# ANNUAL REPORT 2017

THIS IS



Rights. Respect. Responsibility.

### LAUNCHING THE NATION'S FIRST MUSLIM YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## "Advocates has given me the skills to organize my ideas into action. I plan to break all stereotypes about the lives of Muslim women."

Hamna, Muslim Youth Leadership Council

As the Trump Administration launched a series of legal and cultural attacks on Muslims, Advocates launched an expansion of our Muslim Youth Initiative by establishing the nation's first Muslim Youth Leadership Council (MyLC). MyLC is comprised of young LGBT Muslims and their allies from across the country, interested in advocating for safe and supportive environments for their peers and fostering better understanding between Muslim and LGBTQ groups. For the first time, MyLC joined Advocates' other emerging leaders at the 18th Annual Urban Retreat in September 2017 where they cross-trained 120 young people about the intersection of Islamophobia and homophobia, expanded their support networks, and crafted action plans to build empathy and ally-ship among their peers to fight back against the administration's discriminatory policies and rhetoric.

As a first action, MyLC launched #MuslimAnd, a social media campaign designed to counter Trump's discriminatory travel ban and the xenophobia it fosters with inspiring and humanizing messages about Muslim diversity. Young people from around the country posted their photos on social media holding handwritten signs:

## #MuslimAnd Proud#MuslimAnd Queer#MuslimAnd Human;#MuslimAnd Feminist#MuslimAnd Fighting for Abortion Access

MTV, Colorlines and Bustle each ran a feature story on the new council and highlighted the importance of this bold campaign to build understanding and support.



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#### A letter from Deb Hauser

President, Advocates for Youth

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

What a difficult year this has been. The toxic political climate created by the Trump Administration made Advocates' work even more difficult and more imperative than ever. Attacks on the rights of women, immigrants, Muslims, LGBTQ individuals, and people of color have proved ruthless and uncompromising.

In the face of this relentless onslaught, and to counter the administration's efforts to erode gains made by the progressive movement over the past decade, Advocates re-prioritized our efforts. We kept up the resistance at the federal level, protesting cabinet and judicial appointments, rallying against the reinstatement and expansion of the Global Gag Rule, and lifting up the voices of those most impacted by the administration's misguided and dangerous policies—youth of color, immigrant youth, Muslim youth and LGBTQ young people. We also strengthened our initiatives at the state and local level in an effort to safeguard policies and programs to protect young people's rights at risk because of federal initiatives, legislation, and orders. Finally, we doubled down on our efforts to mobilize, train, and support youth activists and young leaders as they became the face and the heart of the resistance movement.

The resilience of these young people is what has given me hope over these last few months. This generation of youth is one of the most progressive in history. They instinctively understand that sexual health disparities are inextricably linked with poverty, racism, and stigma, and they have had it with politicians that ignore their needs and scapegoat those most vulnerable. So, while there is no doubt that in 2017, young people were disproportionately impacted by the harmful and divisive rhetoric that permeated our political and cultural dialogue, they also led the resistance against the Administration and the radical factions emboldened by it.

I could not be more proud that this year Advocates trained more than 1,000 youth as activists and leaders. In turn, these young people educated hundreds of thousands of their peers, organized protests, and advocated for bold, rights-based solutions at the state and local levels. Their impact is nothing short of miraculous. This year, Advocates' youth activists: gained assurances from college health centers to make contraception more available; obtained university presidents' support for Obama-era guidance on Title IX; convinced school boards to implement LGBTQ-inclusive sex education; persuaded municipalities to pass resolutions in support of National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day; and educated peers to demonstrate support and ally-ship for LGBTQ Muslims. These young leaders also exposed Crisis Pregnancy Centers as fake clinics; shared abortion stories with policymakers and peers; and cross-trained other progressive youth activists in support of reproductive and sexual health, rights and justice.

Yes, 2017 was a very hard year. But we did not let federal roll-backs or cultural attacks on the rights we value stop us from implementing bold campaigns, tactics and strategies to support young people, champion their sexual health and rights, and build their skills as activists and leaders.

The future remains theirs for the taking.

