



FYSB Family and Youth Services Bureau update

Expanding Its Reach, FYSB Serves More, Better

Runaway. Thrownaway. Homeless. Abused. Parent in prison. Feeling pressured into sex. When at-risk young people are in need, the places where they and their families seek services are often supported by the Administration for Children and Families/Family and Youth Services Bureau.

For 30 years, the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) has served young people in difficult situations and their families. Until recently, that support largely took the form of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program, which provides street outreach, emergency shelter, and transitional living services to young people at risk of living on the streets.

With the addition of three major programs in the past 5 years, FYSB's sights have grown quite a bit wider. Today, the Bureau provides crisis services and attempts to avert the crises before they begin. And it's the young people who need extra support to navigate the path to adulthood who stand to benefit the most from FYSB's expanded reach.

"As the at-risk youth population we serve experiences new challenges, we have adapted and grown to meet their needs," says FYSB Associate Commissioner Harry Wilson. "Our highest priority, in all our programs, is to provide these young people and their families with the tools and opportunities they need to make the best choices for the future."

Making good choices can be hard for children of prisoners, one of FYSB's newest constituencies. With one or both parents in prison, children are seven times more likely to wind up behind bars themselves. Studies have shown, however, that mentoring can make a difference.



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FYSB at a Glance

Basic Center Program

Addresses the immediate needs of runaway and homeless youth ages 18 or younger
Authorization: Established by Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-415)
Year incorporated into FYSB: 1974
Number of 2006 grantees: 336
FY 2006 funding: \$43.5 million
Grant duration: 3 years

Transitional Living Program for Older Homeless Youth

Provides longer-term residential services to homeless youth ages 16 to 21
Authorization: Established by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-690)
Year incorporated into FYSB: 1988
Number of 2006 grantees: 193
FY 2006 funding: \$36.0 million
Grant duration: 5 years

Street Outreach Program

Provides education and prevention services to street youth up to age 21 who have been subjected to or are at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse
Authorization: Established by the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-322)
Year incorporated into FYSB: 1994
Number of 2006 grantees: 140
FY 2006 funding: \$13.6 million
Grant duration: 3 years

Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program

Provides mentors to children, ages 4 to 18, of incarcerated parents
Authorization: Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001 (Public Law 107-133)
Year incorporated into FYSB: 2001
Number of 2006 grantees: 238
FY 2006 funding: \$45.8 million
Grant duration: 3 years

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Family Violence Prevention and Services Program

Provides shelter and related services, such as emergency transportation and childcare to victims of family violence

Authorization: Title III of the Child Abuse Amendments of 1984 (Public Law 98-457)

Year incorporated into FYSB: 2004

Number of 2006 grantees: 328

FY 2006 funding: \$124.6 million

Grant duration: Varies

State Abstinence Education Program

Provides funding to enable States and U.S. Territories to create or support abstinence education

Authorization: Section 510 of Title V of the Social Security Act of 1996; established under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-193)

Year incorporated into FYSB: 2004

Number of 2006 grantees: 51

FY 2006 funding: \$50 million

Grant duration: 1 year

Community-Based Abstinence Education Program


Provides funding to community- and faith-based organizations that promote abstinence education

Authorization: Defined under Section 510 of Title V of the Social Security Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-191)

Year incorporated into FYSB: 2005

Number of 2006 grantees: 158

FY 2006 funding: \$113.4 million

Grant duration: 3 years for current grantees; 5 years for those starting in 2007 

FYSB SERVES MORE *continued from page 1*

In his 2003 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush made mentoring one of his signature priorities, proposing a \$450-million initiative to bring mentors to more than a million young people, including “boys and girls trying to grow up without guidance and attention, and children who have to go through a prison gate to be hugged by their mom or dad.”

Since then, the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program has grown rapidly, from \$10 million 3 years ago to \$46 million in 2006. Now,

238 grantees nationwide use community-based programs to bring thousands of children together with long-term mentors.

“It can mean the difference between a youth continuing the cycle of incarceration in their family or stepping away from that and creating a new path,” says Curtis Porter, director of the Youth Development Division at FYSB.

