Coalition for Juvenile Justice
National Awards

June 23, 2012
Bethesda, Maryland
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.
CJJ’s 2012 Tony Gobar Outstanding National Juvenile Justice Specialist Award is presented to Alan Miller of Idaho, for his 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, who is dedicated to improving the juvenile justice system and who demonstrates compassion and concern.

As Idaho’s Juvenile Justice Specialist for the past six years, Mr. Miller has used his position to leverage opportunities for court-involved youth. When state funding was made available, and recognizing the need for mental health services for youth, Mr. Miller advocated for replication of a mental health clinician program in all 12 of Idaho’s detention facilities, which has supported a dramatic decline in attempted suicides among detained youth. When funding for juvenile justice substance abuse services was unexpectedly moved to Mr. Miller’s agency, he worked quickly to develop and implement a plan to provide services for youth, statewide, without interruption.

Mr. Miller has proactively reached out to tribal juvenile justice systems and was instrumental in establishing tribal membership as part of the Idaho Juvenile Justice Commission (the Idaho SAG). For his work, Mr. Miller was chosen to speak at the Northwest Tribal Conference in Washington State in 2011. In addition, Mr. Miller has worked with community groups, including faith-based groups, to help them better define their supportive role in helping youth transitioning from incarceration back into the families and communities.

Recognizing the value of the youth membership on the Idaho SAG, Mr. Miller, along with the Idaho SAG Chair, has developed techniques and strategies to recruit and maintain youth members. As an extension of this focus, Mr. Miller and his team nominated the 2011 Spirit of Youth Award recipient and Idaho Youth SAG Member Andrew “Drew” Peterman, and provided encouragement and support as Mr. Peterman shared his story with state and national audiences.

Mr. Miller truly believes it takes a team to make a difference, and with his leadership and foresight, Idaho’s juvenile justice system continues to improve and serve the state’s children, families and communities.
**Spirit of Youth Award**

*Give light and people will find the way.*

- Ella Baker

CJJ’s 2012 Spirit of Youth Award is presented to Jabriera Shakira Handy of Maryland for her 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 has made great strides after involvement with the juvenile justice system, overcome personal obstacles and is, today, 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 juvenile justice professionals and systems can most effectively be of help. Each year, CJJ’s National Youth Committee organizes this award.

Jabriera Handy is a youth advocate, organizer and spokeswoman on the issues of youth in adult court and juvenile justice reforms. She was involved with the juvenile and adult criminal courts, but is now dedicating her efforts to ensuring other youth do not have to experience the challenges of being placed in adult court and/or in adult jails. She has become a leader in the juvenile justice reform movement in Baltimore, and is inspiring and educating other youth to speak up for reforms.

Ms. Handy has courageously shared the story of her involvement in the criminal and juvenile justice systems with her community, policy makers and other youth. When Ms. Handy was 16, she was charged as an adult with the death of her grandmother. Ms. Handy’s grandmother died of a heart attack just hours after an altercation between them. In Maryland, a 16 year old charged with murder is automatically charged as an adult. Eventually, the court did send Ms. Handy’s case back to juvenile court, but only after she was incarcerated in the Baltimore adult jail for 11 months.

Ms. Handy has taken the horrors of her experience in the adult system and her subsequent experience in the juvenile justice system to advocate for change in Maryland’s treatment of youth charged with crimes. She is a youth organizer in the Stop the Youth Jail campaign, advocating to halt a $100-million jail from being built in Baltimore, and in the Just Kids Partnership, advocating to change Maryland’s policies on prosecution of youth in adult criminal court. Ms. Handy’s efforts have been instrumental in the success of both campaigns.

Ms. Handy is also a national spokesperson with the Campaign for Youth Justice on the issue of youth in adult criminal court. She has spoken at the National PTA conference and has provided public testimony before the Maryland state legislature, as well as before the U.S. Attorney General’s Defending Childhood Task Force. Ms. Handy authored an opinion piece that ran in *The Baltimore Sun* and has served as a resource for the media.

Ms. Handy is a gifted, resilient and personable young woman who inspires her peers to lead and show tenacity in the face of huge challenges.
Nothing you do for children is ever wasted.
- Garrison Keillor

CJJ's 2012 A.L. Carlisle Child Advocacy Award is presented to Richard J. Gardell of Minnesota for championing the good for children and youth with courage, compassion and commitment.

CJJ's A. L. Carlisle Child Advocacy Award is presented annually by CJJ to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to youth, juvenile justice improvement efforts 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 their futures secured.

