



VILLAGE OF BOYS TOWN

Proclamation

When children violate the law, justice can be served without sacrificing opportunities for rehabilitation, restoration and redemption. No child is beyond hope, and they all deserve age-appropriate interventions and supports. That was proven more than a century ago by the advocacy of Father Edward J. Flanagan, who fought against the same unjust and brutal systems that failed America's youth then. He believed – and it remains true today – that it was inherently unfair for children to be charged, convicted, and punished by the same rules that applied to adults.

WHEREAS, every child deserves rehabilitation in a system that is responsive to their physical, psychological, and emotional needs.

WHEREAS, youth are developmentally different from adults and these differences have been documented through adolescent brain research;

WHEREAS, youth who are placed under the commitment of the juvenile court system are able to access age appropriate rehabilitative services, education, and remain closer to their families, all of which reduces the likelihood of future offending;

WHEREAS, most laws allowing the prosecuting of youth as adults were enacted prior to research evidence by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention demonstrating that youth prosecuted in adult court actually decreases public safety as, on average, they are 34 percent more likely to commit future crimes than youth retained in the juvenile justice system;

WHEREAS, youth of color, youth with disabilities, and youth with mental health issues are disproportionately represented at point of entry and all stages of the criminal justice system;

WHEREAS, it is harmful to public safety and to young offenders to confine youth in adult jails or prisons where they are significantly more likely to be physically and sexually assaulted and where they are often placed in solitary confinement;

WHEREAS, youth sentenced as adults receive an adult criminal record which deters future education or employment opportunities and the collateral consequences normally applied in the adult justice system should not automatically apply to youth arrested for crimes before the age of 19;

WHEREAS, Youth Justice Action Month (YJAM) is a national campaign to end the prosecution of youth in the adult court system;

WHEREAS, the Village of Boys Town is committed to setting the national standard in juvenile justice by using a system that rehabilitates children while also providing them the physical, psychological and emotional care they need to secure a bright, productive future.


NOW, THEREFORE, let this be the moment we treat children like the individuals they are and give them a second chance; and

LET IT BE PROCLAIMED by Mikecale Jones, Mackenzie Eckley, and Martin Lopez-Lopez, members of the Nebraska Youth Justice Fellowship Program, on behalf of the Village of Boys Town, Nebraska, that October is

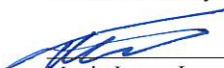
"YOUTH JUSTICE ACTION MONTH"

In the Village of Boys Town, Nebraska, and we hereby urge all citizens and policymakers to take due note of this observance.

Duly adopted this 1st day of October 2024.


Mikecale Jones on behalf of the Village of Boys Town


Mackenzie Eckley on behalf of the Village of Boys Town


Martin Lopez-Lopez on behalf of the Village of Boys Town