The idea of fostering new paths also guides the work of the State and Community-Based

Abstinence Education Programs, which were transferred to FYSB over the past few years. Targeting youth most at risk of becoming pregnant or fathering children, the programs aim to use education to stop the cycle of poverty that often accompanies adolescent parenting.

“It is really about offering kids an alternative message to ‘safe sex,’” says Wilson. “So when you teach abstinence, you’re just presenting the facts about what’s out there and letting youth make the decisions.”

Wilson says FYSB plans to expand the abstinence message by funding cultural centers to develop campaigns intended for African American, Hispanic, and Native American youth. The Bureau is also identifying existing FYSB programs that are successfully reaching hard-to-reach youth and incorporating those same strategies into abstinence education.

Gaining access to a new population of hard-to-reach, at-risk youth is just one of the ways that FYSB has benefited from the addition of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, which was transferred to the Bureau in 2004. Beyond

providing shelter and services to victims of family violence, the Family Violence Program can now focus FYSB’s youth development expertise on providing support to dependents affected by violence at home.


One example, Wilson says, is FYSB’s collaborative method of addressing the restrictions that some domestic violence shelters have against allowing teenage boys to stay overnight.

“Our highest priority, in all our programs, is to provide these young people and their families with the tools and opportunities they need to make the best choices for the future.”

—Harry Wilson, FYSB Associate Commissioner

“We have connected runaway and homeless youth centers to domestic violence shelters so that boys can go into homeless shelters, and they are guaranteed to have contact with their moms in the domestic violence shelters,” Wilson says.

Wilson expects the consolidation of so

many innovative programs under FYSB’s roof to continue to generate rewards for the community- and faith-based organizations that serve youth, families, and communities. 

FYSB Programs Strengthen Families

Parents who call Cocoon House in Everett, Washington, often do so out of desperation. Weary of constant clashes at home, many simply want to send their adolescent to the agency’s basic center, which provides short-term shelter and other services to runaway and homeless youth 18 and under. But Cocoon House staff have found a better way to respond to family discord than leaving young people to fend for themselves.

The agency’s 5-year-old prevention program, called Project SAFE, works with parents to mend their relationships with their children. Parents referred to the project receive a 90-minute phone call with a counselor, who helps them explore ways to improve the situation with the young person at home. A few weeks later, the counselor calls back to discuss what’s working, what needs to be



Harry Wilson
FYSB Associate Commissioner

adjusted, and what additional services parents may need. By smoothing rocky relationships, Project SAFE keeps young people out of the shelter in the first place or, if they are already there, returns them home quickly.

Whether serving runaway and homeless youth, victims of domestic violence, children of prisoners, or youth at risk for early sexual activity, FYSB's programs emphasize a single philosophy: strengthening families by giving them the tools they need to deal with both everyday conflicts and more troubling problems.

"Family is the first and most significant influence in a young person's life," says FYSB Associate Commissioner Harry Wilson. "We know from the research, experience, and our own common sense that youth who are connected to their families are less likely to engage in risky behavior, whether illegal drug and tobacco use, violence, or sexual activity."

Acting on that knowledge is imperative to FYSB's work, but it isn't always easy, especially in work with families grappling with poverty, violence, incarceration, substance abuse, and other issues. That's why programs that serve runaway youth,

like Cocoon House, reunite families whenever possible, and, when efforts fail, also stand ready to support these young people.

"Our goal is always to help kids have connections and resources for the rest of their lives after we're gone, and families are one of them," says Vicki Merriam, who directs the transitional living program, where young people spend up to 18 months learning to live on their own, at Bridge Family Center in West Hartford, Connecticut.

Many things complicate that goal, Merriam says, from drug use and incarceration to abuse and restraining orders—on the part of either the youth or members of the young person's family. Merriam doesn't talk to families without the permission of her clients, and she focuses on improving how youth relate to their families, teaching them to set personal

boundaries and become independent.

In the case of families with a parent in prison, keeping families strong, though a struggle, is a small step toward reducing recidivism and keeping children from following in their parents' footsteps, says Andrea Payne, executive director of Families of Incarcerated Individuals (FII) in Memphis, Tennessee.

