



Mr. White goes to Washington

By C. J. Drake
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Robert White's first visit to Washington, D.C., was as a juvenile justice success story.

White was released from Camp Florence July 22 and next morning flew to the nation's capital to attend a summit on juvenile justice reform. White, who remains under the supervision of a Lane County parole and probation officer, also serves on the Annie E. Casey Foundation's [Youth Advisory Council](#). He was appointed to the council earlier this year after being recommended by Christina McMahan, director of Multnomah County's [Juvenile Services Division](#), and OYA Director Fariborz Pakseresht.

White's membership on the council led to an invitation to attend the [2015 Juvenile Justice Youth Summit](#) July 23-24 in Washington. The summit brought together emerging young leaders in juvenile justice reform. Some of them, like White, were personally involved in the system. McMahan accompanied him to Washington.

"It was my first visit to Washington and the East Coast," said White, 22, who lives in Eugene and just landed a job with Best Buy. "I was really honored to be able to go and meet so many different people. They valued what I had to say."

White spoke with Robert Listenbee, director of the [federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention](#) (OJJDP). He also met Russ Kelley, legislative director to [Oregon Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici](#), and other figures on Capitol Hill.

The summit, hosted by OJJDP and the [Coalition for Juvenile Justice](#) and supported by the Casey Foundation and other non-profit groups, was an opportunity for advocates and leaders to learn more about trends and issues in juvenile justice. Participants built relationships, explored possible



Robert Listenbee (left), director of the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, chats with Robert White in Washington, D.C. (Photo courtesy of Christina McMahan)

career paths and developed advocacy skills. The summit's topics included effective communications with policymakers and keeping youth out of the adult criminal justice system.

White thanked McMahan and Pakseresht and for their support and encouragement throughout his time at OYA.

"What an amazing experience for this young man who found his path and soared to new heights in his life with the care and guidance of our staff," said Pakseresht. "Christina has been Robert's key sponsor and has made these opportunities available to him. We can all be proud of Robert and his accomplishments."

White graduated from Lord High School at MaLaren, earned numerous college credits and worked almost every job and vocational offering at the facility before transferring to Camp Florence in 2014. He thanked OYA staff for their encouragement and guidance.

"I was able to attend the summit because I was on the correct path at OYA," said White. "It proved that I was right to avoid every argument, confrontation and bad choice while I was in a facility. I'm grateful to everyone at OYA for helping me get where I am today."