Homeless Youth and the *Bring LA Home Campaign to End Homelessness*

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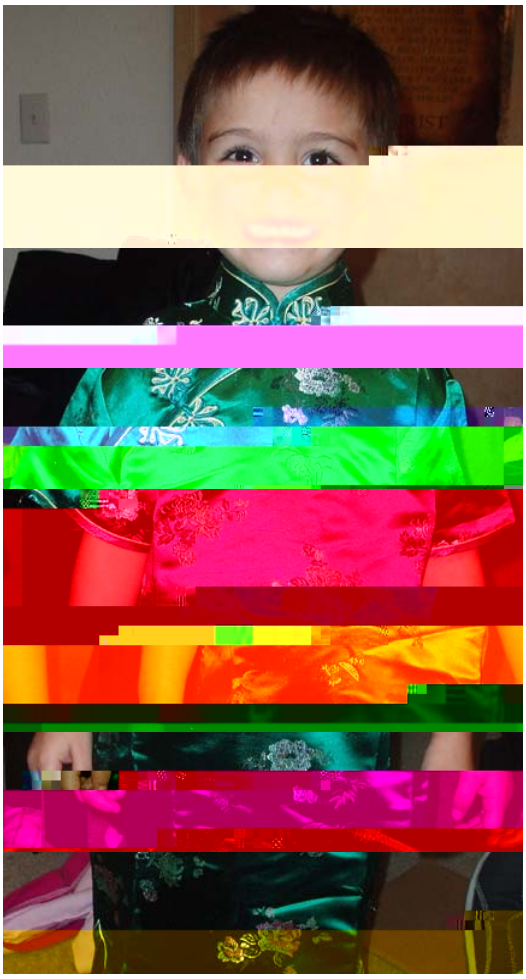
Dedicated to Lola Marie and
future homeless young people



I want to send my special thanks to Heather Carmichael from My Friend's Place, as well as to Ryanne Plaisance from Los Angeles Youth Network for your passion and creativity.

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Thank you to Natalie for your companionship, understanding, and belief in me.

To my mom, Susan, brothers, Jarrett and Jonas, sister, Jeanne, and soul, Magen, as well as my surrogate family here in Los Angeles, Kathy, Irma, and Katy, I am forever indebted to you for your unconditional love and support. Thank you for allowing me to fail. I would be truly lost without you.

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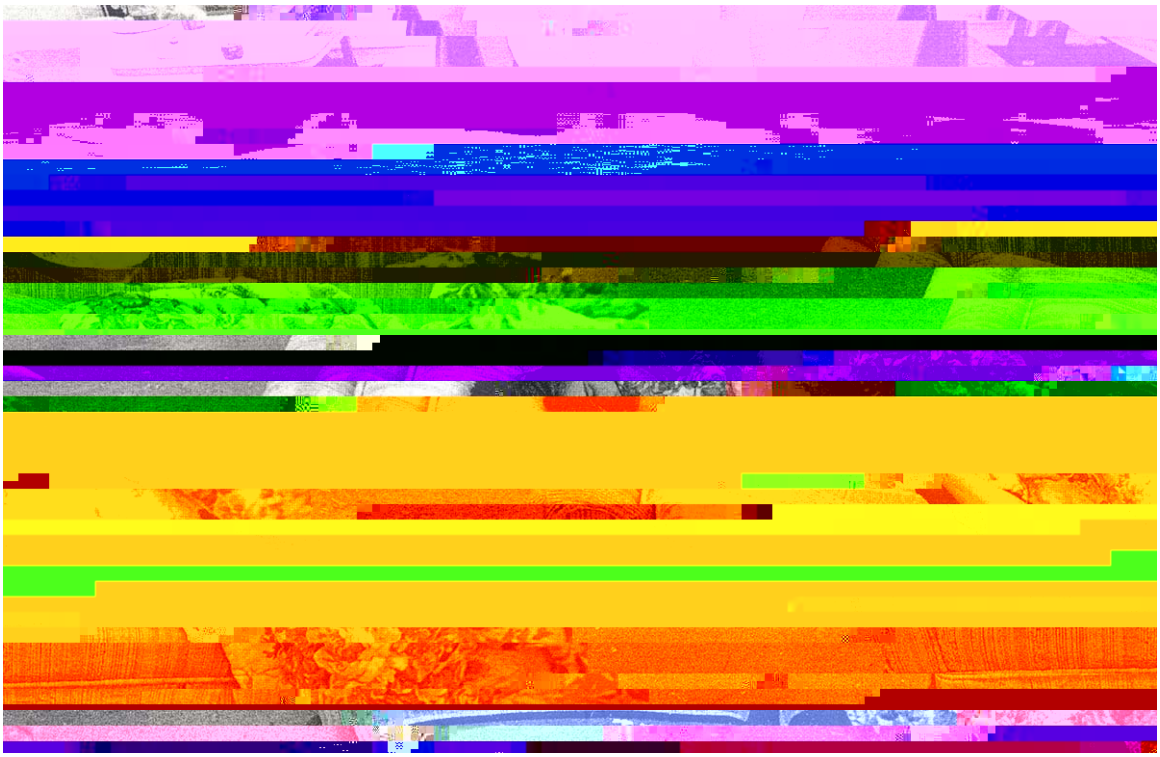


Executive Summary

Homeless youth are a vibrant group of young people. They have complex needs and serious health issues, but with the correct approach, have the potential to develop into incredible human beings. By encouraging homeless youth to participate in decision-making and the creation of new programs, as well as fostering a positive and support relationship between homeless youth and the surrounding community, homeless young people can, in fact, realize their own potential and develop an orientation for the future.

In April of this year the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, along with the Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger & Homelessness, released the *Bring LA Home Campaign to End Homelessness*. This 10-year campaign consists of over 200 recommendations for the City and County of Los Angeles. Phase I of the campaign makes a special commitment to creating affordable housing, as well as concentrates on three focuses: the chronically homeless, homeless families, and mainstream systems reform. Estimates of the cost of the plan range from a high of $12 billion to a low of 2.7 billion in affordable and supportive housing. The City contributed $50 million to supportive housing last year and just before the public release of the plan in April, the County invested $100 million on improved services for homeless on skid row.

Phase I of the campaign only slightly addresses homeless youth. In a rush to release the plan, the *Bring LA Home* executive committee decided to postpone youth-specific recommendations until July of this year. But Children's Hospital Los Angeles convened an ad hoc task force to create youth specific recommendations in December of 2005. They are thoughtful recommendations that recognize the many places homeless youth fall through cracks in the system. The recommendations advocate for developmentally appropriate services that match the needs of homeless youth, as well as agency coordination, and policy changes in order to provide homeless youth with a seamless system of care.

In interviews with professionals representing the *Bring LA Home* campaign and service providers for homeless youth throughout Los Angeles, everyone gave useful recommendations for improvements in the system, as well as programs, that could better serve Los Angeles' homeless youth populations. The professionals linked to the campaign knew well about the issues facing the homeless youth population. One-third of the service providers had not heard about the campaign.

Programs that work with homeless youth need to help young people build trust, reduce high-risk behavior, begin a process of healing, and become self-sufficient. The *Bring LA Home* campaign, as an advocate for change, has the opportunity to set precedent for innovative programs for homeless youth. They should create recommendations that encourage youth involvement in decision-making, as well as programs that foster a relationship between homeless youth and the surrounding community. These partnerships could help the community overcome stigmatizations about homeless youth. They could restore dignity to homeless youth through providing access to the many "natural" resources that exist in the community so that the young people can build the knowledge, skills, and support needed in order to grow into full human beings.

Introduction

In class we worked on the verb "to want."
"How can we make a sentence with the verb to want?"
"Windyn," Andre asked, "What do you want to do when you grow up?"
I answered and then turned to my 19-year-old student, Sandy.
"Sandy, what do you want to do when you grow up?"
He smiled, shifted his weight and crossed one leg. He picked up his cigarette and drew a breath. Smoke escaped through his nervously smiling teeth. "Me?" He motioned to his chest, his head dropped. "I want to be useful."

-Sandy, Jakarta street youth

At age 19, not yet knowing where he stands in life, only knowing that tonight he will again be sleeping on the street, Sandy makes a seemingly simple, yet hugely significant request. What, in fact, does the future hold for him? What future-orientation do homeless youth have to look forward to? James Baldwin, in his book Notes of a Native Son, writes, "...each generation is promised more than it will get: which creates in each generation, a furious, bewildered rage, the rage of people who cannot find solid ground beneath their feet,"[i] Homeless youth possess this fury; they scream this rage. The have no place to stand, no opportunity to exert agency, and no chance to be heard.

