

Youth *Possibilities*

September, 2021
newsletter, issue 1



a publication of
**Youth Opportunity
Foundation**

A Second Chance to Get in the Game

A youth finds his way back to the football field with the help of a Youth Opportunity Foundation grant.



DOJ Awards 3-Year Grant

YOF, in partnership with FDJJ recently received a 3 year, \$1.5M Second Chance Act Grant from the Department of Justice.



Fundraising Event Gets the Green Flag

YOF partners with Miles Ahead for an inaugural fundraising event at the Music City Grand Prix in Nashville.



September is National Recovery Month

Celebrate the success of recovery from Substance Abuse.

President's Message



Welcome to the revised, and improved, Youth Opportunity Foundation (YOF) newsletter! We plan to distribute the newsletter on a monthly/quarterly basis to provide you with an update on YOF mission-related activities to assist vulnerable youth and efforts to improve the environment in which they interact. The challenges confronting our kids are many and varied, however, progress is being made; that is one of the reasons we chose to rename the newsletter Youth Possibilities!

We appreciate your interest in and support of YOF, we cannot do this without you! Our kids are the future; the question is not whether we can afford to invest in their development, but, whether we can afford not to.

YOF - Assisting vulnerable youth in becoming successful adults

Denny Armington

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A Second Chance to Get in the Game

NFL Hall-of-Fame coach Bill Parcells once said, “the best ability is availability”; injuries, coaching decisions and academic eligibility are some of the hurdles that can sideline a young, aspiring football player. For one talented Florida teenager, identified as Youth JW, a past mistake led him into the Florida Juvenile Justice System keeping him off the field and unable to fulfill his dream of playing college football.

Most state juvenile justice systems are designed to provide education, clinical treatment, life skills training and other rehabilitative services to prepare youth offenders for a successful re-entry into community living; organized sports are rarely offered. In the case of Youth JW, while playing catch with a football during recreational time, one of the staff members, who is also a prep school football coach, noticed that this young man was an exceptional passer; he had a “live arm”! The coach received permission to invite his head coach to observe and assess Youth JW’s talent, which resulted in the offer of a partial scholarship to attend an area post-secondary preparatory (prep) football academy.

The scholarship offer was great news to Youth JW, and his family, as the past two years spent in the Florida Juvenile Justice System had not only deprived Youth JW of the opportunity to play the game he loved but also cast doubt on a successful future. Access to the prep football academy would not only allow Youth JW to demonstrate his football skills but also finetune his college admission testing and entrance readiness. Unfortunately, the scholarship only applied to seventh five percent of the prep academy tuition and provided nothing relating to on-site housing; the family has limited resources and lives 1.5 hours from the academy limiting the likelihood of daily participation, as required. This news was devastating!



A successful transition to community re-entry is critical for the long-term rehabilitation of justice-involved youth; 60% of youth at this level are re-arrested within four months of release. When the regional vice president of the facility discharging Youth JW heard of this complication, he leapt into action.

“Once my son was released, Mr. Nixon worked diligently as if he was working for his own family, to help us overcome this challenge,” said the mother of Youth JW. “I really want to thank Mr. Nixon and Youth Opportunity Foundation for making it possible for my son to continue his dream of playing football. They gave us hope again in some of our darkest and most trying days.”

Youth Opportunity Foundation was created to provide youth offenders a second chance at life through mentorship, grants for post-secondary training and education and career development. “The VP called me on the 25th of June and told me of a promising youth whose discharge plan was unraveling with just three days until discharge. “We frequently work together on academic scholarships and job opportunities for pending graduates but a football scholarship was a new challenge” stated Denny Armington, YOF President.

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Fundraising Event Gets the Green Flag

The Big Machine Music City Grand Prix promoters recently invited Youth Opportunity Foundation to participate in pre-race activities, as one of a limited number of local nonprofits, through our fundraising activity, the Music City Grand Prix FUNDTRACE™. This unique event was one of the festivities leading to the inaugural NTT INDYCAR® SERIES race weekend in Nashville, TN. “We were pleased, and excited, to add the Music City Grand Prix FUNDTRACE to our calendar of events,” stated Jason Rittenberry, MCGP COO, “as it provided local racing fans the perfect way to fire-up for the Big Machine Music City Grand Prix. But just as importantly, the funds raised will be supporting a great cause. It was a great way to start the festival!”

Created by Indianapolis based, Miles Ahead, this performance driving event offers an exciting opportunity for YOF supporters to test their driving skills behind the wheel of identical MINI John Cooper Works Hardtops on a challenging autocross course; it is the YOF alternative to the typical “golf outing”. “We were thrilled to be part of the inaugural Big Machine Music City Grand Prix,” said Ted Woerner, President of Miles Ahead, “and pleased to collaborate with Youth Opportunity Foundation, to help them continue to assist troubled youth in becoming successful adults, here in Tennessee, and across the country.”

This is the third year that YOF and MilesAhead have partnered to stage this thrilling event. “We continue to offer the MINI Challenge in Indianapolis on an annual basis, to growing and enthusiastic audiences” stated Denny Armington “anytime you can connect fundraising with something that people enjoy it tends to make donations easier to come by! Nashville was our first out of state experience, we plan to schedule additional cities where YOF can support mission activities.”

Second Chance

continued

Football prep programs for college bound students are common. These programs act as a 13th grade emphasizing college entrance skills and preparation as well as finetuning football skills to demonstrate for agents and college scouts. Youth JW had completed his high school diploma on time while involved in the community re-entry process and was determined to continue playing the sport he loved. “Having played college football” said Armington, “I know the life skills and discipline that Youth JW will be exposed to and the second chance this opportunity represents!” YOF answered the call by awarding him a scholarship grant of \$5,800 to help youth JW, and his family, overcome that financial challenge and continue pursuing his dream.

Youth Opportunity Foundation invests in troubled youth to provide them with a second chance at life, please consider investing in the activities of YOF at yofoundation.org/donate.

YOF Partners with the State of Florida to Reduce Recidivism Among Youth Offenders

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) recently announced that, in partnership with Youth Opportunity Foundation (YOF), it had been awarded a three year, \$1.5M, Second Chance Act grant from the Department of Justice to reduce recidivism for justice-involved youth impacted by traumatic brain injury (TBI). “The prevalence of traumatic brain injury among justice-involved youth is misunderstood, undiagnosed, and thus untreated”, said Denny Armington, YOF President. “We are hopeful that this study will confirm the suspected significant prevalence of TBI among these youth, demonstrate the results of proper brain injury-specific treatment for community re-entry and the reduction of recidivism, and thus provide positive, long term outcomes for the young adults and the communities in which they live”.

Under the supervision of FDJJ, and in concert with the University of South Florida and the Florida Department of Education’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (FLVR), YOF will subcontract with Youth Opportunity Investments (YOI), and prominent neuropsychology and neurorehabilitation experts to create a full range of services committed to youth with TBI. Managed by the YOF Advisory Council, the grant will enable the utilization of evidence-based TBI assessment and treatment modalities for youth during their stay in a residential treatment program, and for up to two years after transition to their communities. “Recidivism is a major issue for all juvenile justice programs”, noted Michael Baglivio a criminologist and YOF Advisory Council member; “without targeted treatment, practitioners run the risk of wasting dollars,



negatively impacting public safety, and, most importantly, limiting a youth’s future potential”.

In order to accomplish the goals suggested by FDJJ to “reduce recidivism” and “create a full range of services focused on youth with traumatic brain injury”, YOF grant staff will coordinate with four YOI managed Florida facilities in Broward, Kissimmee, Hastings and Ocala, statewide brain injury advocacy and support programs, and vocational counselors from FLVR. The post-discharge, community re-entry program will continue to provide supported resource facilitation techniques while focusing on post-secondary education and training, job acquisition and career development. “We are particularly excited” commented Allison Flanagan, Director of FLVR, “about how this project could contribute to successful competitive work outcomes for youth with brain injury.”

The grant will touch on the strategic pillars of the YOF mission including education, mentoring and access to meaningful jobs, however, will highlight the importance of the fourth pillar of using applied research to find solutions to the root causes of the issues and challenges confronting our kids. A October 1 start date is anticipated; “all operational aspects of the research program are in place”, stated Drew Nagele, PsyD, and YOF Advisory Council member, “all we need is budget authority from the Governor’s office!”.



