

# Strengthening Chicago's Youth (SCY) Quarterly Meeting

## Holding Systems Accountable for Violence Prevention | February 4, 2016

### *Panelists*

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**Berto Aguayo, Community Activist, Organizer, and Advocate**  
**Mikva Challenge**  
**berto.aguayo94@gmail.com**

Berto Aguayo is a community activist, organizer, and social and political advocate. Born and raised in the south side of Chicago to a single mother that emigrated from Mexico, Berto's struggles and experiences as a former gang member have led him to an ardent journey toward social justice through public service. Berto expects to graduate Summa Cum Laude from Dominican University with a double major in Political Science and Economics, where he served two years as student body president. In November, Governor Rauner and the Lincoln Academy of Illinois awarded Berto the Lincoln Laureate Award. Berto currently works for Mikva Challenge, an organization that is committed to engaging Chicago's young people to use their voices and talents as active participants in the city's civic arena. Mikva is the organization that first engaged him in public service and inspired him to get off the streets and focus on making a positive contribution through activism, community service, and civic engagement.

At the age of 21, Berto has worked with a variety of community non-profits groups and on the staff of elected officials. At the city level, Berto Aguayo worked three years with the Chicago Mayor's Youth Commission and was recently appointed by Mayor Rahm Emanuel to serve on the My Brother's Keeper Cabinet. Berto worked with Illinois State Rep. Chris Welch, where he helped establish a mentoring program for at-risk youth. Berto also just came back from Washington D.C. where he interned for U.S. Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois. In the summer of 2015, Berto worked with the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council as the Coordinator of the Hoops in the Hood program on Chicago's Southside, while interning for the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

Berto's pursuit of social justice and personal story have been told in a variety of media outlets. He has been featured on WGN's "Chicago's Very Own," on Telemundo's "Making A Difference," and he has been a featured panelist on WTTW's "Chicago Tonight." Berto has also been featured on the cover of HOY Newspaper, Streetwise Magazine, and on NPR Radio. He is also a frequent guest on Spanish radio station "Sin Censura con Vicente Serrano" on 750am commenting on political issues.

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**Ashley Boyd, Community Organizer**  
**Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100)**  
**ashleyveronicaboyd@gmail.com**

Ashley Boyd is originally from the California Bay Area. She moved to Chicago two years ago from San Diego, California. Ashley studied political science and women's studies at San Diego State University and women's studies at the graduate level. There, she organized with student leaders around LGBTQ inclusive policies and anti-racism education. Her research interests included exploring the ways in which the feminist movement of the 1970s influenced public policy and Black women's leadership in reproductive justice movements. Her life's passion lies in building a free society where Black communities live lives absent of structural, physical, and epistemic violence. Currently, Ashley organizes with BYP 100-Chicago with the understanding that young Black people are key actors in the movement for Black liberation.

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**Sarah Johnson, Youth Organizer**  
**Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE)**  
**sarah@communitiesunited.org**

Sarah Johnson is a youth organizer with Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE) and is also a VOYCE alum. Sarah has been involved with VOYCE for a number of years, during which time she has co-led efforts with other students to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline. This has included successfully creating a statewide policy change, SB2793 and SB100, successfully pushing for changes to the CPS Student Code of Conduct and advancing restorative justice efforts in CPS high schools. She is currently organizing to create further reforms to shift investment of public resources from zero tolerance approaches to restorative and preventive alternatives.

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**Mark Walsh, Campaign Director**  
**Illinois Council to Prevent Handgun Violence**  
**mwalsh@ichv.org**

Mark Walsh is the campaign director for the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence. Mark is responsible for ICHV's outreach, education and advocacy for common sense gun laws. Mark has over 20 years' experience on public advocacy issues and has worked in state and local government and politics. Mark has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Millikin University and is lifelong resident of Chicago who currently lives in the Gage Park Community on Chicago's South side.

The Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence (ICHV) is the oldest and largest statewide organization in the U.S. working to prevent the devastation caused by firearms. Founded in 1975 by four suburban Chicago women concerned about the tragic consequences of handgun proliferation and availability, ICHV works on a variety of fronts to educate, raise public awareness, and build coalitions to enact change in laws and behavior. For 40 years, ICHV has been a leader among state gun violence prevention groups. For more information on the efforts of the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence go to [www.ichv.org](http://www.ichv.org).

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**Amy Zimmerman, Supervising Attorney**  
**Chicago Medical-Legal Partnership for Children**  
**amy@legalcouncil.org | 312-605-1963**

As the program's longtime director, Amy brought the Chicago Medical-Legal Partnership for Children (CMLPC) to the Council in 2014, which provides free legal assistance to families with children challenged by disability, chronic disease, and acute illness. One of the first medical-legal partnerships in the nation, this "legal care" program brings together doctors, lawyers, and social workers to tackle social and economic difficulties that negatively impact child health and development.

Over her years of practice, Amy has spearheaded legislative initiatives and helped to implement groundbreaking health policies. Highlights include: the Illinois Children's Product Safety Act on recall requirements, the Illinois School Code on charter school healthy and safety, classroom access and home and hospital instruction, and the Early Intervention Services System Act on council and service delivery improvements. Previously, Amy served as the Children's Policy Advisor to Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, as assistant director of the Children's Health and Education Project at the Chicago Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and as a neighborhood and project attorney at LAF. She has received numerous awards, including honors from the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition and the Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI). In April 2013, CMLPC received the National Outstanding Medical Legal Partnership Award. Amy was recently selected to the inaugural class of the Children's Health Leadership Network. She earned her J.D. from Northwestern University Law School.