

Best of the NETWORKER

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The Northwest Youth Networker; newsletter of the [Northwest Network for Youth](#), edited by [Jerry Fest](#) of the [InterNetwork for Youth](#)

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THE CASE FOR STATE NETWORKS FOR YOUTH

By Gary Hammons – Edited by Jerry Fest

In Issue VI we announced that Galen Phipps had been selected as the Oregon State Coordinator for the Northwest Network for Youth, and in the coming weeks we'll be announcing State Coordinators for Alaska, Idaho, and Washington. In this issue, Gary Hammons makes the case for moving to State Coordinators for the Network:

Although it is hard to walk away from a Northwest Network for Youth program that took more than 30 years to develop, the reality is that the Family and Youth Services Bureau has dismantled the regional structure and changed to having a single national training and technical assistance provider to replace the ten regional organizations. The primary rationale for regional Training & Technical Assistance had been the organization of the Administration for Children and Families with Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs supported by staff at this level rather than centralized in DC. Thus, the changed support structure forces a departure for T & TA.

While we believe that agencies serving runaway and homeless youth populations will get their needs met by the new national Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance (RHYTTAC) program, the change to a remote format has created some temporary vacuums. This makes it tempting to try to maintain a T & TA presence to fill the vacuum and to maintain a regional structure. However, the realities are that there are very few resources to sustain the model without federal funding. Thus, to continue with the prior format would probably result in the demise of NWNKY and most regional networks.

An alternative to the dissolution of a Network with a 30 year history of service in the Pacific Northwest is to evolve into a collaboration of state-based networks. The ability to get state and local funding for youth serving programs requires a strong presence in that state, and many, if not most, youth serving programs are managed at the state level (foster care, juvenile justice, work training, school completion, mental health); so it makes sense to have the same alignment. State laws and regulations for youth programs vary widely from state to state with little regional commonality, and advocacy and community activism is either National or state/local. Thus, the action is at the state level, much more than regional or even national.

For these reasons, the new direction of Northwest Network for Youth is toward the establishment and promotion of state networks for youth in our four states. A minimal regional presence will be maintained to keep our 501c3 non-profit status intact unless or until it becomes more helpful to dissolve the regional organization. Also, provision of connectivity and networking for agencies and programs in addition to runaway and homeless youth services should better serve member agencies; as many already serve those young people in other components. There is a risk/concern, however, that runaway and homeless youth programming would get less priority than programs such as foster care and juvenile justice, and one of the roles the regional collaboration can play is in keeping a balance of interests/priorities and thus providing equitable programming for all young people in need.

Happy Bonza Bottler Day!

And this isn't just any Bonza Bottler Day -- it's a *bodacious* Bonza Bottler Day! Some might even say a *centennial* bodacious Bonza Bottler Day, since 08/08/08 only comes once every hundred years! And, as if all of that were not enough, this is the 23rd anniversary of the *founding* of Bonza Bottler Day! So, playing off of Gary's message from two weeks ago (you know, the one about the importance of care takers taking care of *themselves?*), I just wanted to make sure everybody knew what a *very special day* this is, and encourage you all to take at least some time today to celebrate, relax, and just have some fun. Oh, and by the way, there is a youth connection to Bonza Bottler Day, as the holiday was named by a contest among Australian students. So celebrate! Today is a centennial, bodacious, Bonza Bottler anniversary Day!



Um ... this just in ... it seems that some of you have never *heard* of Bonza Bottler Day. Click on the Bonza Bottler groundhog above for full information ...

Op-Ed: Thoughts on Corporal Punishment in School

By Jerry Fest

While searching for links for this week's newsletter I came across an [article](#) debating corporal punishment in schools. My reaction was the same as I always have when issues of corporal punishment are debated; why do we assume that hitting a *child* is lawful, when it is illegal to hit anyone *else*?



Do you have the right to smack your neighbor or co-worker in retaliation for some perceived slight or when you deem it to be for their own good? If a stranger behaves rudely toward you, or does something that displeases you, are you allowed to take them upside the head? Of course not. We live in a civilized society. We don't use corporal punishment on inmates, and we have to have federal debates to even consider use of force against enemies captured on the battlefield. But

kids? Sure -- smack 'em. Somehow, when we consider the laws against violence toward each other, we don't assume that they also prohibit violence against young people. Are they not people, too?

