. They told me to stop what I'm doing
28. Be a better influence
29. Do something in my life
30. But please stop with the fooling
31. Put me in the right place
32. My friends are there, wait!
33. Here I come, these drugs are getting out my face
34. It's crazy how we did it
35. But I think that I should mention
36. To don't do drugs
37. That's my message and a statement

## Hail and Farewell

**Chris Oluwole** joined the office in January as an Undergraduate intern for the Youth Aid Panel and Drug Treatment Court. Chris graduated from West Chester University in December 2013 where he majored in English and minored in psychology. He is currently filling out applications to various law schools.

## Friendly Reminders

- Please make sure that your panel's paperwork is mailed to our office (that includes the monitoring logs) in a timely manner, preferably by the end of each week. Paperwork can also be sent via fax: (215)-686-7655.
- Please leave the duty of rescheduling cases to the District Attorney's Office. This prevents over-scheduling and cases getting lost in the mix. Keep the lines of communication open with us. We are here at all times to answer any questions.
- The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office is always looking for special people who are willing to help steer first-time juvenile offenders away from the criminal justice system and toward more productive life choices.



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The same folks who administer the Youth Aid Panels bring NEIGHBORHOOD JUSTICE to you:

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**Lisa Pema Harvey, Assistant District Attorney**  
**Adara L. Combs, Law Clerk**  
**Faith Harris, Victim Witness Coordinator**  
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