

# Supportive Housing for Youth

A background of the issues in the design and development of  
supportive housing for homeless youth



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## INTRODUCTION

In the late 1990's, Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) began to hear from housing developers and service providers of the need for supportive housing for youth aging out of the foster care system, as well as runaway and homeless youth/young adults. This report provides an initial assessment of the scope and breadth of the needs of homeless and at-risk youth, and highlights several promising residential program models. It concludes with some preliminary systems change recommendations.

This preliminary exploration is based primarily on conversations and visits with youth providers in five markets: New York City, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Los Angeles, New Jersey, and the United Kingdom. Though literature from other localities has been reviewed, this work was not meant as a complete national survey. Rather, the research presented here is background to the major issues facing some young adults today, and some innovative programs models that have been developed to address their needs.

In April of 2000, CSH, with Common Ground Community, sponsored a trip to the United Kingdom to learn more about *Foyer*, a well-established European model that integrates employment, housing and support services for homeless and at-risk youth. Interest in the model stems from its promise as an innovative solution to meeting the needs of disadvantaged young people in the United States who are ill-equipped for the challenges of independent living. Participants in the trip included City officials from the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS), and the NYC Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in addition to experienced child welfare and supportive housing providers.

Serving youth requires innovative project design, new sources of funding, and methods of service delivery and policy development that is different from the supportive housing projects for singles that CSH has previously developed. CSH is now facilitating efforts by experienced providers that grow out of their current, successful supportive housing programs. This report serves as a starting point as CSH seeds and evaluates models of supportive housing for youth – embarking on an additional population for CSH.

The process of identifying and patching together financing for supportive housing for youth is a challenge. It requires forging new relationships with youth development providers; government entities that have traditionally funded youth; and generating new interest among government entities that have not traditionally funded youth. As CSH has learned from experience, it makes sense to direct initial energies toward states and localities where policy coordination and a desire for program coherence already exist among the key government agencies.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report serves as an overview of youth homelessness in America today, laying the groundwork for the Corporation for Supportive Housing's (CSH) continued venture into supportive housing for older adolescents and young adults who are either homeless or at-risk of homelessness and of a lifetime dependence on government.

Perhaps the overriding reason that policy makers and government officials are paying attention to what some refer to as an "epidemic" of homelessness among America's youth is the recognition of the enormous burden it places on our society. Research findings indicating increasingly poor outcomes in adulthood for both youth in foster care and street homeless youth are spurring local government to action.

In addition to family issues and the myriad other factors associated with youth homelessness, there are systemic reasons that otherwise functional developmentally mature youth become homeless – the shortage of safe and affordable housing. For runaway, street homeless, and older foster care youth transitioning to adulthood, there is enormous pressure to achieve economic self-sufficiency in a market with little affordable housing.

Perhaps the most under-served sub-population of runaway and homeless youth are those who have run away from foster care placements. While the percentage of runaway and homeless youth who meet this criteria is difficult to assess, significant numbers of youth who arrive at shelters come directly from foster placements.<sup>1</sup> Given the turbulent nature of foster youth's lives and the significant, near impossible obstacles they are faced with, the expectation that such youth will "age out" of the system successfully at the age of 18 or 19 is not realistic.

Ending federal financial support for young people in foster care at the critical age when they are transitioning from youth to independence is perhaps one of the system's primary failures. No longer meeting the age requirements for foster care, the youth face the transition to adulthood without the support of family and often without a permanent living arrangement. Research further shows that the lack of affordable and available housing becomes the primary barrier to completing education, securing and maintaining employment, accessing health care and, in short, making a successful transition to adulthood.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to homelessness, experts in the field emphasize that foster care youth with a discharge goal of independent living are particularly at risk of incarceration, dependence on public assistance and out-of-wedlock births and victimization.<sup>3</sup>

Discussions with youth advocates and providers in New York, Minnesota, New Jersey, and California confirm what is indicated in the literature – homeless youth, regardless of experiences in foster care, the juvenile justice system, or on the streets, respond positively to support services attached to safe residential settings. Based on the positive impact that supportive housing has

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<sup>1</sup> National Association of Social Workers, *Helping Vulnerable Youths: Runaway and Homeless Adolescents in the United States* (Washington, DC: NASW Press, 1992). See National Network for Youth Website, February 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> "Youth Leaving Foster Care System with Few Skills or Resources," *New York Times*, 28 March 2000, sec A1.

had for adults with similar needs and histories, it follows that housing linked with services would be an effective model for the needs of older youth/young adults.

