

JOANNA VISSER ADJOIAN

Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project (YSRP)

Co-Founded with Lauren Fine

2014 Black Male Achievement Fellow



BIG BOLD IDEA

Improve the life outcomes for youth prosecuted as adults by providing key supports before, during, and after incarceration.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project (YSRP) works to transform the experiences of kids prosecuted in the adult criminal justice system. YSRP partners with court-involved youth, their families, and lawyers to develop holistic, humanizing narratives that mitigate the facts of each case; get cases transferred to the juvenile system; and make crucial connections to community resources providing education, healthcare, housing, and employment. YSRP's ultimate goal is to eliminate the practice of sentencing children as adults.

PERSONAL BIO

Joanna Visser Adjoian has dedicated her career to advocating for young people in the adult criminal justice system. Prior to co-founding YSRP, Joanna served as Associate Director and Staff Attorney of the Toll Public Interest Center at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where she guided students in pursuit of social justice, and created the Juvenile Justice Working Group. Prior to joining the Toll Center, Joanna clerked for Judge Joel Schneider in the United States District Court of the District of New Jersey, and completed a Penn Law Postgraduate Fellowship at Juvenile Law Center, where she advanced efforts to end the practice of sentencing children to life in prison without parole. Joanna serves as co-chair of the Legal Rights of Children Committee of the Philadelphia Bar Association's Public Interest Section, and she sits on the board of the Philadelphia Student Union and the steering committee of the Pennsylvania Coalition for the Fair Sentencing of Youth. She graduated from Penn Law School, where she was awarded the Black Law Student Association's Agent for Change Award and the Jackson-Healy Public Service Award. Before law school, Joanna worked as a paralegal in the Family Law Unit of Philadelphia Legal Assistance and taught English in Ecuador. Joanna graduated cum laude from Penn with a degree in urban studies and in Hispanic studies.

Issue area

Civil and Human Rights

Organization/Fellow Location

Philadelphia, United States

Impact Location

North America

United States

Organization Structure

Nonprofit

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