MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

COMMISSION ON YOUTH AT RISK

Welcome to the website for the ABA Commission On Youth At Risk. Since the Commission's inception in 2006, the Commission has worked diligently and tirelessly to strengthen and secure the legal rights of at risk children, adolescents and young adults through policy and programming to make a difference in the lives of our nation's most vulnerable youth. The Commission is comprised of lawyers and non-lawyers who are advocates, experts in various areas, including juvenile justice, foster care and the child welfare system, judges and individuals who have promoted policy and practice reforms throughout the legal community. The Commission brings together these experts, as well the voices from youth, to make assistance to the nation's most vulnerable youth more accessible, and achievable, and to also help prevent youth from becoming delinquent. The Commission also strives to protect vulnerable youth from harm and to assist in their retention of needed services and resources.

I am proud to have been involved with this wonderful Commission since its inception in 2006, when it was created under the leadership of then ABA President Karen J. Mathis. Together this wonderful group of individuals has used their skills, experience and background to advocate, educate, promote policy and program changes, promote judicial and legislative reforms, and to facilitate access to resources and much needed services in ways that can make enormous differences in the lives of youth, who are significantly at a heightened risk of involvement with the courts.

The Commission will continue to advocate for law and policy reforms that promote positive youth outcomes, research and identify innovative programs, and pursue new initiatives. The Commission will also disseminate best practices, implement and oversee new and existing

Commission activities such as the Bar Youth Empowerment project and engage in round tables with individuals throughout the country that provide services and/or advocacy for youth to collaborate and share information. We will strive to sponsor web-internet resources, teleconferences, seminars and publications to share education and training, and disseminate information to the legal community and the community at large.

If you are interested in getting involved with any of the work of the Commission, please do not hesitate to contact me at lfarber@hahnlawyers.com or our fantastic Staff Director, Alicia Santucci at Santucca@staff.abanet.org.

We look forward to a wonderful and productive 2009-2010 Bar year.