With warm regards,

Jem A



#### SUSTAINING THE PIPELINE OF NEW LEADERS

## "What motivates me to do this work is the knowledge and experience it gives me.

Going to Washington D.C. three years in a row to lobby on comprehensive sexual health education for my state is a dream come true. Each year at the Urban Retreat, I learn useful skills that I am able to bring home with me. And this year the thing they taught me the most is I am not alone in my struggles. Just like everyone was there for me and there to help me thrive, I can do the same back home."

Dolly, YouthResource

Advocates built the progressive youth movement by engaging tens of thousands of young people to take action in support of youth sexual health and rights, and helping to cross train them in progressive youth issues. Advocates joined the Youth Action Alliance, Criminal Justice Reform Coalition, Young People For, Roosevelt Network, and NextGen Climate, among others, to sponsor a training for 600 youth activists from across the country, building their advocacy skills across issues, including immigration rights, racial justice, economic justice and sexual health, rights and justice. Staff prioritized participation by those most under siege after the election, our emerging young leaders of color, LGBTQ youth activists, and Muslim youth leaders. Advocates' staff served as the keynote speaker, reminding us all,

"We will only win when we remember that those who have been pushed to the margins are brought back to the center and the front."

Advocates continued to nurture its Youth Activist Network of 75,000, providing them hundreds of opportunities to take action. For example, 2,000 joined the Great American Condom Campaign and our 150 "core" youth activists received intensive



technical assistance to implement advocacy strategies:

- After watching the divisive fight in the Texas Legislature over a transgender bathroom bill, YouthResource member Juan was inspired to start the Trans Buddy Program at the UT, Rio Grande Valley, where he educated peers on trans rights to foster a more supportive campus environment.
- With abortion care becoming less accessible for many, Deja, along with 120 other 1 in 3 Campaign activists from across the country, mobilized their peers to uncover the nefarious practices of Crisis Pregnancy Centers near their college campuses and expose them as fake clinics.
- With the threat of a return to federal policy in support abstinence-only programming, and in recognition of the disparate rates of HIV among youth of color, Caitlyn, a member of Advocates' campus organizers mounted a campaign to mobilize thousands of her peers in support of comprehensive sex education in her home state of Nevada.

### WORKING TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

"We can't rely on a President who brags about sexual assault to uphold survivors' rights — which means

## it's time for states to step in to end sexual violence in

**Schools.** That's why Know Your IX published a firstof-its-kind State Policy Playbook, a comprehensive blueprint for state legislation to ensure all students can go to school free from sexual harassment, violence, and discrimination. Our recommendations include best practices for transparency, safe reporting processes, prevention, resources for survivors, fair discipline, and enforcement."

Sejal and Alyssa, Know Your IX Organizers

Appointed to undermine public education, Secretary Betsy DeVos went much further. She upended Title IX protections for trans students and rescinded Obama-era guidance that had advanced the fight to end sexual violence on college campuses. In response, Advocates legally "adopted" a student survivor led organization, Know Your IX, for which we had been serving as the fiscal sponsor. Know Your IX had a long history of wins under the previous administration, successfully advocating for the federal government to make public the list of colleges and universities out of compliance with Title IX protections. In addition, Know Your IX student leaders had trained a network of 600 activists on college campuses around the country to teach their peers about their Title IX rights. They also worked to thwart legislation in Delaware that would have mandated police reporting of campus sexual assault that would have created a barrier for marginalized students, including undocumented youth and trans women, to report sexual violence to school counselors. To provide these bold activists with support and sustainability, Advocates agreed to take the project under its wings. Since then, Know Your IX staff and activists published a first-of-its-kind State Policy Playbook, a comprehensive blueprint for state legislation to ensure all students can go to school free from sexual harassment, violence, and discrimination regardless of federal actions to dismantle protections won under the past administration.

In addition, Know Your IX organized protests at the U.S. Department of Education, conducted massive media outreach, and helped students create open letters to their university presidents, which led to over 30 presidents publicly stating their intention to maintain Obama-era guidance on students' rights.