Adolescence is a difficult time in all young people's lives, but homeless youth additionally face familial abuse, rejection, and abandonment. Whether leaving home is a choice or a result of force, young people then find themselves lacking both familial and financial support in an unfamiliar world of violence, drugs, prostitution, and dramatic health risks. Operating on the edges of society, homeless youth quickly unlearn hopes of mainstream social acceptance. They become invisible, and more often criminal, to the passerby. Homeless youth are chewed up and spit out into the far reaches of the community to fend for themselves at a time when support and guidance are needed most.

With little dignity, little trust, and a stunted vision of the future, homeless youth have difficulty finding solid ground beneath their feet.

This is not to say that we should give up on homeless youth as lost cause. On the contrary, homeless youth are a vibrant group of young people from whom we have much to learn. Homeless youth take mainstream institutions and translate them into social orders that provide protection and survival in some of the most uninhabitable situations imaginable. But the reality of those uninhabitable situations ultimately proves problematic to the meaningful existence of homeless youth. At some point, we must address the plight that fuels these young people's rage. Programs must harness the creative energy displayed by homeless youth and use it in ways other than for the sole purpose of survival. Society needs to foster an environment that encourages and provides skills to homeless youth so that they can move past only trying to survival and create, for themselves, an orientation for the future.

Sanggar Anak Akar, a community of street youth in Jakarta, Indonesia, could operate as a working model for programs interested in the development of homeless youth into full human beings. The Sanggar community helps empower youth by encouraging them to express their strengths, by inviting them to take part in decision-making, and by drawing on the natural resources of the surrounding community. Los Angeles could benefit from a program that helps young homeless people find a place to stand, exert their agency, and make their voice heard. The *Bring LA Home Campaign to End Homelessness* could incorporate wording and examples into their youth-specific recommendations to advocate for more innovative programming and more creative support from Los Angeles' political will.

Use-ful *adj*
1. capable of being put to use to serving some purpose;
2. having value or benefit, or bringing some advantage.

In developing future-orientation, what else is more orienting than having a *purpose*? Whether a young person's goal is to go to school, to create video games, to find

Chapter 1) Literature Review

This chapter serves as an overview of some of the literature and research written about homeless youth since 1987.[ii] These scholars address some of the issues having to do with varying definitions of homeless youth, the multiple causes of youth homelessness, and the experiences young people face once they are on the street. In conclusion, local scholars comment on the homeless youth population specific to Los Angeles.

Introduction

Homeless youth are a unique and complex group of people who, for various reasons, end up living on the street where they suffer from serious physical and emotional problems. They are misunderstood and stigmatized, making it difficult to integrate back into mainstream institutions and society. In defining homeless youth, homeless young people are often mistaken with homeless children or thrown in the rankings of homeless adults. For instance, government legislation and language frequently groups homeless children and youth together. But this misinterpretation ignores the large differences between the two, further hindering the creation of policies that truly aim at remedying youth homelessness. What separates youth from other homeless populations is the age range of 12-24[1] years of age and the reality that, on the street, they are overwhelmingly alone. As result of being virtually alone, unaccompanied homeless youth have to survive on their own without many traditional social and financial supports. Homeless youth's

[1] Homeless youth are categorized between ages 12 and 24 because after age 12, many young homeless people who are still united with their families on the street (especially males) are no longer allowed in the same shelters as their other family members. They officially leave the definition of "homeless child" and enter into "homeless youth." The age range is also consistent with what doctors and psychologists know about the stages of adolescence. In terms of policy restrictions, homeless youth, ages 18-24, loose many benefits and health/ housing services. Upon reaching age 25, homeless young adults become considered homeless adults (although some organizations recognize youth up to 25 and 26).

adolescence further compounds this lack of support. It is a time when all young people enter a process of searching and growing. Adolescent young people, as well as adolescent homeless young people, all struggle to find their place within their community and the larger society. However, unaccompanied homeless youth live without the support that leaves room for much of the freedom of exploration and growth that other non-homeless youth are privileged to. They "live without the support of traditional societal structures, such as family, school, church, and community institutions."[iii] Furthermore, little or no shelters and housing options exist for the homeless youth population. Once T

their families. They "work and live on the streets."[v] The last group of street children is "truly abandoned, with no family ties,"[vi] and only constitutes a small percentage of the street youth population.

In the United States, no widely accepted definition of homeless youth exists. The Association for Children and Families (ACF) believes that "a diversity in definitions creates significant barriers [in] efforts to integrate and synthesize the literature."[vii] Definitions include youth varying from ages 12-21, and in some cases up to age 24. Homeless youth are usually broken up into several categories that relate to the ways in which the young person becomes homeless. The Society for Adolescent Medicine (SAM) categorizes homeless youth into four, overlapping subgroups: runaways, throwaways, street youth, and systems youth.

Runaway youth are thought to have left home because of "abuse, neglect, or serious conflicts"[viii] with parents. The National Center for Homeless Education defines runaways as "young people from the ages of 12 to 24 who have spent at least one night on the streets, in a public space (e.g. park), or in a shelter."[ix] The ACF extends the definition to include youth who have stayed in "unstable residences with friends or acquaintances."[x]

Throwaway youth have been asked to leave their home, have been restricted from returning home, or have been abandoned. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which is "the first comprehensive emergency aid program for America's homeless,"[xi] defines throwaway youth as "children and youth denied housing by their families."[xii] Throwaway youth are often subjected to "extreme levels of abuse or neglect."[xiii] They are also usually significantly older than runaways.

Assistant Program Specialist at the National Center for Homeless Education, Jan Moore, refers to street youth as any young person living indefinitely or intermittently in "high-risk, nontraditional locations" and who "engage[s] in activities such as sex or drug-trade or panhandling."[xiv] Street youth are "usually totally on their own for their survival and are frequent victims of the violence and numerous dangers of the streets."[xv]

Systems youth are young people exiting custodial care, such as foster care or juvenile justice systems. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) says that many of these systems youth "are neither sufficiently prepared to live independently, nor provided adequate aftercare services that will ensure a stable residential placement following discharge."[xvi] Systems youth can come from any government system, "such as juvenile justice and foster care."[xvii] Systems youth differ from other types of runaways because they "frequently have had no recent family contact,"[xviii] making it extra difficult for them to find support systems on which to fall back on.

Magnitude of the Problem

Estimates for this population vary as much as the multiple definitions used for homeless youth. The difference in numbers comes from the different ways in which homeless populations are counted and, particularly for homeless youth, the high rate of transience and often "hidden" populations existing beyond the service capacities. It is difficult to get a realistic count of homeless youth because while some studies have been discounted for only interviewing and counting youth who are in shelters ("Federally funded shelters are estimated to serve only 1 in 12 runaway youths."[xix]), other studies have been questioned because they are accused of only interviewing the "visible" homeless youth (only going to areas where they know homeless youth congregate).

The Society for Adolescent Medicine (SAM) found that worldwide there are anywhere from 30 million to 170 million street youth.[xx] In the United States in 1999, J. Greene et al found that, “nearly 1.7 million youth had a runaway/throwaway episode.”[xxi] But estimates rise as high as 2.8 million youth over the course of a year in a report published by the Research Triangle Institute in 1995.[xxii] The numbers vary substantially due to the challenges of counting homeless youth due reasons as varied as the “hidden” nature of homeless youth, the varying definitions of who is actually a homeless youth and the different approaches to sampling.

In a national survey of adolescents conducted by Ringwalt et al, they “found that the prevalence of homeless adolescents between the ages of 12-17 is 7.6 percent.”[xxiii] Of this 1.6 million homeless adolescents, “an estimated 200,000 are living on the streets.”[xxiv] With similar numbers, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services writes: “Homelessness among youth in the U.S. is disturbingly common, with an estimated annual prevalence of at least 5 percent[xxv] for those ages 12 to 17, and adolescents appear to be at greater risk for literal homelessness than adults.”[xxvi] The U.S. Conference of Mayors thaxyors th(.,9B.hvb458. Assi)]TJ0.008TJET

Jan Moore from the National Center fo

out and girls are more likely to run away."[xxxiii] On the street, both male and female homeless youth are subject to danger and violence, but female homeless youth are often more susceptible to sexual violence, while males are more likely to be physically assaulted.

