

SUMMARY REPORT

2022 Youth at Risk Conference



We did it once again!! The Youth at Risk Conference Committee, along with Pathways for Children, conducted the Annual YAR Conference on May 26, 2022 at Endicott College in Beverly, MA. The conference attracted 630 registrants. The YAR attendees represented over 257 organizations and 69 communities. Nearly 1/3 of attendees were from organizations serving Essex County’s gateway cities, which have populations with below average incomes and adult education levels.

The following communities were represented:

Lynn	10.10%	Boston/Cambridge	3.69%
Lawrence	9.94%	Lowell/Chelmsford	3.37%
Beverly	9.46%	New Hampshire	3.37%
Cape Ann	7.05%	Amesbury/Salisbury	3.21%
Salem	6.89%	Andover/North Andover	2.88%
Newburyport	4.81%	Haverhill	2.72%
Methuen/Tewksbury	4.65%	Woburn	2.72%
Newburyport	4.33%	Other	17.14%
Peabody/Danvers	3.69%		

Of the 327 attendees that chose to identify, the following professions were represented:

• Social Workers	42.51%	• Legal/Criminal Justice	7.34%
• Counseling/Psychology	18.35%	• Nonprofit Management	4.59%
• Education	15.32%	• Other	11.93%

Attendees elected to receive professional development credits in the following fields:

- Children and Family Law (CAFL)
- Early Education and Care
- Marriage and Family Therapy
- Mental Health Counseling
- Social Work

“It was amazing! My first time going and I would definitely recommend and come back again!”

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS: It was an honor and a privilege to have hosted 630 registrants at the YAR Conference at Endicott College. They had the opportunity to attend 32 workshops, visit 30 EXPO organizations and experience 2 exceptional Keynote Speakers.

The morning Keynote Speaker was Sixto Cancel. The topic was Centering Lived Experience at the Core. Sixto's experiences in foster care fueled his passion for shifting system policies and practices through technology and data. As CEO of Think of Us, Sixto co-led the design and execution of the first ever White House Foster Care and Technology Hackathon. The Hackathon prompted new federal regulations, funding for technology in foster care, six additional hackathons and several local technology initiatives. It helped shift the national conversation about foster care and technology. Sixto has served as a Young Fellow at Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative since 2010, where he has worked on youth engagement, asset development and permanency.



Sixto's presentation provided participants with a concrete understanding of how to center lived experience in their practice and system reform. Participants learned about specific practices and projects that have leveraged lived experience data into practice and policy. Surveys indicate that 99% of the attendees felt that the morning Keynote was "inspiring" and "engaging".



The afternoon Keynote Speaker was Kim Bisset, Ed.D, Director and Founder, Radiate Career Consulting, Creator and Lead Trainer. The topic was Hope and Healing through Powerful Stories. Kim founded Radiate Career Consulting, LLC to help underserved young people reach their full potential and work strategically toward their career and life goals. She comes to the field after 12 years in the field of business and education. Kim has a Doctorate in Educational Psychology and loves to explore and learn from individuals about their career journeys. Kim is fascinated by how individuals choose, develop and achieve their careers.

Kim invited five young adults to share their Comeback Stories. These powerful and personal stories inspired participants and helped set the stage for them to empower their clients to enhance their engagement of their own recovery journeys. There was time after the Keynote for the speakers and participants to share their own stories as a way to promote mutual growth and learning. 98% of the attendees felt that the afternoon keynote was "motivating" and "engaging".

The 2022 YAR Conference offered 32 specialized concurrent workshops. For the 6th year, a variety of breakout sessions were ranked "advanced" to provide more relevant information and dialogue to senior practitioners. Some of the most popular workshops were:

- Job Stress, Burnout and Self-Care: What every employee needs to know to feel invested and energized by their work
- Lessons from the Front Lines
- Motivational Interviewing and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy: Strategies for Youth at Risk
- Supporting Mental Health Needs of Immigrant Youth
- Community and Family Engagement Practices
- Turning Experiences and Challenges into Triumph: GIFT Gathering and Inspiring Future Talent Training
- The Pursuit of (lasting) Happiness: How to Thrive During Challenging Times
- From Perfect to Purpose: A Student's Experience with Anxiety, Perfectionism and Substance Use
- Identifying and Supporting Child and Adult Survivors of Domestic Violence

- Fostering Group Cohesion: Leading Effective Groups and Classes for Pre-teens and Teens
- COVID-19 and Schools: Promoting Behavioral Health Wellness
- Supporting Transgender and Queer Youth
- Trafficking of Minors: What Youth-Serving Providers Need to Know to Recognize and Support Systemically Excluded Youth