Mr. Gardell has been a leader and a shaper of juvenile justice policy both in Minnesota and nationally since the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) was passed in 1974. In 1979, Mr. Gardell was appointed by the governor to serve as an inaugural member of the newly formed Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC, the Minnesota SAG). Mr. Gardell proudly represented law enforcement as a member of JJAC until 1992. He was re-appointed in 2002 and has served as the JJAC chair since 2007.

During his tenure with JJAC, Mr. Gardell has worked collaboratively to bring Minnesota into compliance with the JJDPA. Most notably, in 2008, he and his JJAC colleagues recommended that Minnesota adopt a statewide policy on disproportionate minority contact (DMC) in the juvenile justice system, and worked with a broad coalition to get such policy adopted and passed into law in 2009.

Mr. Gardell’s leadership, however, has not been limited to the state level. In the early 1980s, he was part of the great team of advocates that established the National Coalition of State Juvenile Justice Advisory Groups – now CJJ – and served as CJJ’s National Chair in 1988. Mr. Gardell was also the gubernatorial appointee to the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice for four years, serving his last year as chair, Mr. Gardell also served the people of St. Paul, Minnesota, as a law enforcement officer for 31 years, beginning as a police officer and rising through the ranks to Assistant Chief. In this capacity, Mr. Gardell witnessed the challenges young people face and worked to provide them with many opportunities to succeed.

For 30 years, he has volunteered with the Boy Scouts of America, St. Paul Police Explorer Post 454 and mentored many high-school-aged youth. He also volunteered for 10 years as a baseball coach for grade-school youth at two inner-city schools. In 2001, he convinced the St. Paul Police Department to donate bicycles that were recovered and unclaimed to the nonprofit Youth Express so that they could establish a youth-run business repairing and selling bicycles to neighborhood youth. He also volunteered with the capital campaign to help Youth Express to buy and remodel a building as their permanent home.

Mr. Gardell is the CEO of 180 Degrees, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides human and correctional services to juveniles and adults involved with the justice system. As CEO, he oversaw the development of an evening learning center in Ramsey County, a detention alternative that allows court-involved youth to
stay in their homes and schools, and learn critical life skills. “Turning lives around to provide safer communities” is not just the mission statement for 180 Degrees, Inc. -- it also defines Mr. Gardell’s life’s work.

Mr. Gardell lives in St. Paul, MN, where he was born and raised. He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in criminal justice from the University of Minnesota. He is also a graduate of the Southern Police Institute (KY) and the Harvard University Leadership Series. He and his wife Jackie are very involved in their grandchildren’s lives: 8-year-old TJ, 6-year-old Caitlyn, 2-year-old Evan, 1-year-old Keira and 5-month-old Giselle.
Shirkey Warthen, a passionate and dedicated youth advocate nominated by Juvenile Law Center for the CJJ’s 2012 Spirit of Youth Award, was tragically shot and killed in April 2012.

When Mr. Warthen was 14 years old, he became involved in the juvenile justice system and spent two years in placement. Mr. Warthen saw his juvenile justice system involvement as an opportunity to change not only his life, but the lives of other young people who have faced similar circumstances.

In 2008, at the age of 18, Mr. Warthen joined Juvenile Law Center’s Juveniles for Justice, a group of youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system who work to improve the system for other youth.

In Juveniles for Justice, Mr. Warthen proved to be a natural leader and a powerful advocate. He used his personal experiences to demonstrate that youth who have made mistakes can and do change, while also highlighting the barriers to success that youth face. Mr. Warthen was an example of the failures of the juvenile justice system, as well as an example of the capacity and strength of the young people the system serves.

Despite his strength and resolve, Mr. Warthen faced numerous challenges because of his experiences in the juvenile justice system. He struggled to catch up on his education when he returned home from placement, since the academic credits he had earned while in placement did not count at the public high school he was supposed to attend in Philadelphia. For several years, Mr. Warthen looked for a job to support himself and his family, but was repeatedly turned away because of his juvenile record and lack of a G.E.D or high school diploma.

Nevertheless, Mr. Warthen was unwavering in his commitment to improve his life. He stayed on track, even while watching friends and family members being pulled back into the juvenile and criminal justice system. He never missed an opportunity to help other youth see their true potential. His passion and dedication were – and continue to be – an inspiration for the other youth in Juveniles for Justice as well for as the staff at Juvenile Law Center.

Mr. Warthen was on a path to make a better world for young people who went through similar situations. He once said, “If nobody does it, change isn’t going to come.” CJJ joins the Juvenile Law Center in honoring Mr. Warthen’s legacy by continuing to work for the change and reform he sought.