Racial and Ethnic Makeup

While there is a fair amount of traveling between cities by homeless youth, the Society for Adolescent Medicine (SAM) found that "most runaways come from within a 50-mile radius"[xxxiv] of where they receive services or live on the street. They concluded that the racial make-up of the homeless youth population reflects the particular surrounding community.

Sexual Orientation

Family conflicts over a young person's sexual orientation can lead youth to runaway or parents to throw them out. Joseph Truong, of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC), states, "26% of gay adolescent males were forced to leave home as a result of their sexual identity.[xxxv] Marjorie J. Robertson and Paul A. Toro write, "3 to 10 percent of [homeless] youth have reported their sexual orientation as gay, lesbian or bisexual."[xxxvi] Although some statistics show estimates as high as 25-35%,[xxxvii] Robertson and Toro believe that these higher estimates are due to incorrect sampling and that the percentage of homeless youth who are gay, lesbian or bisexual are consistent with the national model of about 10 percent.[xxxviii]

On the street, gender orientation is often fluid. Survival comes before gender definitions and homeless youth can, and do, take on many different gender roles and

sexual orientations. Sexual preference, along with survival and companionship, lead many homeless youth to experiment both with same and opposite sex relationships.

Length

The amount of time a young person spends on the street is an important factor in determining the status of a young person's homelessness because it overwhelmingly compounds the severity of the experience. The longer a young person is on the street, the more likely they will participate in risky behaviors and/or be subject to victimization and exploitation.

The length a young person spends on the street differs greatly depending on whether or not they stayed in a shelter, as opposed to the streets. Jan Moore, from the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE), points out that "for those living in shelters, the average length of homelessness was four months…but the average length for those on the streets was three years."[xxxix] Homeless youth who live in shelters are less likely to participate, or be victim of, risky behaviors and are more likely to reunite with their families. The longer a young person stays on the street, the less likely they will access shelter services. In the more "hidden" areas of the community, youth are at substantially greater risk of poor health, other heath risks, victimization, and exploitation.

A study conducted between 1993 and 1994 by Shelter Partnership, Inc. found the following statistics for the lengths of time certain percentages of youth stay on the street.

- 20% homeless less than 2 months,
- 20% homeless for 2 months,
- 50% homeless for longer than a year.[xl]

The cause of homelessness today is due to huge losses in affordable housing, with 2.2 million low-rent apartment units vanishing from the market between 1973 and 1993, while the demand for such units increased by 4.7 million renters. Author Bruce Burleson continues: “In just two short years between 1993 and 1995, the supply of low cost units decreased by another 900,000.”[xlvii] Poverty associated with a changing labor market and shift to low-paying jobs causes homelessness, as well. The contraction of the urban economy due to urban sprawl and the globalization of the economy formed low-wage, service jobs, with little or no benefits, for a surplus of workers. “Between 1973 and 1993, real income decreased by some 20 percent. In 1996, 36.5 million Americans lived in poverty, up some 43% from the 1970 figure of 25.4 million.”[xlviii] Burleson writes that “in the average state a minimum wage worker would have to work 83 hours a week in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment at 30 percent of her or his income.”[xlix] Cuts in public assistance and a lack of access to affordable health care are huge contributing factors to the increase and change in the homeless population. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, initiated a “welfare to work” program as well as a 5-year lifetime limit on collecting welfare benefits. The Act cut public

assistance, and a lack of access to affordable health care—are not beyond the realm of homeless youth and actually affect them in dramatic ways. Although estimates of homeless youth have not been the most accurate, ranging anywhere from 750,000[li] to 2.8 million, and have not been collected for as long as estimates on adult homeless populations, research points to an increase in the homeless youth population. In 1998, Ringwalt et al conducted research where they found the annual prevalence of youth homelessness to be 7.6 percent. While there are obvious reasons housing pressures, changing job opportunities, lack of benefits, and lack of health care affect homeless youth, it is just as important to recognize the indirect consequences of these structural changes. These changes jeopardize family health because they put pressures on resources and create family conflict. For example, the changes in the workforce puts pressure on family income and could create conflict in the home. Additionally, families without health care do not have access to services such as counseling and mental illness treatment that might aid, or even abate, family conflict. As well, young people suffering from abuse do not have access to the necessary avenues through which they could stop or heal from the abuse.

The causes of youth homelessness are tremendously difficult and devastating. The situations young people find themselves in are so severe that the young person is forced to make a choice between staying at home or moving into a potentially dangerous situation on the streets. The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) groups the causes into three overlapping categories: family problems, economic problems, and residential instability.

Family problems are some of the most devastating experiences homeless young people face, with 65% of youth saying parental relations were the main reason for running.[lii] Extreme physical, sexual, and/or psychological abuse, as well as neglect, alter the young person's view of what is acceptable parental behavior, make it hard for young people to trust adults, and encourage the development of mental and behavioral disabilities. In a study conducted in 2000, Bao et al found a "clear relationship between physical and sexual abuse of youth and their subsequent homelessness."[liii]

Public custodial care programs produce homeless youth because young people are not ready to live independently upon discharge. Upon release, foster youth loose many supportive contacts and have trouble living independently. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) writes, “those leaving care to live on their own rarely have anyone to turn to for help during difficult times.”

sex, of which an estimated 45% of the street youth population engages in,

fact, 25% were high during last sexual encounter with main partner."[lxvii] This behavior puts homeless youth at an even higher risk for HIV/AIDS than before.

Overall Health

The lack of basic health care services puts homeless young people at risk of numerous health problems. With limited access to care, young people rely on emergency room care, which becomes expensive for them and the public. Their physical health problems include:

-"malnutrition,
-immunization delay,
-complicated upper respiratory tract infections,
-gastrointestinal problems,
-developmental delay,"[lxviii]
-head lice,
-teeth problems,
-suicide, and
-homicide.

Garfein et al. found that "homeless youth are at higher risk of contracting infectious diseases such as diabetes, hepatitis, and HIV…and skin and respiratory diseases contracted while living on the streets or in shelters."

as severe as PTSD. Due to feelings of rejection and abandonment, homeless youth suffer from extreme loneliness and hopelessness, as well. “Among the most common and most serious of problems of youth homelessness is low self-esteem.”[lxxii] The website for My Friend’s Place, a local drop-in center in Hollywood, has the following statistics:

> -Major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and conduct disorder are found to be three times higher in runaway youth than in youth who have not left home.[lxxiii]
> -The number of homeless youth diagnosed as learning disabled is double the rate of other children.[lxxiv]
> -Of homeless youth who have been on the streets for six months or more, 35% have attempted suicide.[lxxv]

Social Interactions

While on the street, homeless youth form distinct social groups. These groups can

Negative effects include peer pressure to participate in risky behavior. Bao et al found that "peer support reduces depression, but may also increase peer pressure toward deviant behavior [such as drug use or participation in criminal activities]. This behavior may then lead to depression that counteracts the beneficial effects of their social support."[lxxviii]

Landmark Legislation

In 1974, the federal government enacted the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) called for the creation of three programs, each with their own individual responsibilities. They were:

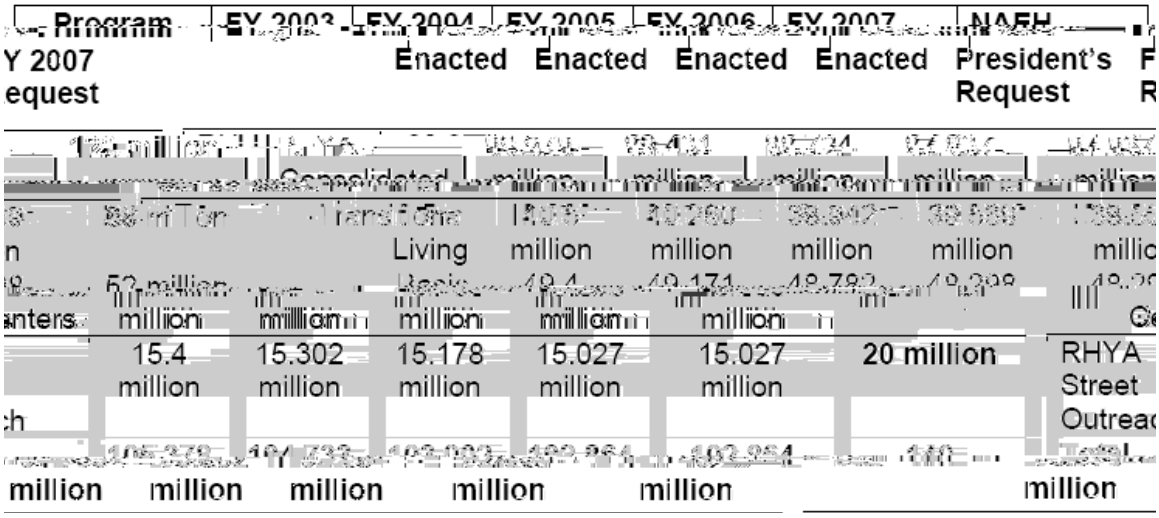
-The Basic Center Program, which provides financial assistance to meet immediate needs.

