

PRESS RELEASE

2015 3RD ANNUAL NATIONAL WEEK OF ACTION AGAINST INCARCERATING YOUTH MAY 17 TO MAY 23, 2015

<http://savethekidsgroup.org/2015noyouthinprison/>
#NoYouthInPrison @STKgroup

WHAT: The National Week of Action Against Incarcerating Youth is a fully-volunteer project organized by hundreds of groups and individuals across the United States. Actions are small and large including candlelight vigils, spoken-word mic nights, protests, rallies, teach-ins, workshops, lectures, panels, banner drops bridges, walkouts, conferences, dinners, lunches, lobby days, dances, street theater, movie nights, press conferences, potlucks, sit-ins, parades, and pamphletting.

PROBLEM: Campaign for Youth Justice, note that “every year, juvenile courts in the U.S. handle an estimated 1.7 million cases in which the youth was charged with a delinquency offense, approximately 4,600 delinquency cases per day.”

Save the Kids states that “the school and juvenile justice system targets four youth groups the most for incarceration; they are the following, in no specific order: (1) Youth of Color, (2) Youth with Disabilities, (3) Economically Disadvantaged Youth, and (4) LGBTTQQA Youth.”

These four youth groups are often targeted in three ways: criminalization of youth through laws and norms that are based on their behavior, dress, socialization, identity, and community; policing of youth through surveillance and social control by law enforcement and those in disciplinary roles; and punitive discipline of youth, which is the punishment of youth including detention, out of school suspension, sitting in the corner in the hall, involuntary labor, incarceration, home arrest, and probation.

GOALS: The end of the incarceration of all youth and the school to prison pipeline is possible. It begins with community-based programs and alternatives such as rehabilitation, therapy, counseling, job readiness workshops, inclusion and diversity trainings, tutoring, more community programs and centers, and transformative and restorative justice programs in the community and in schools to address conflicts, harms, responsibility, and accountability. The ACLU states, “Community-based alternatives to incarceration are much cheaper and more effective in reducing crime and recidivism. While the average cost of a juvenile prison bed is \$241 a day, a slot in a community-based program costs less than \$75 a day.”

Reies Romero, a National Coordinator of Save the Kids, who was incarcerated as a youth, states, “Incarceration is not the solution, but the problem. Once youth are involved in the juvenile justice system, it is hard for them to get out of it.”

Dr. Anthony J. Nocella II, expert on the school to prison pipeline, argues that “the community needs to support youth and their futures and demand that no more youth are incarcerated no matter the crime/harm they have committed. Incarceration does nothing to address the needs of the youth who have committed the harm.”

ACTION: There are over 100 events with over 100 sponsors across the United States organizing events. Please visit the website for local event details/contacts: <http://savethekidsgroup.org/2015noyouthinprison/>

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