#### ADVANCING SEX EDUCATION ONE DISTRICT AT A TIME

## "The main inspiration of my work lies within the hearts of those who I advocate for.

I focus on what can I do for them that will benefit them and bring them into a community in which they feel represented, safe, and educated in a strong sexual educational curriculum. I love to see the faces of those who want my movement to progress. It helps me face challenges which many turn their backs on."

Alfonso, Student Organizer

Despite the Administration's hypocritical and misguided love affair with abstinenceonly programs (currently rebranded as sexual risk avoidance), Advocates continued to focus its efforts where improvements could be made—at the school district level and as a result, broke new ground again this year. More than 50 school districts including 11 of the largest 25, alone reaching more than 2 million students—began using lesson plans from Advocates' comprehensive sex education curriculum, Rights, Respect, Responsibility. The curriculum is: LGBT-inclusive, mapped to the National Sexuality Education Standards, free of charge, and includes 80 lesson plans covering grades K through 12.

Staff also trained over 1,000 educators to teach sex education more effectively and partnered with state organizations to help them nurture youth activism that led to improvements in sex education policy or practice in the Palm Beach (Florida) and Clark County (Nevada) School Districts—the eleventh and fourth largest school districts in the country (2017)—as well as a charter school in Louisiana and a school district in the suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio.

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To further advance LGBTQ-inclusive sex ed, Advocates partnered with University of Central Florida to test a new strategy to build the skills of school-based sex educators to create inclusive classrooms and answer difficult questions such as those regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. The results of this quasiexperimental study demonstrate the success of using UCF's virtual classroom and student avatars to practice skill acquisition. Educators who used the virtual classroom experienced a greater increase of skills development than those trained in person through traditional training methods. Further, use of the virtual classroom requires only a laptop and 40 minutes—no travel, no hiring of substitutes, no costly consultants. This finding paves the way to scale teacher training not only on these topics but many other sex education subjects.

#### INNOVATING STRATEGIES TO COMBAT HIV

## "We work to weave every thread of sexual health together in our quest for reproductive justice. That is

why participating in NYHAAD is so important to me. HIV awareness is a fundamental part of the fight for sexual health and rights."

Mariah, Young Women of Color Leadership Council

The Office of National AIDS Policy remains without a director, six members of the President's Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS guit in protest over the administration's stand on LGBTQ rights, and the National AIDS Strategy has been removed from the White House website. Nonetheless, in the face of continued disparities among their communities, Advocates' LGBTQ youth of color and young women of color activists coordinated more than 100 events, reaching more than 5,000 young people with information and resources regarding HIV and AIDS as well as opportunities to get tested. For example for National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day (NYHAAD), Mariah, a student at Tidewater Community College's Virginia Beach Campus, worked with her school to get free HIV testing the week of April 10 - 14, 2017. She also secured free condoms to distribute and hosted multiple HIV and AIDS educational sessions during the week reaching more than 1,000 students. With annual media impressions of over one million, NYHAAD remains a prime media influencer, focusing attention on the impact of HIV and AIDS on youth. This past year alone the #NYHAAD hashtag reached over 1,362,896 people. Media articles appeared in Teen Vogue and Huffington Post among other venues, reaching an additional 235,000 people.

To help school districts combat the disparate rates of HIV among Black and Latino young men who have sex with men, Advocates continued testing Get Your Life, an



innovative education program designed specifically for young men ages 13-19 who have sex with men (YMSM). Get Your Life is a seven-session HIV/STI prevention intervention, expanded to include students who may not be sexually active. The intervention was pilot tested in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Broward County (Florida) school districts. Get Your Life encourages school districts to create strong linkages with community-based organizations that serve LGBTQ youth and to provide referrals and support. As a result of onsite trainings and sessions, Broward County is now offering HIV testing on school campuses and the Los Angeles and San Francisco school- based health centers now have staff trained to provide intentional support to Black and Latino YMSM.

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**Sexual Assault** Prevention Campaign

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# SETTING THE POLICY AGENDA FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

**We worked hard** to oppose SB4, a bill that attacked immigrants in Texas. We made sure to show up to as many hearings and votes as we could. We joined the ACLU to testify against this bill while it was in the Texas Senate. During the legislative session, we joined immigrant rights organizations, like the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health and LUPE, to lobby our representatives and senators against the bill. Additionally, we joined various anti-SB4 rallies and protests outside the capitol. We let people know their rights, while also letting them know where undocumented community members could seek health care. We gathered other youth to join us in our efforts.