-The Transitional Living Program, which supports residential services for 16- to 21-year-old for up to 18 months.[2]

-The Street Outreach Program, which funds private, nonprofit agencies' efforts to help runaway and homeless youth transition off the streets.[lxxix]

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) created a chart of past appropriations, as well as funding requests for FY 2007. It is listed below:[lxxx]

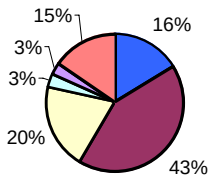
[2] The National Collaboration for Youth found that "the average cost of serving a youth in a Transitional Living Program is $8,348.00 per year – a mere fraction of the public dollars spent on housing youth in costly corrections systems."

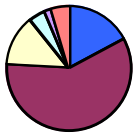


In 1986, as part of the Homeless Persons' Survival Act, the Homeless Eligibility Clarification Act, "removed permanent address requirements and other barriers to existing programs such as Supplemental Security Income, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Veterans Benefits, Food Stamps, and Medicaid." [lxxxi]

Before 1987, the atmosphere for homeless individuals and families was much different. A lot changed in the terms of rights for homeless people with the passage of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. The Act remains the only "major federal legislative response to homelessness."[lxxxii] It includes fifteen programs offering different services to homeless people, including the rights of homeless children and youth to an equal education. In the beginning "congress authorized just over $1 billion in expenditures for McKinney Act programs for 1987 and 1988; however, a total $712 million was appropriated for those years. In subsequent years, overall funding levels increased from $350.2 million in FY87 to the all-time high of $1.49 billion in FY95. Recently, however, support for McKinney Act programs has declined."[lxxxiii] In fact, the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) found that "U.S. budget allocated to Homeless Assistance Grants has decreased by 8% over the past four years, and by 28%

Racial and Ethnic Makeup of General Homeless Youth Population in ***LA*** **





reported that they had injected drugs at some point in their lives, of these more than half, 58% had injected within the past 30 days. Of those, 21% reported sharing needles."[xcvi]

Mental Illness

The My Friend's Place website referenced a local study that found "among street youth in Hollywood ages 13-17, 26% met the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders criteria for major depression compared to 4-6% of community and school samples of adolescents."[xcvii]

Chapter 2) Methodology

I wanted to look at the *Bring LA Home* Campaign to End Homelessness, published by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger & Homelessness (LACEH&H), in order to review how it addressed homeless youth. I conducted interviews with professionals linked to the campaign because I was interested in how they defined homeless youth and interested in what they felt were the particular issues connected to this population.[4] In addition to these interviews, I conducted interviews with service providers for homeless youth in the Los Angeles area because I was interested in whether they had been contacted in the process of formulating recommendations, as well as interested in what recommendations they felt needed to be included.[5] I also conducted informal interviews with two homeless young people here in Los Angeles outside a local drop-in center and three in Albuquerque with homeless young people I knew because of prior work done in New Mexico. I began by asking them to tell me a little bit about themselves. After finding out a little bit about how they came to the streets, we talked about programs that worked well for them. I also shared and discussed with them the recommendations I gathered from my interviews, as well as the model program I highlight, Sanggar Anak Akar, in order to gather their feedback.

In addition to personal interviews, I participated in the Coordinating Council for Runaway and Homeless Youth's (CCRHY)[6] meetings in October 2005 and April 2006.

[4] I spoke individually with one representative from LAHSA and one from LACEH&H; although I also had the opportunity to hear many representatives of these two organizations speak at different meetings.
[5] I interviewed a total of five service providers individually throughout Los Angeles County, although two-thirds of them were from the Hollywood area. I also had the opportunity to meet many other service providers at the CCRHY's meetings.
[6] The CCRHY promotes interagency collaboration on issues surrounding and affecting homeless youth.

One more area of interest in terms of bridging the gap between when a young person first enters the street and when they exit the street would be to look at where homeless young people end up. Do they become homeless adults? Are they incarcerated? Do they reintegrate with mainstream society? A long-term longitudinal study could serve to benefit how services are targeted to youth so that they may not have to enter homelessness.

Chapter 3) *Bring LA Home! A Campaign to End Homelessness*

in which the campaign will be successful is if it produces "visible, measurable, and quantifiable results"[c] from its recommendations. He stressed that without a plan, things only get worse, but the key is to create outcome-oriented plans that build around a few priorities and get those done. He asserts that with success, new dollars will come. All the politicians who spoke at the press release reiterated the fact that the time for talking is over and it's now time for action. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa spoke about the county's investment of $100 million on improved services for homeless on skid row and the city's $50 million to supportive housing. He assured the audience and media that these figures are not a one-time deal.

The *Bring LA Home* campaign is made up of over 200 specific recommendations, but has a clear structure resting on broad strategies and goals, along with three major themes. The executive committee wanted to create a plan for chronic homeless, homeless families, and the improvement of mainstream systems, while leaving special populations to specific ad-hoc groups for phase II of the campaign to be released in July of 2006. Phase I of the campaign unifies all recommendations with seven guiding principles. From those principles and keeping in line with the idea of a Continuum of Care (CoC)[12], the ten-year plan to end homelessness emphasizes seven goals. The strategies and goals are listed as follows:

Seven Guiding Principles

- Prevent homelessness
- Address the structural causes of homelessness
- Sustain the current capacity to serve homeless people and build new capacity where it is needed
- Ensure rapid return to housing for people who become homeless
- Bring alienated homeless people into the mainstream of society

[12] **Continuum of Care-** a comprehensive and coordinated housing and serve delivery system providing a balance of outreach, emergency, transitional, and permanent housing and service resources, so that homeless persons can make the transition from the streets to jobs and independent living.

- Á Take a regional approach to the crisis
- Á Reaffirm that housing is one of the basic human rights

Goals

1) Create Housing to Prevent and End Homelessness
2) Improve the Continuum of Homeless Services
3) Increase Income and Improve Economic Stability
4) Improve Health and Human Services
5) Strengthen the Partnership with the Criminal Justice System to Help End and Prevent Homelessness
6) Regional Issues and Priorities
7) Specific Populations

The concerns of service providers who work with homeless youth are whether or not the issue of homeless youth will be taken seriously in the *Bring LA Home* campaign and among L.A.'s stakeholders. Homeless youth are addressed in the campaign to end homelessness but, as a LAHSA representative reaffirmed, "The concern of the youth ad hoc group is, how much are youth *really* on the table?" Many of the recommendations in the campaign could surely benefit the homeless youth population that exists in Los Angeles, but youth advocates fear that the "political will" might ignore the issues specific to youth. The problem with the current recommendations is that they are not developmentally appropriate services. For example, there are very few mental health services provided to homeless youth. Of the mental health services that exist, even fewer employ therapists and techniques that are sensitive and responsive to homeless adolescent's needs. Developmentally appropriate housing is also a huge issue; especially with the focus the *Bring LA Home* campaign has put on supportive housing. Housing that serves the needs of young homeless people has yet to be created on a large scale. Many of the recommendations in phase I of the plan do not adequately address the specific needs of *young* homeless people.

- Under Goal #3, *Increasing Income and Improving Economic* Stability, LAHSA advocates for a focused planning process to address employment concerns associated with youth (Specifically focusing on improving accessibility to a variety of transitional employment, training, and permanent employment opportunities). Page 28
- In Goal #4, *Improving Health and Human Services*, the campaign recommends supporting countywide networks for homeless youth (regional service planning) because they feel networks are "essential for specific populations, in order to identify and disseminate best practices in service delivery, understand and remove system barriers, and create needed system-level changes." Page 32
- LAHSA advocates for increasing the number of detoxification and treatment beds for substance use and co-occurring disorders, ensuring the availability of beds for specific populations, such as unaccompanied youth. Page 32
- In addressing the integration of services to special needs populations, the campaign mentions, "expand[ing] programs to connect, or reconnect, emancipated foster care youth (ages 18-21) or eligible minor youth prior to emancipation to Federal Title IV-E services." This recommendation is built off the fact that "existing outreach efforts and service models are not adequate for those youth who have been homeless for any length of time, and do not engage youth who are disconnected from formal service systems. This requires expanded resources and better integration with homeless youth providers." Page 33
- The campaign designates a few recommendations for homeless students. These are useful recommendations if the homeless young person is still enrolled in school, but, as shown by Cauce, et al., "up to three quarters of older homeless youths drop out of school."[civ] These recommendations are worth mentioning, but I am unsure of whether they can capture the more hidden populations of homeless youth. Page 33 and 34
    - The campaign addresses the need for a Homeless Education Advisory Group within LAUSD and LACOE so that homeless children and youth are effectively served.
    - They also recommend the adoption of Homeless Education Program Coordinators who will ensure that schools are following the protections and rights of homeless students which are set forth in the McKinney-Vento Act.
    - In response to the fact that homeless students have limited access to basic services (such as after school care or tutoring) and supplies (such as uniforms), the campaign recommends teachers and administrators become familiar with the special programs and services set up to aid homeless students. They stress that information is made available to *all* students about these services and resources rather than leaving it up to the student to first admit being homeless before being aided.
    - Homeless students often fall behind in school because they frequently move from one district to another without history of their school records. Student Information Systems could do a huge service to homeless students by "effectively tracking service delivery to homeless youth and foster youth as they move from school to school throughout the district."

- Right now LAUSD has the capacity to employ a one-half time staff person devoted to the LAUSD Homeless Education Program. LAUSD calls for an increase in the number of Pupil Services and Attendance Positions to five full-time positions. (They ask for a significant funding increase to total funding at $1.3 million).
- As discussed throughout this paper, varying definitions of homelessness exist everywhere. The Bring LA Home campaign advocates for changing HUD's definition of homelessness to the Department of Education's definition, which includes families who are living "doubled up" or in motels. Another recommendation they could advocate for, which would extraordinarily assist homeless youth, would be to advocate for the adoption of a definition of youth homelessness that includes youth up to age 24.

Á The campaign mentions housing types that might be useful for transition age youth. Page 72

Housing Types for Transitional-Age Youth	
Low intensity services (ongoing)[15]	**Subsidized**
	service-enriched housing[16], including single site and scattered site[17] SRO[18]
Moderate intensity services (ongoing)	**Subsidized**
	supportive housing[19], special needs housing[20]

Á

meet the Federal-funding requirements, get funding for otherwise worthy programs? Page 44

The *Bring LA Home* campaign began four years ago because people concerned with homelessness in L.A., both community members and stakeholders, wanted to create a more comprehensive plan in order to end the growing population of homeless persons in Los Angeles. They needed a strategic plan that held community members and leaders accountable. Today in Los Angeles, the homelessness issue is front-page news. Homelessness affects Los Angeles in a large way, with 1 in 9 homeless persons throughout the U.S. found in Los Angeles.[cv] The *Los Angeles Times* has given considerable coverage to the issue of homelessness, especially with its articles on skid row. Journalist, Cara DiMassa, covered the dumping of homeless persons onto skid row by police and emergency medical technicians;[21] journalist Steve Lopez's five-day coverage of skid row revealed a large number of homeless people suffering from dually

In a meeting with the Coordinating Council for Runaway and Homeless Youth (CCRHY) the day after the campaign's release, service providers for homeless youth discussed the campaign's phase II release scheduled for July. A Children's Hospital representative spoke about how they valiantly tried to have youth addressed in phase I of the campaign with arguments about how foster care and probation youth suffer the same discharge mismanagement as homeless adults leaving hospitals and jails. They also illustrated that by not addressing youth now, Los Angeles is only deferring the problem until another time when the young person will be qualified as an "adult."

But, youth specific recommendations were left by the wayside. Representatives of the *Bring LA Home* campaign say youth recommendations were not included because the youth ad hoc group did not to get their recommendations in on time. These same people are confident that phase II of the campaign will receive the same attention as phase I. Others are worried that homeless youth issues will not appropriately integrate into the plan. Phase I of the campaign focuses its attention on the chronically homeless population because HUD funding (McKinney, SuperNOVA, etc) is contingent upon a city having a plan for their chronically homeless. Homeless families attract the political will because society considers family homelessness unconscionable. Finally, systems reform gathered attention due to the *Los Angeles Times'* exposure of homeless dumping onto skid row, as well as an effort to address the mainstream institutions that produce homelessness.

The following chapter covers the youth-specific recommendations created by an ad hoc group formed by the CCRHY. Hopefully the blue ribbon panel and the *Bring LA Home* campaign will support the developmentally appropriate strategies for phase II of the campaign in July 2006.

is essential to deliver services to young people in their own communities. Strategies need to be youth-specific and youth-friendly. Services have to be available, accessible, affordable and appropriate for homeless youth.

Policy changes aim to include more unaccompanied youth in programs and to qualify more youth for federal benefits. For example, the ad hoc group advocates for the inclusion of young people up to age 24 in the definition of homeless youth. They recommend that Los Angeles adopt the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition, which defines adolescence "as the period of life between 10-19, youth as between 15-24 years and young people, as those between 10-24 years old."[cviii] The youth ad hoc group holds that "current research on the adolescent brain supports a developmentally-based definition of youth." The public often blames homeless young people living on the street for being lazy or avoiding responsibility. Youth advocates, on the other hand, recognize that there are scientific reasons young people may take longer to exit adolescence than others. Brain development and maturational process do not reach completion until age 24 or so. The ad hoc group says, "This incomplete brain development and maturational process indicates that there is a neurological basis for the extended path that many young adults need to attain stability, successful employment and economic independence."[cix] The ad hoc group also recommends that Los Angeles direct funding from the Mental Health Services Act (prop 63 funding) toward youth. Another example of barriers caused by age limit is upper-age eligibility requirements for TLP[25] services funded through the RHYA.[26] The ad hoc group believes that the age eligibility requirements "no longer reflect the needs of the homeless youth population. Communities, including LA, are

[25] **TLP-** Transitional Living Programs
[26] **RHYA-** Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

experiencing an increased need for longer-term transitional living programs services for older youth than can currently be provided under the Act."[cx]

Agency coordination has to do with inconsistencies in definitions of homeless youth, age cut-offs, seamlessness between school jurisdictions, and cooperation between different counties for foster care. The youth ad hoc group writes that "improved coordination between public and private ag

flexibility in licensing requirements, saying, "Current licensing requirements are too restrictive and pose barriers to engaging and retaining youth in care."[cxiii] They also recommend an increase in shelter and bed availability. They say, "2500 youth were turned away from RHY Act-funded TLP services in 2003 due to lack of resources, and 4,226 youth were tuned away from Basic Center Programs (RHYMIS)." They believe, "increased funding would allow faith-based and community-based organizations to serve an additional 165,000 runaway and homeless youth annually."[27] [cxiv] The ad hoc group also recommends independent living-skill-based classes that could help keep a young person in housing. Classes, for example, could help with landlord selection and preparation, as well as landlord/tenant mediation.

Whatever the recommendation, the ad hoc youth task force expresses the importance of knowing that the same outcomes cannot be expected for all homeless youth. Street youth, as opposed to more stable, newly homeless youth, do not have the same issues as one another. The ad hoc group recommends the *Bring LA Home* campaign create a pilot program that is no-fail, low-barrier, and low-demand housing for chronically homeless street youth. A community of street youth in Jakarta, Indonesia provides such a setting in chapter 7 of this comprehensive project.

[27] This is if funding is expanded to $140 million in 2007.

Chapter 5) Interviews with LAHSA, LACEH&H, and Service Providers to Homeless Youth

I conducted interviews with professionals linked to the *Bring LA Home* campaign and with service providers who work with homeless young people in Los Angeles because I wanted to find out how well the campaign added the needs of homeless youth. My goal was see if professionals linked to the campaign and service providers felt the *Bring LA Home* campaign sufficiently addressed the needs of homeless youth and young adults. If the people I interviewed felt that something was missing, I was interested in what recommendations they had for the campaign and what recommendations they had for programs for homeless youth in general. As I have expressed previously, I feel that homeless young people make up a very unique group of the homeless population for reasons having to do with their adolescence, the extreme ng torsksdery had artremh. poso

I wanted to speak to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), who took the primary role in the strategic planning process of the campaign, to find out how they defined homeless youth, who they contacted when writing the section about homeless youth, and what youth-specific recommendations they feel need to be included in the campaign. I had similar questions for the Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness (LACEH&H), who partnered with LAHSA in drafting the campaign. In speaking with service providers who work with homeless youth in Los Angeles, I was interested in finding out if they felt confident that the campaign addresses the needs of homeless youth. I was also interested in hearing what recommendations they had for programs for specific to homeless youth.

Everyone I spoke to had meaningful things to say about homeless youth. Most of the people I interviewed recognized that homeless youth are a unique population with special needs. The representative from LACEH&H was a little unclear about homeless youth when he said that to some extent, phase I of the campaign did address youth by addressing homeless families. Although similar in age, homeless teenagers who are still with their families have different experiences on the streets than homeless youth. I was very impressed with the representative from LAHSA who really stressed that in order to address the needs of homeless youth, the government is going to have to exhibit an emotional connection with the young people and find a way to put love into policies that affect youth.

The service providers I spoke to have a very good grasp on recommendations that would serve the populations they worked with. For example, Project Strife, which works with younger homeless youth, recommended that the Los Angeles County Department of

Children and Family Services (DCFS) increase their staffing. Organizations like My Friend's Place, who work with older youth, have less of a chance of benefiting from DCFS services because most DCFS services stop when youth reach age 18 (some organizations work with young people up to age 25 and 26). This supports a

Home campaign will address this problem now

felt that all services exist, but what is going on now in LA is an issue of accessibility. He said that you can find it all, but there is not enough of everything for everyone in need (For example, the representative from LAYN said that there is approximately 13,000 homeless young people ages 12-17 on the streets in LA, with only 100 shelter beds available for all).

LAYN
Á Provide youth with educational systems that set them up for success and provide real options (Without education, the young person's mind won't be open to new ideas) Á LAYN proposes the creation of their own school, which would network all the services existing in the Hollywood area.
Á LAYN proposes one more step after TLPs and before independent living in order to slow the transition down. When graduated from TLPs, LAYN finds that young people still don't have the money to make it on their own. There is one more step before adulthood that needs to be addressed.
My Friend's Place
Á Set up locally-based, relevant service centers
Á Create new housing models, especially for those with multiple challenges (who might not yet be ready to let go of some of the coping strategies they use to survive and enter treatment
Á More emphasis on systems responsibility and holding these services accountable
Á The Department of Mental Health (DMH) needs Transitional-Age Youth Specialists to help youth navigate system (Something has to be done to make mainstream services more inviting to young people who are already over-labeled and over-medicated and who have no willingness to reenter the service structure) Á Take advantage of Proposition 63 and make sure that services are developmentally appropriate for youth
Project Strife (Angel's Flight)
Á Continuation of counseling even after temporarily housed
Á Increase in number of emergency shelters
Á More drug rehabilitation centers for youth (There are always waiting lists. Sometimes young people make an interview in advance and forget to come to their appointment, or when they try to make an appointment, are put on a wait list to even get an interview)
Á The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is swamped with cases. There needs to be an effort to hire more DCFS workers
Á Substantial increase in the number of shelters for unaccompanied youth
United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP)
Á "District liaison to respond to special needs of homeless students
Á District-wide system to identify and track homeless youth, ensuring they are receiving services
Á Create alternatives to suspension and/or expulsion for "behavioral differences"
Á LAPD change strategy from "zero-tolerance" to "compassionate correction"
Á Stop criminalizing poverty by targeting youth for petty citations, such as jaywalking and loitering

Á	Youth liaison offer or Youth Service Officer at handle all youth-related criminal matters in “skid row”
Á	Establish an alternative way to address outstanding tickets, e.g., community service, traffic school or other strategies that do not involve monetary payment
Á	Sliding far scale or free bus transportation for children who meet the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act’s definition.”[cxv]

Chapter 6) Model Programming

The goal of working with homeless youth is to encourage autonomy and self-sufficiency through the development of trusting relationships, the reduction of high-risk activities, the process of healing, and the fostering of empowerment.

Urban Peak in Denver and Colorado Springs, Colorado and New Avenues for Youth in Portland, Oregon, are two model programs in the United States who embody these four characteristics.

Urban Peak is an exemplary program for homeless youth. They are committed to superb data collection and the production of real outcomes in order to strategically address the problem of homeless youth. They use the outcomes to create a strategic planning process, "providing a blueprint for the agency to respond flexibly to new opportunities, the changing needs of youth, budget realities, and necessary changes in organizational structure." "Intake and assessment procedures document homeless history, resources, housing barriers, and what would be needed for the youth to leave homelessness."[cxvi]

Outcome Measures for Urban Peak Denver, 2000–2004

Measure	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**
Number of youth with successful housing outcomes	308	343	368	426	435
Percentage of youth with successful housing outcomes	48%	52%	53%	65%	63%

The programs at New Avenues for Youth in Portland, Oregon, help homeless young people "gain the life skills and support necessary to not only leave streetlife, but lead sustainable lives—and avoid lifelong homelessness."[cxvii] New Avenues goals are to:

"-prevent homelessness among youth by immediately responding to their needs,

-engage homeless youth positively by building trust,

youth come out of foster programs or other treatment programs so over-labeled and over-medicated that the last thing they want is to reenter the system.

Outreach programs build relationships by serving the particular needs of different homeless populations. The outreach at Urban Peak in Denver and Colorado Springs,

Outreach programs not only operate as the first point of contact with homeless youth, but also serve the extremely important role of bringing targeted education to homeless young people in their own environment. Successful outreach education programs include peer education programs, which serve to not only empower the peer educator, but also disseminate the information to other young people in an understandable and relevant way.

Part of the education must include options for those young people who choose to continue participating in risky behaviors. Resources need to be available at all times so that young people have safer avenues in which to practice risky behavior. Examples of these resources include needle exchange programs, regular STI and HIV/AIDS testing, and access to items such as condoms.

The most important risk-reducing program would be to get young people off the streets and into shelter as soon as possible. This calls for a very committed and innovative way of working with homeless youth because not all homeless young people are quite ready to jump into a group home or transitional living center with a strict, mapped out plan with a caseworker. One example of a program working with the general population of homeless people who are not quite ready to live in a strict environment is Common Ground in New York City. This organization "is launching a program it calls 'First Step' for homeless people who don't wish to use the city's shelter system and are not ready to move into a more permanent home." The program rents rooms for $7/ night to people who "want security, privacy, a place to store their belongings, and no mandatory interviews with social workers."[cxxi] This could be translated into a similar program for hard-to-reach homeless youth.

Healing[29]

Many programs struggle with this step because they are so busy providing direct services that they never reach a point where healing can begin to occur. Meaningful programs are unable to service the deeper needs (such as services for mental health and trauma healing) of the homeless young people because the youth they work with are always in a state of crisis. Increased funding for unduplicated programming and networking between different service providers could both help organizations serve homeless youth in a seamless way.

Healing is encouraged in the expression of oneself through non-traditional ways, through one-on-one counseling, and though peer discussion groups. New Avenues for Youth in Portland, as well as The Spot in Denver, have facilities for a music/recording studio. All of the programs also offer art therapy, which is a "non-threatening method of expressing anger, abandonment, substance abuse and other critical issues, while also providing opportunities for positive socialization and engagement into more traditional forms of counseling and psychotherapy."[cxxii] For example, New Avenues for Youth uses a culinary workshop to teach young people about nutrition, effective consumer spending, food preparation and sanitation.

Los Angeles Youth Network (LAYN) in Los Angeles provides many services including housing services. Young people involved in LAYN enter though the outreach and drop-in services and can continue through LAYN's emergency shelter program, 30-day group home, and two-year transitional living center. Throughout this entire time, the

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young person stays with the same therapist.[30] This consistency provides a very meaningful relationship and opportunity for healing.

At New Avenues for Youth in Portland, Oregon, a peer-counseling program meets young people where they are while providing useful leadership skills to young counselors.

Self-Sufficiency and Empowerment

Organizations can help youth exert agency by encouraging them to input ideas and lead programs. By providing homeless young people the tools necessary to develop self-worth and leadership, youth can overcome barriers and create, for themselves, their own vision of the future.

Self-sufficiency and empowerment among homeless young people rests on community partnerships, support and funding. Government officials and community and business stakeholders have to think creatively along with opening their heart to understanding the unique issues related to youth homelessness.

Stakeholders and Community Members

If I were to create a similar breakdown of steps stakeholders need to take in order to help homeless youth, it would look similarly like the one laid out for homeless youth. Stakeholders and community members have to learn to put their ***trust*** in the belief that homeless youth deserve recognition and agency and are able find a positive role in relation to mainstream society. In building trust, businesses and communities could help ***reduce the risks*** of youth homelessness by fostering partnerships in employment and job training, as well as creative housing opportunities. The education and experience

[30] LAYN receives a lot of their funding from government grants, such as DCFS, etc. They also receive a good deal of money through Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and some from private foundations and their own fundraising events.

homeless young people could gain from the partnerships and the education business and community partners could gain from working with homeless youth, would help all community members begin a process of ***healing***. The healing and new insight would translate into a feeling of purpose for the youth.

Chapter 7) Sanggar Anak Akar

Sitting around a crowded computer screen, the documentary began.

"Sanggar Anak Akar is a medium of education for marginalized youth founded in 1994 in Jakarta…"

"…The vision of Sanggar akar is developing a model of education as a cultural movement that respects the dignity of marginalized youth and their need to grow fully into human beings."

So, it is the job of the *Bring LA Home* campaign to create a list of recommendations that instate programs and policies whose overarching goals are to restore dignity in homeless youth. Programs and policies which focus on incorporating homeless youth back into a position of power in decisions that affect their lives, in addition to programs and policies that foster community reciprocity and involvement, will help homeless young people grow into full human beings.

A model that Los Angeles might look to for guidance is a "school"[31] for marginalized street youth in Jakarta, Indonesia called Sanggar Anak Akar (Community Children Roots). Sanggar Akar helps to restore dignity among street youth by empowering them to express their strengths, by inviting them to take part in decision-making, and by drawing on the natural resources of the surrounding community. The school could provide as a model for innovative housing options for youth, as well as a model for community members interested in working with the most hard-to-reach homeless youth.

Originally an outreach team made up of concerned community members, Sanggar Akar became a school and community for homeless young people and now helps them realize their potential by helping them develop a purpose within the Sanggar community. Ibe Karyanto (Karyo) found Sanggar Akar in 1994. Sanggar Akar began as an outreach team made up of concerned members of the community who noticed a growth in the number of young people living on the street. They brought services to and conducted study groups in different target communities all over Jakarta. With umbrella funding from the Jakarta Social Institute, Sanggar Akar found a permanent location to serve the

[31] School in a broad sense of the word—Sanggar Akar is a school, a home, a *buttress*…a community.

needs of their growing clientele. Karyo, along with many other community members, created activities and programs surrounding music and the arts. In 2001, Sanggar Akar

Sanggar Akar is more than a school; it is a community in which homeless youth devise their own self-realization. Sanggar Akar is an agent of change that works with socially excluded, rejected, and marginalized youth, providing them with a socially transforming education. Young people are taught at every level, from basic skills in reading and writing to university-style lect

exactly opposite of what needs to be going on in an organization fighting to represent socially marginalized populations. Clark and Meloy brainstorm the possibility of an organization unhindered by the cogs of bureaucracy…and imagine Sanggar Akar: "Suppose that one could imagine an organizational structure with the individual as its building block, exhibiting a total regard for persons. Reasonably, this personal model would trade off control for empowerment, domination for freedom, and authority for consent. An organization built on these principles would chose its members and leaders, concern itself with the self-actualization of all is members, share the power tools of the organization, de-emphasize hierarchical relationships, and create opportunities for self-fulfilling jobs."[cxxvi] In nightly meetings at Sanggar Akar, young people decompress from the day's activities as well as discuss administrative and curriculum issues. Distributing decision-making power as well as keeping issues transparent invites young people into an atmosphere that cultivates respect and trust. This sharing of power instills dignity in homeless young people.

Sanggar Akar is also unique in that it takes advantage of human capital, "the idea that ordinary people with ordinary knowledge are the natural resources of the community."[cxxvii] Caring community members and community activists alike donate their time and talents to the youth at Sanggar Akar. They spend as much a two weeks teaching workshops in such areas as "Film Production and Editing" and "Women and Globalization." In this way, the burden of

homeless youth’s healing process, at the same time as breaking the barriers and

Conclusion

"Hey Windyn?"

"Yeah?"

"If you see me sleeping on the streets, or maybe, maybe at a bus stop somewhere and you know, I maybe haven't taken a shower in a couple of days or eaten, would you...would you still say hello?"

-Reyes, Albuquerque homeless youth

Homeless young people are stigmatized and misunderstood. In a world that constantly views them as delinquent, non-existent, or hopelessly out of control of their lives, homeless youth have trouble finding footing and purpose in mainstream society. To deny homeless youth agency serves to greatly ignore their, often-creative ways of dealing with desperate situations and extreme conditions. Homeless young people come from many backgrounds and arrive on the street for various and complex reasons. The prevalence of abuse and neglect among homeless youth is significant. Many struggle with the onset of mental illness. Homeless youth participate in high-risk activities in order to survive on the street and these activities put them at a heightened risk of numerous health problems. For example, in response to the dangers faced on the street, homeless youth rationalize their circumstances by numbing the experiences with drugs and/or unhealthy relationships. The challenges young people face on the street makes reintegrating into mainstream society all the more difficult. So what we end up with, to use a quote by James Baldwin, are "...boys and girls are growing into stunted maturity, trying desperately to find a place to stand."[cxxviii]

Homeless youth cannot find solid ground beneath their feet, but service organizations in Los Angeles and model programs in Denver, Colorado Springs, and Portland, try and help young people regain their footing. These organizations first try and

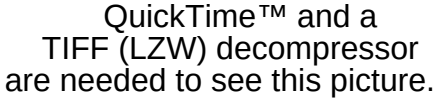
build trust with young people. They then provide education to reduce high-risk behaviors such as needle sharing and unprotected sex. Next they employ various forms of programs concerned with the many stages of healing homeless youth must go through. Finally, organizations strive to provide homeless young people with the adequate support, skills, and opportunities so that they may become empowered and self-sufficient.

The *Bring LA Home* campaign should create recommendations that support the building of trust, reduction of high-risk behavior, process of healing, and road to empowerment. But in addition, the *Bring LA Home* campaign must propose more innovative programs for youth in the areas of housing. Using Sanggar Anak Akar as a model, the *Bring LA Home* campaign needs to support recommendations and programs that express a willingness to include homeless youth in the process of creating new programs. The *Bring LA Home* campaign must create recommendations that set a precedent for community building between the homeless youth population and the surrounding community. This campaign is the first time Los Angeles has attempted to create a long-term plan to address homelessness. As an advocate for change, the *Bring LA Home* campaign must break down the barriers and stigmatizations attached to homeless youth and really encourage community participation in solving this problem. Homeless youth are unique in their resilience, but they are also unique in that they possess the capacity to become incredible human beings. Recommendations for the homeless youth population must create opportunities for youth so that they can realize their potential.

Every homeless youth comes to the streets with complex histories of abuse, neglect and abandonment. These problems are complicated and compounded when survival results in unhealthy behaviors. By really *investing* in addressing these individual

problems now, Los Angeles can achieve what the Director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, Phillip Mangano, refers to as the “front door, back door” policy. We can close the front door to homelessness at the same time as encouraging and providing skills to vibrant young individuals so that they may realize a future with them in it. What can be more worthwhile than that?

Appendix A: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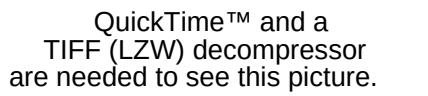
Appendix B:



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[34] Agnese, Kelly, Kate Golden, and Jen Tyson. "Where to Now? Innovative Housing Programs for Homeless Young Adults Leaving TLPs." New England Network for Child, Youth & Family Services (2004). 3 Feb 2006 <http://www.nenetwork.org/publications/where-to-now-report.pdf>.

Flight school, which is off-site. The classroom holds a maximum of 16 students and the units are transferable to LAUSD.
Angel's Flight operates a short-term (15 to 21 day) shelter program.

The Door

Located in New York City, The Door is a multi-purpose and comprehensive drop-in center—and much more—for both homeless and non-homeless youth. Began in 1972, The Door currently serves 7,346 members ages 12-21, of which 18% are currently or were formerly living in foster care and 28% are currently or were recently homeless or living with friends. The Door provides an incredible amount of integrated services and networking/linking among the existing service system. The Door is so important for young people because they practice a holistic and human approach to services. This approach "helps each individual member to dismantle the complex barriers that often stand in the way of success." The mission of The Door is "to empower young people to reach their potential by providing comprehensive youth development services in a diverse and caring environment."

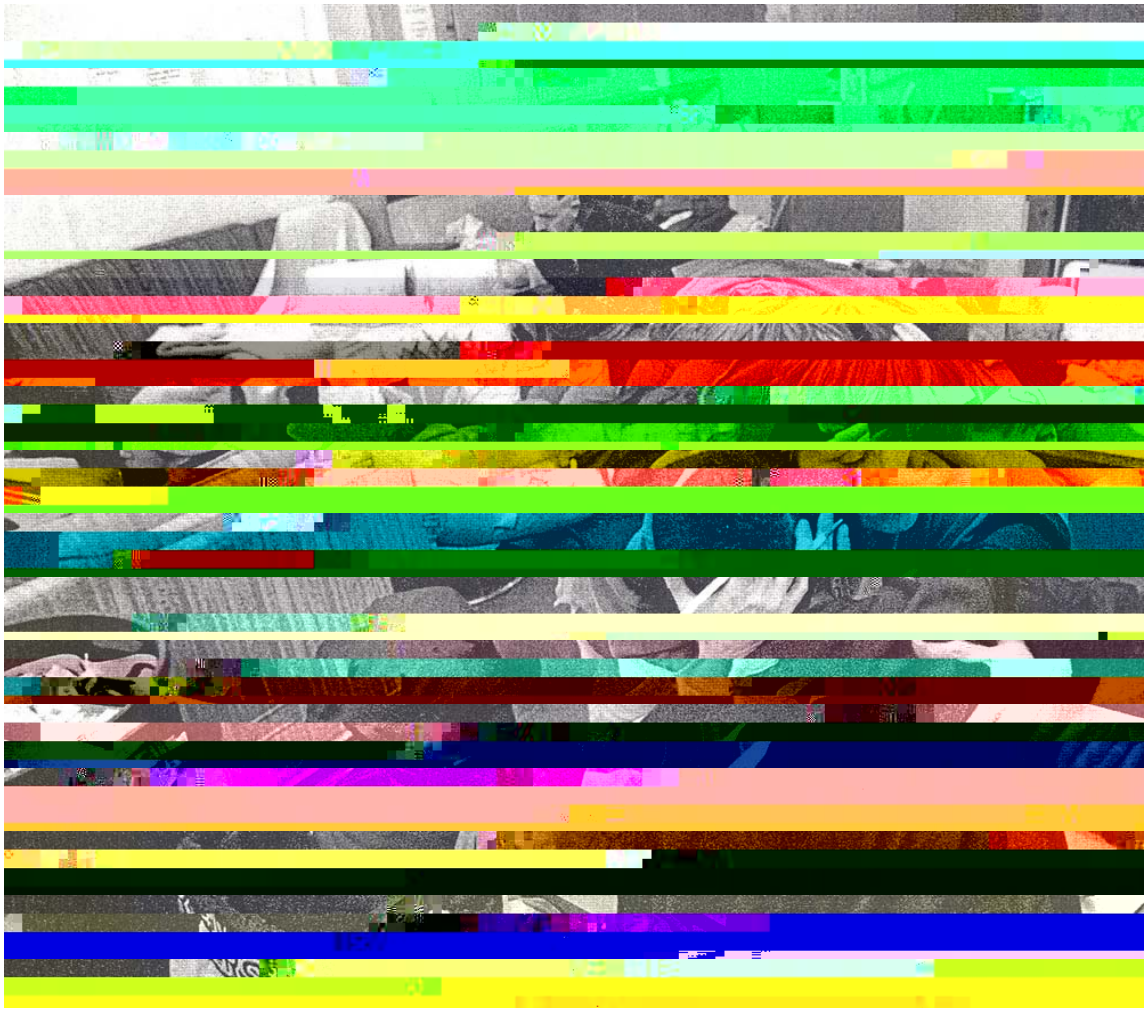
United Coalition East Prevention Project

Works with young people living on skid row. They are concerned about the lack of recreational opportunities in the area. They have a daily after school care program as well as conduct organizing campaigns with homeless young people.

Urban Peak

Urban Peak, located in Denver, Colorado, is an exemplary program for homeless youth. They are committed to superb data collection and the production of real outcomes in order to strategically address the problem of homeless youth. They use the outcomes to create a strategic planning process "providing a blueprint for the agency to respond flexibly to new opportunities, the changing needs of youth, budget realities, and necessary changes in organizational structure." "Intake and assessment procedures document homeless history, resources, housing barriers, and what would be needed for the youth to leave homelessness.

“…I was too old to be adopted,
too young to be alone.”
–Stacey, Albuquerque Homeless Youth



Endnotes

Introduction

i Baldwin, James. Notes of a Native Son. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963. p 71.

Chapter 1) Literature Review

ii Enacted in 1987, the Stewart B. McKinney Act Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 100-77) (specifically Title VII-B, the Education for Homeless Children and Youth portion) marks the most comprehensive federal response to homelessness to date.

iii Farrow, M.D., James A., Robert W. Deisher, M.D., Richard Brown, M.D., John W. Kulig, M.D., M.P.H., and Michelle D. Kipke, Ph.D. "Health and Health Needs of Homeless and Runaway Youth." Society for Adolescent Medicine Journal of Adolescent Health 13 (1992): 717-726.

iv Ibid

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Index of Terms

ACF- Association for Children and Families

ACYF- Administration for Children, Youth and Families

CCRHY- Coordinating Council for Runaway and Homeless Youth (Promotes interagency collaboration on issues surrounding and affecting homeless youth.)

Chronically Homeless- homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

Continuum of Care (CoC)- is a comprehensive and coordinated housing and serve delivery system providing a balance of outreach, emergency, transitional, and permanent housing and service resources, so that homeless persons can make the transition from the streets to jobs and independent living.

DCFS- Department of Children and Family Services

Doubled-up- temporarily staying with family or friends

Emancipated foster youth- is considered to occur when a youth reaches age 18 or is no longer under the
jurisdiction of the court, or is married or has entered military service.

HMIS- Homeless Management Information System

Homeless youth- unaccompanied persons, age 12 to 24. Youth may have run away or were forced out of their home and are not in the company of a parent or guardian, and who may not be legally emancipated.

Human costs- diminished health and wellmayas ento 2ed person (-f05 0A9 12Td(a))8(ouBDCle,are nbuncTt of

NAEH- National Alliance to End Homelessness

NCHE- National Center for Homeless Education

NHCH- National Health Care for the Homeless

NISMART- National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Throwaway Children

NNY- National Network for Youth

NPEYH- is a consortium of the Child Welfare League of America, National Alliance to End Homelessness, National Foster Care Coalition, National League of Cities, National Network for Youth, and Volunteers of America.

NYAC- National Youth Advocacy Coalition

RHYA- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

RHYMIS- Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System

SAM- Society of Adolescent Medicine lTIu 0 12 72 43jociWci/0 Td[re Coesl Com)4 >escent Mi2Teri24ne uD

Title VII-B

Index of Terms

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RHYA- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

RHYMIS- Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System

SAM- Society of Adolescent Medicine

Scattered Site- housing developments or individual units that are not located at one-single location.

Service-Enriched Housing- Housing for families and individuals with no service needs or low or moderate intensity service needs, in which crisis intervention, resources/referral, and time-limited case management are available to all residents.

Single Room Occupancy (SRO)- private rooms that contain either food preparation or sanitary facilities, or both, and are designed for occupancy by a single individual.

SPA- Service Planning Areas (There are a total of 8 SPAs in LA County)

Special Needs Housing- Housing developed for and occupied by people with a variety of disabilities who are at risk of homelessness but may not have been literally or chronically homeless.

Street children- Includes youth up to age 18 and is broken up into three categories: children "on" the street, children "of" the street, and abandoned children.

Survival crimes- crimes committed in order to secure food, shelter, or clothing.

Survival sex- "The selling of sex to meet subsistence needs."[iii]

Title VII-B- The Education for Homeless Children and Youth portion of the McKinney-Vento Act. It relies on the "basic standard that homeless children and youth 'should have the same access to elementary and secondary education as children whose parents are fully established residents of the state'."[iii]

Transition Age youth- refers to youth ages 18-25. This group faces particular challenges because they have reached adulthood in legal terms but still require supportive services and housing. Included in this group are youth, who, because they have reached 18 years, no longer can be served by certain child dependency and delinquency systems but nonetheless require help.