



Keynote Speaker
Anna Wong

Keeping Kids Out of the Justice System: Afterschool as a Path to Child Well-Being

This presentation will provide a broad overview of the youth justice system, including a brief historical perspective, the ways in which we are failing youth who are in trouble with the law, and research that we should consider when making decisions about young people. The presenter will share policy and practice changes as well as community based models from other jurisdictions that have improved outcomes for youth. Participants will be encouraged to draw upon this information to think more deeply about how afterschool programs can play a stronger role in youth justice reform and how to best support justice system involved youth in Wyoming, particularly vulnerable populations such as low-income youth and Native American youth.

Who is Anna?

Anna Wong is a Senior Policy Associate with the W. Haywood Burns Institute (BI). She provides technical assistance to BI sites, analyzes data, assists in developing local strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities, conducts policy research, and facilitates training for youth justice professionals around the country.

Prior to joining the BI, Anna directed Project WHAT!, a leadership and advocacy program for youth affected by parental incarceration. Anna was born and raised in Washington, D.C. She holds a Masters in Public Administration, and loves to go hiking with her dog.

Anna, what inspires you to do social justice work?

"Through my life, I've witnessed and experienced the ways that our society treats kids differently based on race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, and where they live. Kids everywhere test boundaries and take risks. I did. Our job as adults should be to help young people learn from their mistakes and grow into productive members of our communities. Instead we criminalize them – some more than others – and fast track them into a justice apparatus that is not effective or just. My work at the Burns Institute allows me to explore how we can work together to promote well-being for children"

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