# We showed up, and others followed."

Juan, YouthResource and Sadie, Young Women of Color

The Trump administration's obsession with overturning hard-won rights gained under his predecessor continues to threaten youth sexual health and rights. The impact of the Muslim Ban, Gestapo-like ICE raids, and rallies by White supremacists and neo-Nazis further threatened the health and well-being of the most vulnerable youth. In response, Advocates published its Youth Policy Agenda, the culmination of deep discussions with young activists across the U.S. and in the global south to learn about their hopes, dreams and priorities. In compiling the Policy Agenda, staff surveyed more than 125 of our core youth activists, and conducted in-depth followup conversations with more than 20 youth. Staff launched the Policy Agenda at a reception on Capitol Hill sponsored by Congresswoman Barbara Lee and which was attended by more than 100 Congressional offices and colleague organizations.



### SPEARHEADING THE FIRST-EVER ABORTION STORYTELLING LOBBY DAY AND EXPOSING CPCS

"The fact that the very few powerful elite in our society controls what we can do with bodies and how that can affect people's life is so frustrating.

I've learned the importance of storytelling - how stories humanize experiences and can really affect the way people perceive health and rights - and how to fit this into my activism."

Kaitlyn, 1 in 3 Campaign

2017 brought the rise to power of far-right conservatives committed to chipping away at abortion access and ultimately overturning Roe v. Wade. Advocates responded, expanding the power of our annual livestreamed six-hour Abortion Speakout by adding the first-ever abortion storytelling Hill briefing and lobby day. Storytellers shared the impact abortion access has had on their lives and protested the nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court. Seventeen thousand people tuned in to view the Speakout. The hashtag #1in3Speaks trended nationally and reached almost four million. The event was covered by Newsweek, New York Magazine, and Teen Vogue, among others.

During the Speakout, 30 women from 16 states and the District of Columbia took their stories directly to Capitol Hill for the Hill Briefing and Lobby Day. Fifty legislative offices and colleague organizations attended the briefing. Afterwards,



30 storytellers from 16 states and the District of Columbia met with 40 legislative offices, sharing their own stories as constituents and urging their legislators to support abortion access.

Attacks on abortion care continued throughout the year – and policy makers weren't the only perpetrator. In partnership with ReproAction, 120 1 in 3 Campaign activists from across the country mobilized their peers to uncover the nefarious practices of Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs) near their college campuses to expose them as #FakeClinics. Ofelia, a 1 in 3 activist and senior at University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, led a protest outside the clinic in McAllen Texas that drew many participants and was profiled in Refinery29.

#### ADVOCATING FOR THE REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS OF YOUTH IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Rebuffing the Trump administration's consistent attacks on foreign aid, including withdrawal from UNESCO and the defunding of UNFPA, Advocates for Youth accepted a commision from UNESCO to update the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, Volume II. Used by Ministries of Health and Education around the globe, the document provides guidance to assist countries to improve their sex education programs.

To assist young people unable to access sex education through schools, Advocates expanded its highly acclaimed AMAZE initiative to reach young people in other countries. Working in partnership with MSI South Africa, MEXFAM in Mexico, and IPPF Western Hemisphere in Colombia, staff assisted in the adaptation of AMAZE videos and resource materials for dissemination in each region. In addition, partners in South Korea, Hungary and Uruguay also began adapting the program.

In Kenya, Advocates and its partner, SPEAK Kenya, trained youth and adult advocates who conducted 30 community public awareness forums across three villages, reaching 767 community members, including adolescents and youth, and distributing outreach materials in support of sexuality education, and continued to support 54 primary school teachers from 18 schools.

Advocates and its partner, Maná de Vida, based in Escuintla, Guatemala, launched a new project to translate and pilot test the 3R's Sexuality Education Curriculum into Spanish for use in the Central America region.