"If you keep the family unit strong," Payne says, "when the inmate comes out, he's less likely to go back. We try to keep them involved with the family." She also notes that gangs often prey on children of prisoners, representing themselves as a replacement for a lost family unit.

In FII's mentoring program for children of prisoners, mentors are free to take children to visit the incarcerated parent, Payne says. Mentors and staff encourage children to write to their incarcerated parent, and parents are also encouraged to write to their children and phone them. Inmates who are in school while in prison can share schoolwork with their children as a way to stay in touch. But many obstacles keep children and parents from remaining close, Payne says, and family involvement with a person in prison often drops off after a period of time, despite the best efforts of everyone involved.

Like families with a parent in prison, families affected by domestic violence face extreme pressures. Under a demonstration grant from FYSB's Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence is testing ways to help victims of domestic violence create a stable, secure, warm, and caring environment for their children.



"The traditional focus has been on the women in terms of being victims," says Barbara Nissley, the coalition's children's program specialist. "What we've never looked at is how do we help her help her child." That thinking has led the coalition to shift toward a three-pronged approach to domestic violence services: services to victims, services to children, and services that address the relationship between victims and their children. While most domestic violence agencies have a child's advocate, the coalition sees a need for all domestic violence workers to have training in child development. In addition to creating training programs for staff, the coalition will develop user-friendly materials for moms.

"Parenting effectiveness among victims is similar to that of other moms," Nissley explains, but a domestic violence victim may not be aware of the effect witnessing violence has had on her children.

The Pennsylvania coalition's 3-year demonstration project, which is being implemented at five sites across the State, will also test home-based services to strengthen mother-child relationships, with "home" defined loosely as anywhere that is not a domestic violence shelter. It could be the woman's house or apartment, her workplace, transitional housing where she is staying, or another location of her choosing.

In addition to assisting families in times of duress, FYSB programs are preparing young people to create their own families, a job that

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—Vicki Merriam, Bridge Family Center

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entails confronting commonly held beliefs about marriage and relationships.

When Rachel Sacksteder, an abstinence educator at Elizabeth's New Life Center in Dayton, Ohio, asks middle and high school students how many of them have witnessed good marriages, one-third to one-half of class members raise their hands. But when she asks about bad marriages, every hand shoots up. Young people want to marry eventually, but they are jaded, she says, explaining, "There is a deep longing [for marriage], but they don't want the marriages they see."

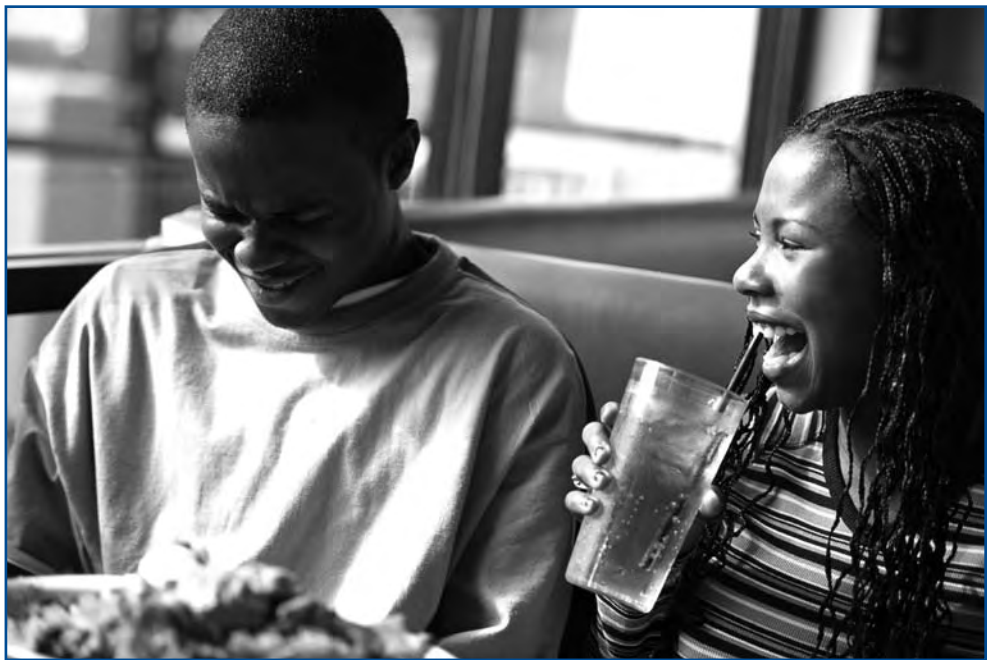
So, to combat the idea that healthy, stable marriages are "some fake dream," Sacksteder says, the abstinence education program at Elizabeth's New Life aims to let youth know that they can have a good marriage and avoid divorce.