Members of the Cisco team celebrate their results with InyCar legend Scott Goodyear



The CEO of the FreshPress Marketing team jump's into his driver seat



A Member of the Cisco team focused on the track before another lap



MediaTree Advertising leadership strategizes before another good finish

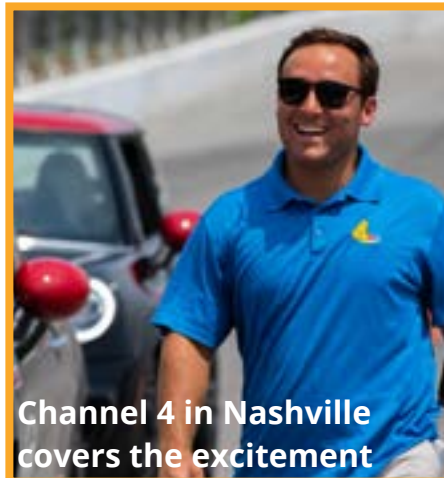
Music City Grand Prix **FUNDRACE**



Team YOI agrees on an outstanding day at the track



A member of 3LS making his way around the track



Channel 4 in Nashville covers the excitement



A great way to get out of the office and teambuild

The Music City Grand Prix FUNDRACE was a great success! Many thanks to those who participated. We WILL be back next year!

September is National Recovery Month

Each September, for the past 23 years, thousands of prevention, treatment, and recovery programs and services around the country have celebrated and shared their successes in an effort to educate the public about recovery from substance use, how it works, for whom, and why. There are millions of Americans whose lives have been transformed, perhaps saved, through recovery, however, there is still much work to be done.

It is estimated that 60% of the US population is actively using some form of substance, including alcohol, tobacco, and/or drugs (recreational, prescribed or illegal); twelve per cent have admitted to using illicit drugs in the past month. While substance use is not an addiction, it can lead to it. In addition to concerns regarding the continued increases in the rate, and types of, substance use, drug overdose deaths exceeded 70,000 in 2019, a 400% increase since 1999.

As with adults, the reported increases in substance use by teens is alarming. The teen years are a time of rapid growth, exploration, and risk taking, some risks such as smoking, drinking alcohol and using drugs, can have harmful and long-lasting effects on a teen's health and well-being, including juvenile-justice involvement. Of the 730,000 arrests of youth under the age of 18 in 2018, 40% were under the influence of drugs or alcohol when arrested. Of those charged with a crime, and detained, substance use disorder was the most common diagnosis (ranging between 35 and 77% of the cases depending on gender and state) contributing to the offense.

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The Center for Disease Control has been deeply concerned with this growing trend and formed a panel of experts to recommend ways to avoid and/or identify substance use among teens. The panel identified the following as high-risk factors for youth substance use:



Family history of substance use
Favorable parental attitudes towards the behavior
Poor parental monitoring
Parental substance use
Family rejection of sexual orientation or gender identity
Association with delinquent or substance using peers
Lack of school connectedness
Low academic achievement
Childhood sexual abuse
Mental health issue

Recognizing that parents are a powerful influence in the lives of their teens, the CDC panel suggested that parents make a habit of knowing about their teens, what they are doing, who they are with, and where they are and setting clear expectations for behavior with regular check-ins to be sure these expectations are being met. This recommended parental monitoring can reduce their teens' risks for substance use, and abuse, leading to issues including injury, pregnancy, arrest and juvenile-justice system involvement.

YOF salutes those who have regained control of their lives from the devastation of substance use disorder, those who have effectively dealt with the temptation of substance use, or avoided it altogether, and those dedicated professionals who have assisted in those efforts.

Youth Opportunity Foundation's mission is to assist vulnerable youth in becoming successful adults. Substance use represents a huge impediment to the growth and development of our kids.

YOF is a member of INStep, an Indianapolis based, nonprofit organization created to align a community-wide response to substance use, in order to support, be informed and participate in solutions to this ongoing issue.



Alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, prescription stimulants, and methamphetamines are the most widely used drugs in the country. Here's a closer look at US drug use rates, and which substances are most commonly used, according to NCDAS research:

Alcohol: 139.8 million people

Tobacco: 58.8 million people

Marijuana: 2.9 million people

Prescription Stimulants: 2.9 million people

Methamphetamines: 2.2 million people

Prescription Painkillers: 1.9 million people

Heroin: 957, 000 people

Cocaine: 638, 000 people

Prescription Sedatives: 319,000 people



YOF provides grants, develops partnerships, and commissions applied research to turn vulnerable and traumatized young people into productive adults.

yofoundation.org