DIRUHI MATTIAN AWARD

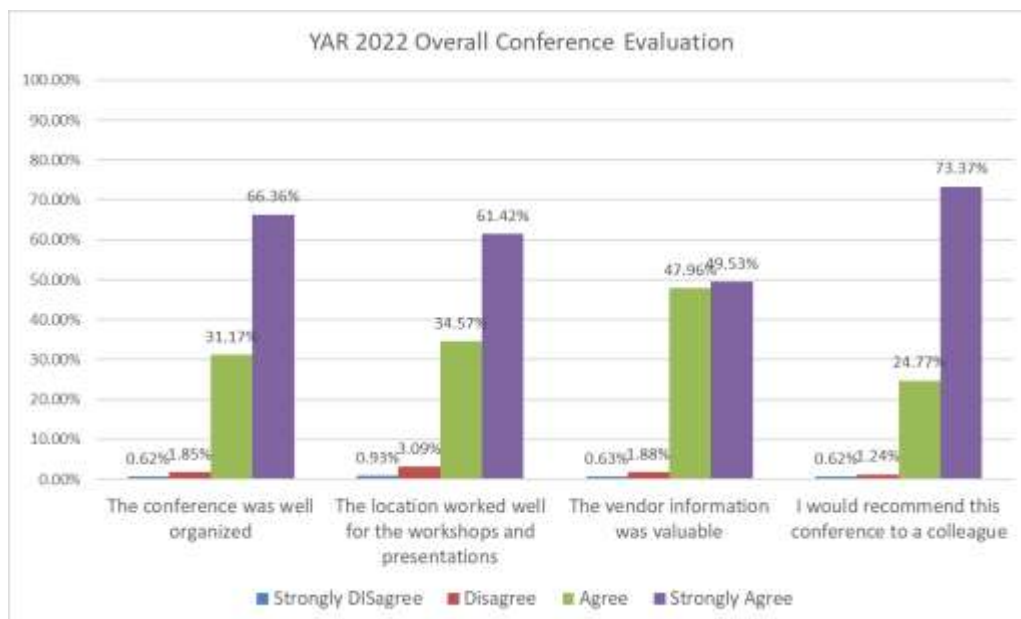
The Diruhi Mattian Award is given each year in honor of Mattian, a social worker tragically killed in 2008 while doing the work that meant so much to her. This year’s recipient is Detective Carlos Mercado who works in the Family Services Division of the Lowell Police Department.

Detective Mercado is a leader, a teacher, and a mentor. He tracks missing youth, works with youth who are abused and neglected and helps them understand that there are other alternatives to their lived experiences. Carlos works closely with the Lowell Police Department to implement and engage youth in programs such as the youth police academy, a horseback riding program for at risk youth as well as a boxing program. He teaches at the Lowell Police Academy where he introduces new officers to the “ropes” of the job and their role in meeting the challenges of working with youth at risk and ensuring the safety of themselves and the youth and families with whom they work.

CONFERENCE EVALUATION

All conference attendees are invited to complete an evaluation on the overall conference and for each individual workshop they attended. The evaluation results will guide the YAR Conference Committee in choosing programming for the 2023 conference. 98% of those who responded expressed that they would recommend YAR to others.

Of those who responded to the questionnaire, more than 98% reported that the workshops they attended met or exceeded their needs and expectations.



SPONSORS

We are so very grateful to the sponsors of the 2022 YAR Conference. Their support makes this conference possible by keeping the conference fee affordable for the practitioners and non-profits that engage in this difficult work every day. *Thank you!!!*

Trailblazer (\$10,000) Beth Israel – Lahey Hospital

Leader (\$5,000)

- Rogers Family Foundation
- Stevens Foundation
- Tower Foundation
- Youth Villages

Ambassador (\$2,500)

- McCarthy Family Foundation
- Jason Hayes Foundation
- Gardiner Howland Foundation

Advocate (\$1,000)

- Willard C. Tilson Foundation
- JRI
- Plummer Youth Promise
- Salem Five

Friend (\$500)

- Marblehead Bank
- Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce

2022 YAR CONFERENCE COMMITTEE


The following are the current members of the Youth at Risk Conference Committee, representing a variety of organizations who are committed to the YAR conference. Many have been on this committee for several years:

Chair: Jane Truesdell Ellis, Attorney

Co-Chair: Kathy Moriconi, Lawrence Family Development

Committee

Amy Ackroyd, Children's Friend and Family Services, a Division of JRI
Maria Avila, MA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children/Eliot
Nicholas Bound, Department of Youth Services
Linnea Burrill, Department of Children & Families
Missey Donohoe, Essex County Sheriff's Department (retired)
Kerry Fitzgerald, Pathways for Children
Michelle Fyrer, Department of Children & Families
Stephanie Gargiulo, Beth Israel Lahey Health Behavioral Services
Staci Gergely, Salem Juvenile Court
Antonio Gutierrez, Lynn Youth Street Outreach, Inc.
Kimberly T. Hutchins, Private Practice Psychotherapist & Consultant
Frantzie Kebreau, Department of Mental Health
Hailey MacDonald, Pathways for Children
Mary Pat McNally, Volunteer
Mollie Monaco, Beth Israel Lahey Health Behavioral Services
Linda Richards, Department of Mental Health (retired)
Fran Rosenberg, Northshore Education Consortium
Richard Ross, Pathways for Children
Christine Shaw, Merrimack College
Michelle Vercellone, Department of Developmental Services
Karen Wilk, Educational Clinical Consultant (Beverly Public Schools – retired)



“This is my 10th year attending YAR!!! I recommend it to everyone I know in the field.”