"You can practice for high quality relationships by building friendships," Sacksteder says. Students learn the social skills that go into any good friendship or relationship: trusting and respecting the other person, paying compliments, and making apologies.

They also learn how to steer clear of peer pressure. Using role play activities, students learn a three-step method to avoid peer pressure: speak up and defend yourself or use a joke to diffuse the situation; stand up and use body language to show you won't cave in; walk out and remove yourself from a bad situation.

More than building individual family units and preparing young people for the future, FYSB's commitment to strengthening families is closely linked to an investment in communities. To that end, the Bureau's Positive Youth Development State and Local Collaboration Demonstration Projects bolster local communities in their efforts to increase opportunities for young people. In each of the nine sites taking part in the demonstration, schools, communities, families, and young people play an important role in pinpointing the unique problems their communities face and the solutions that will work best.

Underlying this approach is a view articulated by First Lady Laura Bush: "Strong communities support families, so that parents know the values they teach will be reinforced when their



children are outside the home." Strong communities, strong families, strong young people. ■

Building Up Youth To Make Healthy Choices

She stands for something.

That's what 17-year-old Aisha thinks her friends and classmates would say about her.

"In school, when I express an opinion, people respect me for that," she says. "Like when I tell people that I chose abstinence, friends look up to me and come to me for advice."

Aisha is one of more than a hundred young people at Morning Star Baptist Church in Catonsville, Maryland, who have pledged abstinence until marriage as a personal standard.

Aisha joined Morning Star's abstinence education program—funded through the Center for Self Sufficiency, a Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) grantee—with some friends about a year ago.

"I believe the program helps build character and self esteem," she says. "It gives a foundation for young people facing pressures in school or outside of school. We talk about real issues and how we would handle them."

Abstinence education is just one of the ways that FYSB helps young people make healthy choices. Through the Abstinence Education, Mentoring Children of Prisoners, and Transitional Living Programs, for example, youth are given opportunities to build character, build

relationships, and build competencies, helping them grow into healthy, happy, self-sufficient adults.

"Today, youth are faced with a growing number of choices in an environment where positive guidance and encouraging role models are more important than ever," says FYSB Deputy Associate Commissioner David Siegel.

FYSB's 158 abstinence education programs

across the country help young people, ages 12 to 18, develop the refusal skills they need to cope with peer pressure around not only sex, but also drugs and alcohol. For Aisha and her

"Life is not a straight line. We're all going to have bumps along the way. The question is, how do we react to those mistakes? How do we think about what we did? Do we have something in place to help a young person not do it again?"

—David Siegel, FYSB Deputy Associate Commissioner

peers, learning to set goals and think about the future is perhaps even more important.

“It’s not just about finding ways for kids to say no, or for there to be a reduction in out-of-wedlock births or sexually transmitted diseases,” says Stanley Koutstaal, acting division director for abstinence education at FYSB. “It’s really about building character – how to help young people make choices now that will set them on a path where they’ll experience benefits long-term.”

Indeed, studies show that young people who pledge abstinence are more likely than their peers to do well in other parts of their lives and are better prepared for the transition to adulthood. Specifically, these studies say those who abstain from sex until marriage are less likely to be depressed, more likely to graduate from college, and more likely to have happy marriages as adults.

For now, Aisha and her friends are simply enjoying themselves. They like spending time with friends at church and are also encouraged to get involved in school activities, like sports and student government. “It’s really fun,” Aisha says, “and in the long-term, I know it will help me be a better person.”

