



Advocacy for Youth

TeamChild Seeks Candidate for 2010 Post Graduate Public Interest Fellowships

TEAMCHILD

TeamChild is a nationally recognized, innovative advocacy program serving low income youth. TeamChild's clients are 12-18 years old, with a focus on those who have a matter pending in juvenile court or are at risk of juvenile court involvement. TeamChild attorneys provide free individual legal representation on youth's civil legal rights in the community, including the right to education, mental health and medical treatment, safe living circumstances and other social services. Our advocacy for youth targets the root causes of juvenile delinquency and aims to give juvenile courts effective, community based alternatives to secure detention. TeamChild works in partnership with public defenders to provide young people with holistic representation and meaningful access to justice in juvenile court and the community. TeamChild has offices located in Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, Spokane, and Yakima.

TeamChild is seeking a candidate to apply for a 2010 post-graduate public interest fellowship to work in either our Spokane or Tacoma office. TeamChild will work collaboratively with the fellowship candidate to identify local and national fellowship opportunities.

BACKGROUND & FELLOWSHIP OVERVIEW

There is an increasing public awareness regarding the connection between school discipline, drop outs and involvement in the juvenile justice system. This phenomenon is known nationally as the school to prison pipeline. School discipline practices and juvenile justice involvement both disproportionately impact minority youth here in Washington State. TeamChild provides advocacy to hundreds of youth each year, many of whom are struggling with juvenile justice involvement, school disengagement, and credit deficits as a result of school discipline practices. Under Washington state law, students have a constitutional right to a public education but many of the young people we serve are cut off from public education. TeamChild seeks to further awareness and discussion around the connection between school discipline and juvenile justice involvement and affect change to the public school system at the local school district and statewide levels to ensure that all students are provided with opportunities to be successful in school.

FELLOWSHIP PROJECT

2010 Focus: Dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline

The fellowship will have two components. First, the fellow will provide direct representation to youth who are experiencing difficulties in school which result in increased risk or actual involvement in the juvenile justice system. The fellow will focus on school issues, including enrollment barriers, school discipline, and unmet special education needs. Providing holistic

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representation to youth will ideally put appropriate educational services in place in order to keep youth engaged in their education and safe in their home communities.

Second, the fellow will work to further the statewide advocacy efforts in Washington on identifying and addressing the institutional and systemic factors that propel youth with school problems into the juvenile justice system. The fellow will both build on existing efforts and help to create and implement new strategies for addressing these identified factors. For the past two years, TeamChild has run a Youth Law and Policy Internship for law interns and youth interns focused on the relationship between school discipline practices, drop outs and juvenile justice involvement. The fellow will continue to further this internship program, working directly with the interns during the summer months and further building on their policy advocacy in this area, with the goal of generating statewide conversations and strategic advocacy to address the school to prison pipeline here in Washington. Possible work in this area may include: identifying particular school districts and advocating for district wide solutions to this problem, conducting a broad public disclosure request of information from school districts and educational agencies to compile data and to further understand the impact school discipline practices have on students, working cooperatively with existing efforts to reduce the disproportionate number of minority youth involved in the juvenile justice system, working to build capacity for additional advocacy and representation for youth in this area through training and outreach, and/or designing training modules and conducting community outreach to educate law enforcement and other juvenile court professionals about the connection between school and juvenile court.

QUALIFICATIONS

Must have a demonstrated commitment to working for the rights of low income or otherwise disenfranchised people, and in particular, youth. Must have excellent writing and oral advocacy skills and an interest and ability to creatively problem solve. Must be respectful and open to working with people from diverse backgrounds, committed to strengthening community and organizational partnerships, and able to work well both as a team member and independently. Sense of humor a plus. Must be willing to sit for the summer 2010 Washington State Bar Exam.

APPLICATION

Send cover letter, resume, writing sample and a one page statement indicating why you are interested in working at TeamChild on this particular fellowship project by **August 13, 2009** to: Annie Lee, Executive Director, TeamChild, 1225 South Weller Street, Suite 420, Seattle, WA 98144. TeamChild's fellowship candidate will be selected by **late August, 2009**. Questions? Email anne.lee@teamchild.org

TeamChild is committed to promoting an environment free of barriers and discriminatory practices for its clients, Board and staff.