

Coalition for Juvenile Justice National Awards



May 4, 2013
Washington, D.C.

Each year, Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) leaders, members and allies gather to recognize and celebrate individuals who exemplify excellence, dedication and commitment to CJJ's core mission to reform the juvenile justice system and improve the lives of children, families and communities, nationwide. With the following awards, CJJ also hopes to inspire more people to serve their communities with distinction.

Tony Gobar Outstanding Juvenile Justice Specialist Award

We will be known forever by the tracks we leave.

-- Dakota Proverb

CJJ's 2013 Tony Gobar Outstanding National Juvenile Justice Specialist Award is presented to Valerie A. LaMotte of Connecticut, for her leadership through service and for reminding us all that every child is indeed special.

With this award, named in memoriam for Tony Gobar of Mississippi, CJJ recognizes a State Juvenile Justice Specialist who exemplifies excellence in service to others, is dedicated to improving the juvenile justice system and demonstrates compassion and concern.

Valerie LaMotte is just such a person. Ms. LaMotte has worked for more than 35 years as the State of Connecticut's primary liaison with the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). She serves as Connecticut's Juvenile Justice Specialist, Compliance Monitor and Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Coordinator, and works as a manager at the Office of Policy and Management, the Governor's budget agency. Ms. LaMotte is responsible for staffing Connecticut's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) and seven active subcommittees or task groups.



As one of the most consistent voices for juvenile justice in Connecticut, Ms. LaMotte's leadership on issues such as jail removal and DMC has moved Connecticut near the forefront in juvenile justice reform. Ms. LaMotte's accomplishments in the area of DMC include overseeing statewide assessment studies, leading task groups in the development of several specific DMC intervention tools and a communications initiative for system practitioners and the public.

Ms. LaMotte also was instrumental in convening and staffing the Connecticut Consortium on School Attendance, aimed at improving school attendance through data-driven planning, providing money for programs that school districts cannot afford and, ultimately, helping school districts keep young people in school.

She has worked tirelessly to ensure that the funds voted by the JJAC and administered by her office go to groups that most directly serve at-risk and disadvantaged youth and their families. She also helped develop a nationally recognized police and youth training curriculum that supports improved interactions between youth and police. In addition, Ms. LaMotte has spent many years providing support to Civics First, a non-profit group that coordinates training on government and the court system for young people.

According to Francis J. Carino, Supervising Assistant State's Attorney for Connecticut: "I cannot think of anyone who has exemplified excellence in service to others, has been dedicated and committed to improving the juvenile justice system and has demonstrated compassion and concern for juveniles and advocates – in the tradition established by Tony Gobar – more so than Valerie LaMotte."

Ms. LaMotte received her Bachelor of Arts with high honors from the University of Connecticut, her Master of Science in Library Science from Southern Connecticut State University and her Juris Doctorate from the University of Connecticut School of Law. She has three grown sons and considerable personal experience with the special education process from a parent's perspective.

Spirit Of Youth Award

Give light and people will find the way.

- Ella Baker

CJJ's 2013 Spirit of Youth Award is presented to Hernan Carvente of New York for his personal triumphs, professional achievements and extraordinary service to others.



The Spirit of Youth Award is given annually by CJJ to recognize and celebrate a young adult, under the age of 28, who made great strides after involvement with the juvenile justice system, overcame personal obstacles and is now making significant contributions to society.

The award provides CJJ and the public with an important opportunity to learn from a young person's direct experience about the hard work and dedication it takes to build a better life, and how those in the juvenile justice system and at the community level can help. Each year, CJJ's National Youth Committee organizes the award.

Hernan Carvente is an impressive example of "speaking truth to power" and how it became one young man's way to build a better life for himself and others. The story behind Mr. Carvente's success is filled with both despair and hope.

At age 15, Mr. Carvente made some poor choices that led to a conviction in the adult criminal justice system and four years of incarceration. Yet, at age 20, Mr. Carvente almost does not recognize his 15-year-old self.

He is a college student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, a loving and dependable partner and father, and an intern at a prestigious research organization, the Vera Institute of Justice. There he is working on a project to reform the same institution where he was incarcerated for four years.