Building Relationships

Part of building the character of young people is giving them a safe environment in which to make their own decisions. Through the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program, FYSB relies on mentors to let kids know they are worthwhile, to build their self-esteem and self confidence, and to help them trust themselves.

“For the 2 million kids in this country with incarcerated parents, nobody can substitute for a parent, but a consistent relationship with a trusted adult can help a young person through some tough years,” Siegel says.

Indeed, children of prisoners suffer not only from the disruption in the relationship with their parent, but also from economic, social, and emotional burdens related to the incarceration.

Studies, like a recent evaluation of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, show that mentoring programs can aid in preventing first-time drug and alcohol use for young people,

Saying “Yes” to Abstinence

“Abstinence is definitely a thumbs up!” says Taylor Moore, a 17-year-old high school senior at Kenwood Academy on Chicago’s South Side. Taylor, a vocal and passionate advocate for abstinence until marriage, says abstinence helps young people give their all and be the best that they can be.

“Abstinence is a personal standard I created for myself in order to reach my highest potential,” says Taylor, a spokesperson for Project Reality, one of FYSB’s abstinence education programs in Glenview, Illinois.

She counts her mother and Libby Gray Macke, director of Project Reality, among the many mentors who have helped her reach this important decision.


“As soon as I was old enough to understand, my mother talked to me about saving sex for marriage,” she says. “My mother made a wrong decision, but she was able to get back on track and instill values in me.”

And Macke, who Taylor calls Aunt Libby, has shown Taylor that healthy marriages are possible. “I come from a long line of single mothers,” Taylor says, “so it means a lot to see how to have a great relationship and that it is possible to wait until marriage and have that fairytale relationship.”

Further, Taylor says, “She is a great role model and helps to bring out the best in people. She sets standards at a high level instead of lowering the bar because some people think we [youth] can’t reach a certain goal.”

Taylor says *her* goal is to be a positive role model for her peers and to let them know that abstinence is one of the keys to success. Many teens, Taylor says, are really starving for something positive, something uplifting. And abstinence is a perfect message, she says, since it is about making good decisions, being the best you can be, and helping make your dreams a reality.

Taylor uses music to reach out to her peers and deliver the abstinence message. She wrote the music and lyrics for “I’m Worth Waiting For,” a song she describes as an anthem for teens and anyone who is not yet married to encourage them to save sex for marriage. When she performs the song, she says, people really get into it, “singing the hook and everything.”

Taylor sums it up this way: “There are many choices we as teenagers have to make. By saying ‘no’ to premarital sex, I can say ‘yes’ to all the other good things in life and help make other people’s lives that I come across that much greater.” 



Taylor Moore, a 17-year-old spokesperson for Project Reality, one of FYSB’s abstinence education programs.

improving their relationships and academic performance, and reducing the likelihood that they will initiate violence.

“I have to admit that in the beginning I didn’t think this was a good idea. I thought I was too

cool to have a mentor,” says Taye from OreMi Mentoring Program in Oakland, California. “Now I know that I am becoming a better person because of [my mentor] Al. I get better grades and give my mom less problems.”

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Not to mention, it can also be a lot of fun. Kamille from Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Heart of Georgia in Macon, Georgia, says of her mentor Patricia, “We like to do ‘girlie’ things—hair, nails, shop, talk, and laugh!”

While the relationship can provide instant gratification for both mentors and mentees, studies show that, with regular and frequent meetings for a committed period of time (usually a year or more), the rewards of the mentoring relationship endure; and the benefits can continue long after the mentoring relationship has ended. These delayed effects of mentoring, FYSB believes, helps kids make healthy choices down the line.

Building Competencies

For the older young people who seek help through FYSB’s Transitional Living Program (TLP) for Older Homeless Youth, the focus is on recognizing past poor decisions and building skills to make better ones in the future.

Each year, more than 5,000 runaway and homeless youth ages 16 to 21 receive housing, counseling, life skills training, and education and employment support through TLPs. These services help youth who are homeless build competencies and gain life skills so that they can make a successful transition to self-sufficient living. But mostly, they get to experience reality and practice decisionmaking within a safe and supportive environment.

