

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 68

BY SENATOR BARROW

A RESOLUTION

To commend the service and contributions of Magellan Youth Leaders Inspiring Future Empowerment (MY LIFE) and to recognize May 5, 2016, as MY LIFE Youth Day at the State Capitol.

WHEREAS, involving youth in the process of designing and delivering behavioral health services is a relatively new practice, but it is becoming more widely accepted following support from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and other experts; and

WHEREAS, professionals are recognizing that involving youth in the systems that serve them can improve outcomes for youth, helping them develop relationships, acquire new skills, improve behavior, build self-confidence, instill positive social supports and cultivate leadership skills and they also have noted the value in providing opportunities for youth to share their opinions and ideas to help shape policies, programs and services for their own care and for the broader community – youth involvement not only benefits the individual youth involved, but can also be very beneficial to programs and systems that serve youth; and

WHEREAS, to address this need, MY LIFE, a free community youth program for youth between the ages of 13 and 23 who have experience with mental health, substance abuse, foster care-related and/or other challenges, was established in Arizona in 2008 by Magellan Health; and

WHEREAS, through regular meetings, special events, presentations and performances, MY LIFE members provide support for their peers; develop critical skills in leadership, mentoring and mental health resiliency; act as advisors to Magellan and local

officials to help improve services and systems that serve youth; and provide a much-needed voice in the community to combat the stigma associated with behavioral health issues; and

WHEREAS, there are currently fifteen MY LIFE groups in six states with more than five hundred youth regularly involved; and

WHEREAS, in July 2012, MY LIFE Louisiana was established by Magellan Behavioral Health in Louisiana with the support of the Louisiana Behavioral Health Partnership and other organizations with MY LIFE groups being established in Baton Rouge and Shreveport and since that time seventy-five monthly MY LIFE Louisiana meetings have been held with an average of twenty-five youth attending each meeting; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, Magellan Health partnered with Ekhaya Youth Project to enhance and expand MY LIFE in Louisiana, starting new MY LIFE groups in Lafayette and New Orleans in April 2016, and groups serving other parts of the state soon to follow; and

WHEREAS, two previous MY LIFE Louisiana Youth Day at the Capitol events were held May 8, 2014 and May 7, 2015 in Baton Rouge, celebrating National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day with over six hundred people taking part in these uplifting events that included a youth empowerment rally on the Capitol steps with inspirational speeches by MY LIFE Youth and Louisiana state representatives and senators with the events being featured on five television segments which aired on the local CBS affiliate the days of the event; and

WHEREAS, the third annual "MY LIFE Louisiana Youth Day at the Capitol" will be held on Thursday, May 5, 2016, which is also National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day; and

WHEREAS, youth from around the state will be participating in this event that will provide youth a truly unique hands-on educational experience to learn about our state government process first hand by visiting the State Capitol, interacting with state legislators and participating in other activities, an event that is open to all Louisiana youth and will not only be an educational and empowering experience for youth, but will also help them to develop leadership skills, social skills, and greater self-confidence; and

WHEREAS, MY LIFE Louisiana programs and activities have flourished due to the great support and partnerships of other youth serving organizations including Magellan Health, Ekhaya Youth Project, Louisiana Behavioral Health Partnership, Family Youth and

Service Center, Goodwill of North Louisiana, Capitol Area Human Services, City Year, Youth Oasis, Department of Juvenile Justice, Dream True, faith based groups and other organizations.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the service and contributions of MY LIFE (Magellan Youth Leaders Inspiring Future Empowerment) and does hereby recognize Thursday, May 5, 2016, as MY LIFE Youth Day at the State Capitol.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to MY LIFE.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE