

March 11, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking member
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Mikulski and Shelby:

We would like to thank you for your commitment to this nation's most vulnerable and exploited young people, runaway and homeless youth. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) is the foundation of a national system of vital services for our communities. **Please continue to show your support by protecting and sustaining the Runaway and Homeless Youth programs as you craft your FY13 full year Continuing Resolution.**

Nationally, studies have estimated that there are approximately 1.68 million runaway or homeless youth under the age of 18 each year¹, approximately 400,000 of whom remain outside their home for over a week. In addition, an estimated 150,000 single young adults ages 18 to 24 are homeless over the course of a year, along with many young women with children.

At a time when the economic and social fabric of our nation is frayed by homelessness and poverty, the Runaway and Homeless Youth programs need to be bolstered and supported, not cut. While the number and needs of homeless youth have been increasing, local and state resources continue to decline.

We highlight just a few of the compelling reasons for preserving RHYA:

- 1. The Need is Great.** Our runaway and homeless programs can serve only a fraction of the youth who need help. In 2009, RHYA programs contacted over 812,000 unaccompanied youth, yet only five percent of those youth were provided shelter or transitional housing through a basic center, transitional living project, or maternity group home. Many shelter programs do not have the adequate space they need to accommodate homeless youth
- 2. RHY Programs are Cost-Effective.** The cost-effectiveness of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs, which engage the runaway and homeless youth and their families, when possible, to help them solve their problems, rather than simply confining the youth, also makes them superior choices for aiding some of our most disenfranchised, vulnerable populations. The cost of sheltering a youth is less than one-half the cost of incarceration.

¹ National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children, (2002).

3. **RHYA is the Sole Federal Law Targeted to Unaccompanied Youth.** Congress first enacted the RHYA in 1974 and has regularly reauthorized it to ensure a basic level of support for unaccompanied youth regardless of their state of origin or residence. Few states have established funding streams targeted to unaccompanied youth.
4. **Federal Funding of RHYA Has Been Well-Managed.** Under the HHS PART Rating score under the Bush Administration, the runaway and homeless youth programs were part of the elite 19% of programs rated that were considered “Effective” and the most recent Management score on that system was 100 percent.
5. **RHYA Projects Use Federal Funds to Leverage Community Resources. RHYA projects succeed due to partnerships** created among families, schools, community-based organizations, faith communities, law enforcement agencies, businesses, and volunteers.
6. **RHYA Projects Raise the Achievement Level of Unaccompanied Youth.** The last federally-funded evaluations of the Basic Center Program and the Transitional Living Program found that they produced **positive outcomes for participating youth** in the following areas:

Family Strengthening

- Basic center youth reported lessened rates of family conflict and parental physical abuse.
- Transitional living youth reported that the program helped them better manage communication and maintain positive relationships with their families.

Education

- School participation among basic center youth doubled after basic center services commenced, compared to the participation rate 30 days prior to accessing a basic center.
- The proportion of youth in transitional living projects attending college was three times that of homeless youth who were not in a TLP.

Employment

- Employment rates of youth in basic centers increased by 24 percent.
- 60 percent of transitional living youth were employed part-time or full-time, compared to 41 percent of homeless youth not participating in a TLP.

In a year when we understand that priorities are difficult choices, we ask if you would keep in mind that our runaway and homeless youth programs are both triage efforts in physical safety and conflict resolution and family reunification that directly save lives, as well as investments in remediation and life skills that benefit the individual and society for generations to come.

Please contact the Policy Director of the National Network for Youth with any questions: Darla Bardine, 202-783-7949 or darla.bardine@nn4youth.org. Thank you for your consideration of this vital matter affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of our most vulnerable youth.

Sincerely,

Members, National Network for Youth:

cc: Members of the United States Senate Appropriations Committee

NATIONAL MEMBERS

National Runaway Switchboard
Chicago, IL
(800) RUNAWAY
www.1800RUNAWAY.org

National Safe Place
Louisville, KY
www.nationalsafeplace.org

Mid Atlantic Network of Youth and Family
Services
Pittsburgh, PA
<http://www.manynet.org/public/default.aspx>

ALASKA

Juneau Youth Services
Juneau, AK
(907) 523-6531
<http://www.jys.org/>

ALABAMA

New Life Center for Change
Phoenix City, AL
(334) 298-0000

ARIZONA

Our Family Services
Tucson, AZ
(520) 323-1708
www.ourfamilyservices.org

CALIFORNIA

Bill Wilson Center
Santa Clara, CA
(408) 243-0222
www.billwilsoncenter.org

Channel Islands YMCA Youth and Family
Services
Santa Barbara, CA
(805) 569-1103
www.ciymca.org

Fresno County Economic Opportunities
Fresno, CA
(559) 498-8543
www.fresnoeoc.org

Huckleberry Youth Programs
San Francisco, CA
(415) 621-2929
www.huckleberryyouth.org

Northern California Family Center
Martinez, CA
(925) 340-1990
www.ncfc.us

San Diego Youth and Community Services
San Diego, CA
(619) 221-8600
www.sdycs.org

South Bay Community Services
Chula Vista, CA
(619) 420-3620
www.southbaycommunityservices.org

Tahoe Youth and Family Services
South Lake Tahoe, CA
(530) 541-2445
<http://www.tahoeyouth.org/>

YMCA Youth and Family Services of San
Diego County
San Diego, CA
(619) 543-9850
www.yfs.ymca.org

COLORADO

Family Tree, Inc.
Wheat Ridge, CO
(303) 422-2133
www.thefamilytree.org

Arthur Harriman
(970) 712-8873

CONNECTICUT

Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, Inc.
Bridgeport, CT
(203) 334.1121
www.ccgb.org

Kids in Crisis
Cos Cob, CO
(203) 327-5437
www.kidsincrisis.org

DELAWARE

Aid in Dover
Dover, DE
www.aidindover

DISTRICT OF COLOMBIA

Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc.
Washington, DC
(202) 675-9340
www.sashabruce.org

Bonnie Politz
(202) 744-8898

FLORIDA

Care 4 America.
Morristown, FL
www.care4america.com

Family Resources, Inc.
Pinellas Park, FL
(727) 521-5200
www.family-resources.org

Youth and Family Alternatives, Inc.
New Port Richey, FL
(727) 835-4166
www.yfainc.org

GEORGIA

Gwinnett Children's Shelter
Buford, GA
(678) 546-8770
www.gwinnettchildrenshelter.org

IOWA

United Action for Youth
Iowa City, IA
www.unitedactionforyouth.org

Youth and Shelter Services
Ames, IA
(515) 233-3141
www.yss.ames.ia.us

ILLINOIS

Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center, Inc.
Olympia Fields, IL
(708) 747-7100
www.auntmarthas.org

Night Ministry
Chicago, IL
(773) 784-9000
www.thenightministry.org

Project OZ
Bloomington, IL
(309) 827-0377
www.projectoz.org

Youth Network Council
Chicago, IL
(773) 506-6012
www.youthnetworkcouncil.org

INDIANA

Crisis Center, Inc.
Gary, IN
(219) 938-7070
www.crisiscentersb.org

KANSAS

Amber Miller of Kansas Children's Service League
Topeka, KS
(785) 274-3100
www.kcsl.org

LOUISIANA

Educational and Treatment Council
Lake Charles, LA
(337) 433-1062
www.epccinc.org

Our House, Inc.
Monroe, LA
(318) 345-5556
www.teen-help.com

MAINE

New Beginnings
Lewiston, ME
(207) 795-4077
newbeginmaine.org

MASSACHUSETTS

Bridge Over Troubled Water
Boston, MA
617-423-9575
www.bridgetw.org

Brookline Community Mental Health Center, Inc.
Brookline, MA
(617) 277-8107
<http://www.brooklinecenter.org/>

MICHIGAN

Catholic Family Services
Kalamazoo, MI
(269) 381-9800
www.catholicfamilyservices.org

Genesee County Youth Corporation
Flint, MI
(810) 233-8700

Don Schuster of Listening Ear Crisis Center
Mt. Pleasant, MI
(989) 773-6904
www.listeningear.com

Jessica McCormick
Grand Rapids, MI
(616) 432-8397

Wayne Metropolitan Community Action
Agency
Wayndotte, MI
(734) 246-2280
www.waynemetro.org

MINNESOTA

Richard Hooks Wayman of Hearth Connection
Saint Paul, MN
(612) 730-7574
www.hearthconnection.org

MISSOURI

Boys and Girls Town of Missouri
Springfield, MO
(417) 865-1646
www.bgtm.org

Synergy Services, Inc.
Parkville, MO
(816) 587-4100
www.synergyservices.org

NORTH CAROLINA

Youth Focus
Greensboro, NC
(336) 274-5909
www.youthfocus.org

NEW JERSEY

Anchor House, Inc.
Trenton, NJ
(609) 396-8329
www.anchorhousenj.org

Center for Family Services, Inc.
Camden, NJ
(856) 964-1990
www.centerffs.org

Community Access Unlimited
Elizabeth, NJ
(908) 354-3040
www.caunj.org

Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced
Children
Bridgewater, NJ
(908) 526-6605
www.somersethome.org

NEW YORK

Child & Adolescent Treatment Services
Cheektowaga, NY
(716) 819-3420
www.mentalhealthfornykids.org

The Center for Youth Services
Rochester, NY
(585) 473-2464
<http://www.centerforyouth.net>

Equinox
Albany, NY
(518) 434-6137
<http://www.equinoxinc.org>

Huntington Sanctuary Project
Huntington, NY
(631) 351-3061
http://town.huntington.ny.us/department_details.cfm?ID=18

OHIO

Bellefaire JCB
Shaker Heights, OH
(216) 932-2800
www.bellefairejcb.org

Daybreak
Dayton, OH
(937) 395-4600
www.daybreakdayton.org

Lighthouse Youth Services, Inc.
Cincinnati, OH
(513) 221-3350
www.lys.org

Sojourners Care Network
McArthur, OH
(740) 596-1117
www.sojournerscare.net

OKLAHOMA

Jane Fultz of Payne County Youth Services
Stillwater, OH
(405) 377-3380
www.pcys.org

University of Oklahoma National Resource
Center for Youth Services
Norman, OK
<http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/>

Youth Services for Stephens County, Inc.
Duncan, OK
(580) 255-8800
<http://www.youthservicessc.com/>

Youth Services of Tulsa, Inc.
Tulsa, OK
(918) 582-0061
www.yst.org

OREGON

Boys and Girls Aid
Portland, OR
(503) 222-9661
www.boysandgirlsaid.org

Janus Youth Programs, Inc.
Portland, OR
(503) 542-4608
www.janusyouth.org

Northwest Human Services
Salem, OR
(503) 588-5828
www.northwesthumanservices.org

PENNSYLVANIA

Valley Youth House
Allentown, PA
(610) 820-0166
www.valleyyouthhouse.org

Catholic Social Services, Inc.
Wilkes Barre, PA
(570) 824-5766
<http://www.bridgeyouthservices.org/>

TEXAS

City House
Plano, TX
(972) 424-4626
www.cityhouse.org

Connections Individual and Family Services, Inc.
New Braunfels, TX
(830) 629-6571
www.connectionsnonprofit.org

LifeWorks
Austin, TX
(512) 735-2400
www.lifeworksweb.org

VERMONT

Spectrum Youth & Family Services
Burlington, VT
(802) 864-7423
www.spectrumvt.org

Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless
Youth Programs
Montpelier, VT
(802) 229-9151
www.vcrhyp.org

Washington County Youth Services Bureau:
Vermont Coalition of RHY Programs
Montpelier, VT
(802) 299-9151
www.youthservicebureau.info

WASHINGTON

Cocoon House
Everett, WA
(425) 259-3184
www.cocoonhouse.org

Community Youth Services
Olympia, WA
(360) 943-0780
www.communityyouthservices.org

Friends of Youth
Redmond, WA
(425) 869-6490
www.friendsofyouth.org

Teen Feed
Seattle, WA
(206) 605-5044
www.teenfeed.org

Volunteers of America, Spokane
Spokane, WA
(509) 624-2378
www.voaspokane.org

YouthCare, Inc.
Seattle, WA
(206) 694-4500
www.youthcare.org

WISCONSIN

Walker's Point Youth and Family Center
Milwaukee, WI
(414) 672-5300
www.walkerspoint.org

WEST VIRGINIA

Daymark, Inc.
Charleston, WV
(304) 340-3675
<http://daymark.org>