In Burkina Faso, Advocates continued to partner with local organizations, Mwangaza Action and the Association des Jeunes du Département de Léo, to increase youth access to contraception and strengthen sex education with a special emphasis on out-of-school young people.



#### BUILDING CAPACITY TO PROVIDE CONTRACEPTION FOR VULNERABLE YOUTH

"The greatest lesson l've learned from Advocates is how much hard work goes into not only creating a better world, but bettering yourself. I've learned some of my hardest lessons about privilege and allyship at Urban Retreat, and they've informed every bit of work I've done since. Every year when I come back to Urban Retreat I'm reminded of how far I've come and how much more there is for me to learn. Advocates reminds me that I need to be learning every day."

Annabeth, 1 in 3 Campaign

As the Trump administration issued new regulations allowing employers to cite "moral objections" as an excuse to not include birth control coverage in health care insurance policies, Advocates began pilot testing three models of service delivery to assist in the provision of contraception for highly vulnerable youth, including 1) refugees, 2) youth in drug treatment, homeless shelters and foster care, and 3) young people at risk for dropping out of school. Staff worked with partners in Atlanta, Georgia, Tucson Arizona and Washington D.C. to develop intervention designs linking agencies that serve these youth with health centers and creating a system of collocation of services and case management unique to the circumstances of each population. The designs are grounded in research, reflective of reproductive justice principles, and adaptable to the unique needs of highly vulnerable youth and the organizations that serve them. This year, teams in each city began testing the feasibility, sustainability, and replicability of these interventions.



#### SETTING THE AGENDA TO IMPROVE LGBTQ HEALTH AND WELL-BEING THROUGH SCHOOLS

## "When I think of community, I think of inclusiveness. Community

has historically been a place of coping, healing and support. It looks like a place where your experience is validated. It looks affirming and just like you. It's a place where you discover your true authentic self. There cannot be community if homophobia, transphobia, sexism, and racism are present."

Aidan, YouthResource

At a time when the administration mandated no federal data be collected regarding sexual orientation or gender identity on the annual American Community Survey or the 2020 Census, Advocates redoubled its efforts to ensure that LGBTQ youth are represented in national data on youth that drives public health policy and program. Staff continued to spearhead advocacy efforts to add questions about sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS) and to widely disseminate findings from the 2015 national survey—the first nationally representative survey of school-aged LGBQ youth. Initially released in August 2016, the survey demonstrated schoolaged LGBQ youth are at disproportionate risk for bullying and harassment, sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and perhaps consequently for drug use, depression and suicide ideation and attempts. To combat these findings, Advocates continued to promote its LGBT-inclusive sex education curriculum, the 3Rs; pilot tested an HIV prevention initiative for young Black and Latino MSM; and worked to redress stigma through its campaign #MyStoryOUTLoud. In addition, in summer 2017 staff collaborated with Northwestern University to convene two meetings of researchers in the LGBTQ and youth development fields to identify high impact, evidencebased strategies and gaps in research to improve LGBTQ health and well-being through schools. In fall 2017, staff used its appointed position on the CDC/HRSA Advisory Council (CHAC) to submit into public record a letter from CHAC members



to CDC and HRSA summarizing the findings and advising the agencies prioritize, invest in, and advocate for these evidence-based, high impact interventions: the training of multiple school-based educators in each school building to be LGBTQ-supportive and affirming; the establishment of Gay Straight Alliances; the enactment of enumerated anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies; and the implementation of LGBT inclusive-curricula in sex education, history, science, English and math.

#### INCLUDING YOUTH IN THE PAN AFRICAN LGBTQI MOVEMENT

(1) To bring a focus on youth to the forefront of the LGBTQ movement organizing in the African region, (2) to expand and strengthen strategic partnerships, with a focus on building new alliances, (3) to highlight issues affecting LGBTQ youth in hard to reach communities and (4) to develop and communicate clear and concise advocacy messages about LGBTQ youth.