Advocates of corporal punishment will tell you that it's a different situation, that you can't always reason with a young child and sometimes you have to use a little physical force to get your point across. They generally justify it in the name of safety -- what if a child runs into the street or tries to touch a hot stove? Leaving aside the fact that corporal punishment is more often used in schools to coerce behavior, hitting them is not the intervention that protects them from risk anyway. Grabbing them and pulling them to safety ends the threat -- and that level of physical intervention is even justifiable between adults. It is *after* they are safe that they get smacked in order to deter them from repeating the behavior that created the risk. And it may even accomplish that goal. The fact that something works doesn't make it right. If that were the case we may as well tear up the

Bill of Rights and give the police carte blanche to do whatever they like in the pursuit of crime prevention, because coerced confessions and warrantless searches *work* ... just as threatening people with physical force when they annoy you or do things that you don't like *works*. But it is not justifiable between adults to hit each other to make a point or coerce a result -- only young people are exempted from this human courtesy.

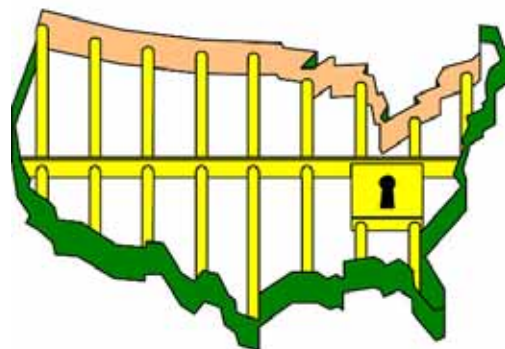
In a world where human beings begin their life with physical force defining right and wrong, are we really surprised when we are faced with bullying in schools or domestic violence? In my opinion, corporal punishment isn't even a debate ... it is abuse, and it should be illegal in all states.

Source of graphic: <http://www.stophitting.com/disatschool/statesBanning.php>

Transfer of Juveniles to Adult Court

By Gary Hammons

For some time I have been consternated about the prosecution of juveniles as adults. Two considerations have been particularly perplexing. First, the constitutional rights of young people prosecuted as adults are often violated. Their access to competent legal representation is often limited or non-existent. Second, the monetary cost can be incredible, as some states are constitutionally mandated to have separated jails for underage prisoners (ironic since their rights were violated in the first place). The result can be as much as \$250,000 per year or more in additional incarceration cost per juvenile in an adult prison.



I had just finished reading the article [Juvenile Transfer Laws: An Effective Deterrent to Delinquency](#) by Richard Redding in the latest issue of the *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* when I also read Jerry Fest's Op Ed on corporal punishment in last week's Northwest Youth Networker. Jerry's analysis and commentary had/has much relevance for this topic as well (see his article in the May 30th [issue III] Networker). The "Transfer" article noted that the recidivism rate for juveniles in adult jails is far higher than for detention in youth facilities even when adjusted for background and degree of offense. Being a better criminal seems to be the most frequent outcome of our "get tough on juvenile crime" practices that have gained momentum since the 1980s.

Redding's article reported that the "deterrent" question has not been effectively studied, but that surveys of young people subjected to adult prosecution had little or no knowledge that this could even occur. Additionally, there is extensive disproportionate transfer to adult court of minority and low income populations in many states. He, Redding, proposes careful research on the deterrent question, but does not address the cost issues of incarceration or the impact on families and the community.

While many states are questioning the practice of prosecuting minors as adults, some prosecutors and legislators seem to be more interested in grabbing headlines than on addressing the bigger picture. Those of us in youth services need to take action to enlighten legislators, the prosecutor ranks, and the media as to the huge cost and negative outcomes of charging young people as adults. We need to strengthen the juvenile justice system and to hold it and young people accountable, not trash it with heavy handed transfers to the adult criminal justice system (which, by the way, imprisons more people with less success than any other westernized country).

The Northwest Network Welcomes: Laura Hamilton

By Gary Hammons

After a protracted and difficult selection process, Laura Hamilton was named as coordinator of Washington State's Network for Youth. A large number of qualified candidates applied for the position and three outstanding finalists were interviewed. The final decision was very difficult and the interview team, headed by [Steve Olsen](#) (our regional representative on the National Youth Policy Council) contributed extraordinary effort to the process.



Laura has been the Intervention Specialist and [McKinney-Vento](#) Homeless Education Liaison for [Northshore School District](#) in the suburban area Northeast of Seattle for the past ten years. Prior to that, she was a special education teacher in Northshore and Seattle schools. She has been active in local and state level organizations serving children and youth and has represented her school district in both King and Snohomish County Interagency councils.

In addition to having a wide range of professional skills and experiences, Laura is highly successful as a facilitator. She has led numerous wrap-around sessions that have transformed families in deep crisis into more functional and durable situations. She has presented at state educational conferences on the value of interagency collaborations (not something that public schools are good at) and has been a key influence on policy development in this regard. She is knowledgeable regarding the entire spectrum of youth issues and will provide leadership and support for agencies throughout the State and Region.

Laura is active with running and swimming as part of her daily routine. She and husband Bob live in Edmonds. They are active in their community and support a number of causes. Please welcome her to this position. State Coordinators for Alaska and Idaho will be named in the near future.