“Life is not a straight line,” Siegel says. “We’re all going to have bumps along the way. The question is, how do we react to those mistakes? How do we think about what we did? Do we have something in place to help a young person not do it again?”

At Valley Youth House, a FYSB grantee in Allentown, Pennsylvania, staff start by trying to understand where each youth is coming from, according to Executive Vice President Bob Robertson. Once immersed in a young person’s history, Robertson says, it is easy to predict future poor choices and try to head them off.

Unfortunately, for many young people, making bad choices can become an easy pattern to fall into. Many residents of Valley Youth House start using drugs or alcohol at an early age.

Some skip school; some get involved in sexual relationships without fully anticipating the consequences of their decisions. Too often, these young people find themselves in trouble, with parents, at school, and sometimes, with the police. When they can’t return to their families but are not yet equipped to live on their own, they turn to Valley Youth House for help.

“In the beginning, we discuss, ‘Who do you want to be? What are your goals?’” Robertson says, “This provides an opportunity for a whole different kind of conversation about choices.”

Part of that conversation involves helping youth think through the consequences of their decisions by asking them to consider the long- and short-term implications. In this way, young people begin to understand the positive and negative consequences of the choices they make. The goal is to get them to think for themselves in healthy ways.

Take Alex, who is 17 years old and has been at Valley Youth House for about a year. He is a senior in high school and has a job doing maintenance work at the program. With the job skills he’s learned, he feels more competent. He says, “I know I’m going to be leaving soon, so I need to make healthy choices and think about my future.” Next year, Alex plans to go to college.

“When a kid messes up, and all kids will mess up,” Robertson says, TLPs work with the youth to understand their bad choice and learn how to turn it around. “You can’t take it back, but you can make it right.” **▣**

Working Together To End Abuse

It was a fluke, they thought.

When staff at Hoyleton Youth and Family Services asked a focus group of 11- to 18-year-old boys and girls how many of them had been, or knew someone who had been, in an abusive relationship, three-quarters of the hands went up.

Must be a fluke.

So they repeated the question in focus groups throughout Washington County, Illinois – in low-income, middle class, and wealthy neigh-

borhoods, among all racial and ethnic groups. What they found shocked them: the same amount of hands kept going up all over town.

“And it wasn’t just the girls,” says Chris Cox, CEO of Hoyleton. “There is this sense that the male is the aggressor and abuser, but we listened to a lot of young men who would meet the definition of being in an abusive relationship.”

According to research, dating violence is an all-too-common but little-talked-about problem among today’s teenagers. Though statistics vary wildly, young people suffer from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse at the hands of their peers at alarming rates (studies have estimated anywhere from 28 to 96 percent). And no one is more at risk than those young people already in the most precarious of life’s situations—runaway and homeless youth. That’s why FYSB has combined the efforts of two of its signature programs—Runaway and Homeless Youth and Family Violence Prevention and Services—in an effort to develop services and solutions to better protect already at-risk youth.



“Our family violence and runaway and homeless providers are natural allies,” says Curtis Porter, who directs FYSB’s youth programs. “This collaboration is just one of the ways that FYSB grantees in all of our programs can pool their expertise for the benefit of young people in at-risk situations.”

As part of the demonstration program, 13 domestic violence providers partnered with runaway and homeless youth providers to

undertake 17-month-long dating violence education and awareness projects running from October 2004 through early 2006. An additional nine grantees were funded in 2005.

“The idea was for these grantees to develop some sort of guidance and services to make runaway and homeless youth more resilient in their own relationships,” says Bill Riley, director of the Family Violence Division at FYSB. “With this, and the other demonstration projects we run, we are always looking to formulate new models and outreach strategies to eliminate domestic violence.”