As part of the African Queer Youth Initiative, Advocates organized the first ever youth pre-conference at the Changing Faces, Changing Spaces conference. The objectives of the pre-conference were (1) To bring a focus on youth to the forefront of the LGBTQ movement organizing in the African region, (2) to expand and strengthen strategic partnerships, with a focus on building new alliances, (3) to highlight issues affecting LGBTQ youth in hard to reach communities and (4) to develop and communicate clear and concise advocacy messages about LGBTQ youth. The pre-conference succeeded in increasing youth visibility at the CFCS conference with fifty youth participating in the pre-conference and increased attention to youth issues within the larger LGBTQI movement in Africa. By organizing the youth pre-conference, the African Queer Youth Initiative was able to influence the agenda of the CFCS conference.



#### TAKING THE AWKWARD OUT OF SEX ED

"Just found this channel and I'm glad I did!! It is really informative and definitely not awkward, thanks for making these videos!"

"Hi there! I've been watching some of your videos and I think it's great how you guys normalize traditionally taboo subjects."

"Wish I could have watched this when I was 14!"

"Another Amazing Video! Thank you, your channel has helped me so much!"

## "AMAZE has taught me to be more comfortable with who I am :)"

Commenters on AMAZE videos

To counter restrictions to sex education at the district level, Advocates provided resources directly to young people. Staff continued working on AMAZE in collaboration with Answer and Youth Tech Health. The partners published more than 40 new videos about puberty, consent, healthy relationships, sexual orientation and gender identity, among many other topics. Created for 10-14 year olds, and recognizing that many school districts consider early sex education controversial, these videos can be accessed directly at AMAZE.org and through YouTube. Already the videos have received over 3 million views, and they have received coverage from the New York Times, the Washington Post, NPR, Vice, and others, reaching millions more.



## **VISION AND VALUES**

Advocates for Youth envisions a society in which all young people are valued, respected, and treated with dignity; sexuality is accepted as a healthy part of being human; and youth sexual development is recognized as normal. In such a world, all youth and young adults would be celebrated for who they are and provided with the economic, educational, and social opportunities to reach their full potential. Society would recognize young people's rights to honest sexual health education and provide confidential and affordable access to culturally appropriate, youth-friendly sexual health education and services, so that all young people would have the opportunity to lead sexually healthy lives and to become sexually healthy adults.

Advocates' vision is informed by its core values of Rights.Respect. Responsibility.

Advocates believes that:

- Youth have the inalienable right to honest sexual health information; confidential, consensual sexual health services; and equitable opportunities to reach their full potential.
- Youth deserve respect. Valuing young people means authentically involving them in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies that affect their health and well-being.
- Society has the responsibility to provide young people with all of the tools they need to safeguard their sexual health, and young people have the responsibility to protect themselves.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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## Why I Support Advocates for Youth



"As a physician, advocate, and activist whose career focuses on reproductive health, rights and justice, I came to know of Advocates for Youth through their 1 in 3 Campaign to reduce stigma and shame around abortion care. As a Board member, I have had the privilege of learning even more about the amazing work that Advocates does. Whether it's through their programs to ensure young people receive comprehensive, evidence based sex education, or their work advancing LGBTQ health and rights, Advocates is dedicated to centering the work and voices of young people. They consistently show up

and push back against the dominant narrative that young people can't be trusted to make decisions about their lives and their bodies.

In light of the aggressive war being waged against sexual and reproductive health in this country and abroad, their continued commitment is critical. I give to Advocates for Youth because I believe the world needs the work that this organization does now more than ever."

*Dr. Jamila Perritt, Chair of the Board of Directors of Advocates for Youth* 

#### OUR FINANCIALS FISCAL YEAR 2017 | APRIL 1, 2016 - MARCH 31, 2017

In FY2017, Advocates' expenses totaled \$7,151,712. Revenue included large multi-year grants awarded in FY17 for use in FY17 as well as future fiscal years.



#### NET ASSETS BEGINNING OF FISCAL YEAR: \$4,400,067 NET ASSETS END OF FISCAL YEAR: \$5,973,799

NOTE: The financial data have been summarized from the financial records of Advocates for Youth. A complete copy of the audit and/or Form 990 for the year ended March 31, 2017, prepared by Advocates' independent public accountant, is available upon request.

#### DONATE

www.advocatesforyouth.org/donate



