



# Monthly Newsletter

August 2026



## Peer Court Recruitment Event

Youth Options Shasta welcomed 55 prospective youth volunteers to our Peer Court Recruitment Event, where participants had the opportunity to hear from community leaders, including Judge Burgess, Sarah Murphy from the District Attorney's Office, and representatives from the Shasta County Sheriff's Office. Youth also met current Peer Court members and learned how they can make a positive impact in their community through restorative justice.

A highlight of the event was a Mock Peer Court Trial, presented and facilitated by our Youth Action Council (YAC). The interactive experience gave prospective volunteers an inside look at how Peer Court works and the important role youth play in the restorative justice process.

One participant praised the event's "interactiveness," while another enjoyed "the explanation of how peer court works and the overall energy."

***"I liked it when the actual judge/advocate came in and described what the event is and how it helps people.***

***I also won a gift card, which I was happy about."***

*- Prospective Peer Court Volunteer*

We are incredibly proud of our YAC members for taking the lead in welcoming and engaging prospective volunteers. Their leadership helped make the event informative, interactive, and inspiring for the next generation of Peer Court volunteers.

### THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS:

**Peer Court Recruitment Event**

**Mindfulness Group for Girls**

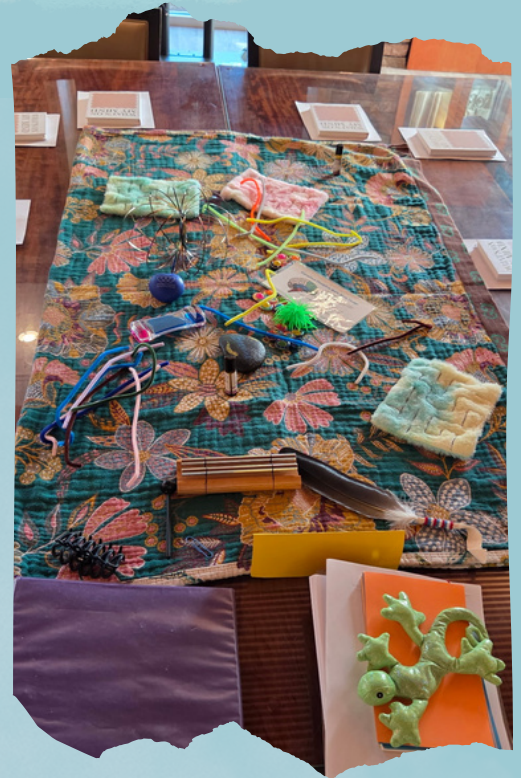
**Meet Our New Staff**

**McConnell Gathering**

**Locked Up for Youth and Looking Ahead**

# Mindfulness Group for Girls

At Youth Options Shasta, a new mindfulness group is giving girls a supportive space to practice emotional regulation and build self-awareness. According to Sara Bartow, a Case Manager at YOS, the group focuses on mindfulness practices that help participants recognize what is happening in their bodies and minds before they become overwhelmed. Through exercises—such as mindful breathing and journaling—participants learn to identify their emotions and develop skills that they can apply in their everyday lives. Using these, they can build habits to combat negative influences such as harmful substances.



The group complements another class offered by Youth Options Shasta, A.R.T. (Aggression Replacement Training), which all participants in this cohort completed prior to joining the mindfulness group. As Bartow explains, “A.R.T. is the education, and mindfulness is feeling your way through those principles and making connections.”

One of the most significant changes observed throughout the group has been the growth of trust among participants. As the group progressed, girls became more comfortable letting down their guard, opening up, and allowing themselves to be vulnerable in a supportive environment.



When asked about the three most important principles of mindfulness that everyone can practice, Bartow shared:

- We only have control over ourselves.
- We have the capacity to regulate ourselves.
- We are here to experience this life together, so seeing ourselves in others is always beneficial.

# Meet Our New Staff!

Faith Toso, a Redding native, attended high school in the North State before going on to Sacramento State, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Economics with a minor in Psychology. With four years of experience in case management, working with individuals experiencing homelessness and people with special needs, Faith is excited to return to case management and build connections with local youth. Now with Youth Options Shasta, she looks forward to supporting youth as they grow, and making a positive difference in the community.



On August 11, 2026, at the McConnell guest house, Youth Options Shasta gathered at the McConnell Guest House to celebrate our progress and plan for the future. The morning session brought together YOS Staff to review the progress we have made so far this year, strengthening collaboration, and identify the few priorities that matter most moving forward. We also focused on developing practices -across our programs that will better support the youth and families we serve.

The session provided an opportunity to recognize each team member's strengths and the unique contributions they bring to Youth Options Shasta.



In the afternoon, eight Youth Action Council (YAC) members joined us for a session focused on developing committee goals and planning for the year ahead. One goal is to become better role models for the community by displaying healthy decision-making and substance-free choices.

We concluded the meeting by celebrating the 17th birthday of one of our Youth Action Council members, Lou Harrie!

# Thank you for joining us for Youth Options Shasta's First Annual Locked Up for Youth Fundraiser & Resource Fair

Thanks to our incredible community members, Locked Up For Youth was a huge success! Fifteen local leaders were "arrested" on humorous charges and raised "bail" through their networks. We are grateful to everyone who participated and supported this fun community event!

**Giving Corner**  
It's not too late to  
**DONATE!**  
**SCAN BELOW**



## **LOOKING AHEAD**

### **September 2026:**

- Tues, September 1 - **Aggression Replacement Training** | at 1700 Pine St (YOS)
- Wed, September 2 - **Case Conferencing** | at 1700 Pine St (YOS)
- Thurs, September 3 - **Locked Up for Youth** | Whistlestop Park downtown Redding
- Tues, September 8 - **Aggression Replacement Training** | at 1700 Pine St (YOS)
- Wed, September 9 - **Peer Court** | at Redding City Hall
- Tues, September 15 - **Aggression Replacement Training** | at 1700 Pine St (YOS)
- Wed, September 16 - **Case Conferencing** | at 1700 Pine St (YOS)
- Tues, September 22 - **Aggression Replacement Training** | at 1700 Pine St (YOS)
- Wed, September 23 - **Peer Court** | at Anderson City Hall
- Tues, September 29 - **Aggression Replacement Training** | at 1700 Pine St (YOS)

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