



**TURNING
POINTS** FOR
CHILDREN
a PHMC affiliate

STRONGER FAMILIES, BRIGHTER FUTURES

Youth Circles: Innovating Youth Support

This Spring, Turning Points will be introducing **Youth Circles** into our Older Youth Programs, an approach our staff first learned about through a conference workshop led by a Hawaiian organization [Epic 'Ohana](#). Youth Circles are voluntary, youth-led meetings that bring together the people a young person identifies as their support system: friends, family, mentors, teachers, coaches, and others who matter to them.

With the guidance of a staff facilitator, the young person prepares for their Circle by identifying who they want there, 5 goals to focus on (short-term and long-term), how they want to open the circle, and their proudest accomplishments to share with the group. Together, the Circle spends time talking, sharing a meal, and creating a transition plan designed to support the young person beyond the program. Roles for each person, regular check-ins, and a scheduled follow-up circle help ensure those supports stay strong.

Recently, in our ReUP215 program (our youth diversion program) one young person showed us just how powerful this model can be.

As she approached program discharge and needed more stability, she chose to hold a “family” meeting inspired by the Youth Circle model. The people she invited reflected who she truly felt connected to: her best friend and her best friend’s mother, two cousins, and her boyfriend. The young person led the conversation, identified her needs, and helped shape the support around her. Just days later, she was back in school and living with safe, appropriate supports.

This is not a traditional social services model for Philadelphia, and that is exactly the point.

We're excited about this new pilot as a next step to better support our youth. **Thank you, our donor community and impact partners, for believing with us in innovation, possibility, and the voices of young people.**

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