A critical and, unfortunately unique, experience helped shaped Mr. Carvente's life during his incarceration: He took a college class, and it changed his entire focus. He recognized an opportunity to get an education that, as he said, "No one could ever take away from me."

Mr. Carvente exemplifies the meaning of the Spirit of Youth Award – to recognize young people who have changed their lives and strive to change the lives of others. Mr. Carvente's story of success as a college student with an internship and part-time job is remarkable given the odds stacked against him.

What makes Mr. Carvente's success even more inspiring is his drive to give back, to affect change, to touch the lives of young people going through the same system he just survived. The Spirit of Youth Award not only validates Mr. Carvente's achievements, but it also supports him in his quest to help others.

In January 2013, Governor Cuomo appointed Mr. Carvente to the New York State Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG). Following his appointment to the JJAG, he was then accepted to become the Northeast Regional Representative of the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) National Youth Committee. The future shines bright for Mr. Carvente!

A. L. Carlisle Child Advocacy Award

Nothing you do for children is ever wasted.

- Garrison Keillor

CJJ's 2013 A. L. Carlisle Child Advocacy Award is presented to Robert H. (Robin) Jenkins of North Carolina for championing for youth with courage, compassion and commitment.

CJJ's A. L. Carlisle Child Advocacy Award is presented annually by CJJ to an individual who makes outstanding contributions to youth, the improvement of juvenile justice and in the broader area of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention. The award is named in honor of A. L. Carlisle, CJJ's founding force. Ms. Carlisle was a volunteer activist who strived to ensure that the nation's most troubled and vulnerable children would have secure futures.

Robin Jenkins is Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Juvenile Justice in the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, where he has served with distinction and continues to provide leadership and vision for his state. He formerly served as executive director of Cumberland County CommuniCare Inc., a non-profit agency devoted to strengthening families through effective prevention and early intervention services for at-risk children and their families through community-based collaboration.



He is a member of the American Psychological Association, the American Evaluation Association, the Society for Community Research and Action and the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ). In North Carolina, he also serves on the Governor's Crime Commission, the Criminal Justice Information Network Board of Directors, the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission and the State Advisory Group.

While serving as the court psychologist in the Juvenile Court Counselors Office for 20 years, Dr. Jenkins embodied the genuine spirit of the A. L. Carlisle Child Advocacy Award. He offered many young offenders opportunities to search within themselves for elusive answers to the challenges they were facing.

Colleagues recall that it was not unusual to notice Dr. Jenkins involved in an intensive "one-on-one" session with a youth that continued way beyond the allotted time. On other occasions, one could see him with his hand on a young fellow's shoulder, walking him out to his parent as if he himself was the parent. For many youngsters, Dr. Jenkins was a role model, as he was – and continues to be – for many of the staff persons who observed him day in and day out.

He always believed and hammered home that services on the front end will prevent the necessity of services on the back end. He was well-aware that the earlier one is able to connect an adolescent to appropriate services, the more likely success would prevail and the less likely the need for ongoing help.

Dr. Jenkins' work with CJJ began in 1997 when he joined the North Carolina SAG. He has served on various CJJ committees over the years, including Special Projects, Conference Planning (several) and Annual Report Writing committees. Dr. Jenkins became the CJJ Southern Region Chair in 2002, was elected CJJ Chair-Elect in 2005 and rose to the position of CJJ National Chair, from January 2007 until July 2009. He then served as the Immediate Past National Chair from 2009 through 2011.

A. L. Carlisle Child Advocacy Award (Cont.)

He presently serves as the liaison between CJJ and the National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN) and as Co-Chair of the CJJ Member Services Committee. Dr. Jenkins also served on the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice for OJJDP, where he contributed significantly to the Annual Report Writing Committee.

“Robin is a hard-working, conscientious, highly motivated individual who has spent a significant amount of his life being the voice for the voiceless,” said the Hon. Edward Pone, North Carolina District Court Judge. “He has been a role model to our youth, as he has worked diligently with people from various walks of life to help improve the quality of life for our children and families.”

Dr. Jenkins’ favorite quote is from Kahlil Gibran: “There are those who give with joy and that joy is their reward.” Dr. Robin Jenkins surely exemplifies the person for whom the joy of giving is its own reward.







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