In Illinois, the Violence Prevention Center of Southwestern Illinois and Call for Help partnered with FYSB-funded runaway and homeless youth services provider Hoyleton Youth and Family Services to undertake an ambitious countywide project designed to raise awareness among all citizens about the effects of adolescent dating violence in general, and its prevalence among runaway and homeless in particular. The first two parts of the three-pronged project included the initial focus groups and targeted prevention education in schools, churches, human service agencies, and groups for at-risk young people. Both youth and adults were taught to recognize the warning signs of dating violence among young people and the dynamics of an abusive relationship. They were also supplied a variety of resources on dating violence prevention and services, including the provisions of the statewide Illinois Protocol for Partner Abuse Prevention. In its final step, the project delivered its awareness message more widely, with tear-off flyers, radio and television spots, and public service announcements before and after movies.

Their countywide approach, Cox says, was grounded in the belief that “parents and the community need to have the skills to deal with what is going on today.”

The Hawaii Youth Services Network and its partner, the Hawaii Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Legal Hotline, took a different tack, specifically targeting runaway and homeless youth across five Hawaiian islands.

To educate themselves, the partners initially convened a quarterly work group of 35 people from 22 different agencies and brought in

speakers. Topics included the legal rights of minors, developmental impacts of witnessing domestic violence, and violence among street youth. They eventually adapted an existing school-based dating violence curriculum, including tailored role-playing exercises and handouts, to specifically target at-risk youth. They tried out the curriculum with runaway youth in drop-in centers, shelters, and transitional living programs.

“One of the things we found out through that process was that we were really working with several distinct groups of runaway and homeless youth,” says Judith Clark, director of Hawaii Youth Services Network. “Those that were in the transitional living program were in a very different place than those showing up at drop-in.”

The transitional living youth had made commitments to change their lives for the better: they were attending school, looking for jobs, and living in stable environments with long-term relationships. By the nature of their arrangements with the programs they were in, they could also be required to attend the sessions.

For street youth at the drop-in center, abuse was much more common, Clark says, and sessions were complicated by the fact that the victim and abuser often showed up together. In the end, the partners had to get creative, holding movie nights and weekly art groups with subtle prevention messages. In February, for example, they had the young artists create Valentine’s Day cards while discussing what an ideal relationship is.

“The movie night didn’t work so well, but the art group was very successful,” Clark says. “They could express their creative sides through something that doesn’t feel like it’s educational or therapeutic.”

The work group’s final intervention was a conference on dating violence prevention for 180 attendees at the Filipino community cen-

ter 10 miles outside of Honolulu. Many of the attendees, panelists, and speakers were young people themselves.

Though both grants have now ended, Cox and Clark feel that the collaborative effort between runaway and homeless youth and domestic violence providers was priceless.

“People in Hawaii in domestic violence have a greater understanding of the needs of runaway and homeless youth,” Clark says, “and runaway and homeless youth providers are more comfortable talking about dating violence with the clients.”

Cox continues to receive calls from partners on the Illinois project asking for advice or referrals.

“It gave us the ability to build a support group,” Cox says. “Society’s needs are so large that no one agency can deal with

them. This allowed us to break down some of those barriers we all have.”

Cox and Clark say the Hawaii and Illinois projects are both looking for ways to continue the groundbreaking work they have done.

Cox says his organization would like to develop better intake systems to track victims of domestic abuse. He would also like to educate the local police force, which didn’t opt to participate in the project, about the prevalence of dating violence in the community.

Besides continuing the quarterly work group meetings, Clark would like to target specific immigrant populations in Hawaii. She would also like to see more intense interventions for youth in the drop-in center.

“They have so much violence in their lives that if they have an abusive partner, they don’t even recognize it as a problem,” Clark says.

For all the grantees who continue to work on dating violence among at-risk youth, even one hand going up in the room is too many. **■**

“This collaboration is just one of the ways that FYSB grantees in all of our programs can pool their expertise for the benefit of young people in at-risk situations.”

—Curtis Porter, FYSB

INSIDE:

The New FYSB

Learn how the new programs at the Family and Youth Services Bureau have expanded the Bureau's efforts to serve more youth in novel ways.

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NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON FAMILIES & YOUTH

P.O. Box 13505

Silver Spring, MD 20911-3505

Tel./TTY: (301) 608-8098

Fax: (301) 608-8721

ncfy.acf.hhs.gov



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
ACYF/Family and Youth Services Bureau
Washington, DC 20447