While some programs do exist to provide needed support for both youth who age out of foster care and older runaway and homeless youth, they are drastically under-funded and limited in scope. Many states still do not have transitional living programs (TLPs) and/or Supported Independent Living Programs (SILPs); almost all the programs that exist are short term. Moreover, the programs are non-existent for those over 21 years of age, and young adults with psychiatric disabilities fall through the cracks between the youth and adult systems.

Awareness of the difficult issues facing this subset of young adults must be raised among legislators and the general public alike. Most urgently, additional funding is necessary to adequately address this growing problem. These additional funds should not be seen as adding costs to government and the taxpayers. They should be seen as an investment in the youth of today; the payoff will come a few years later, in the context of reduced service needs and costs when they become adults. Only through greater awareness will the necessary legislative, programmatic, and funding changes be made.

Other changes will also enhance services to this population. These changes include coordination of government funding streams and cross-agency coordination among those that serve this population. Together, increased funding and changes in the existing systems are keys to improving services and reducing the risk of homeless and future dependence on government supports.

## I. THE NEED FOR YOUTH SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

For at least three decades, youth providers and advocates across the country have been speaking out about the crisis among our nation's youth; yet, paradoxically, older youth and young adults remain among the nation's most under-served populations. Recent private and government initiatives in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New Jersey, and New York draw attention to the plight of at-risk older youth who face multiple barriers to becoming self-sufficient and productive adults. Perhaps the overriding reason that policy makers and government officials are paying attention to what some refer to as an "epidemic" of homelessness among America's youth is the recognition of the enormous burden it places on our society. Research findings indicate increasingly poor outcomes for both youth in foster care and street homeless youth when they become adults. The New York City coalition responsible for coordinating the Continuum of Care application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) identified homeless youth as a high priority group, for the first time, in 1999.

*Young adults from "normal" families are not able to move out on their own due to the high cost of housing and difficulty finding jobs that pay enough.*

M. Kroner, *Housing Options for Independent Living Youth* (Washington, DC: CWLA Press, 1999).

### Why Are Youth Homeless?

There is no single cause for youth homelessness. An examination of *who* homeless youth are requires an understanding of the multiple and complex reasons for their plight. A study of homeless youth in New Jersey conducted by The Garden State Coalition for Youth and Family Concerns identified twenty-six potential reasons youth become homeless. Some of the reasons are those typically attributed to a youth becoming homeless – the youth reports that he/she has run away, or has been thrown out of the home by his/her parents. Less well-known reasons identified include recent release from prison, juvenile detention, or leaving foster care placements.<sup>4</sup>

A review of the literature reveals that a general sense of frustration in youth/parent relationships underlies the reasons many youths leave home. A difficult home life, which can manifest itself in many ways, creates a tense and often intolerable parent-child relationship for the youth and is one of the primary factors correlated with youth homelessness. Physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, alcoholism, substance abuse and parental disapproval of youth sexual/gender identity are some, but not all of, the reasons that youth leave home. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families reports that approximately 66 percent of the youth that run away seek assistance from youth shelters because of problems with parental relationships.

*For runaway, street homeless and older foster care youth transitioning to adulthood there is enormous pressure to achieve economic self-sufficiency in a market with little affordable housing.*

M. Kroner, *Housing Options for Independent Living Youth* (Washington, DC: CWLA Press, 1999).

In addition to family issues and the myriad other factors associated with youth homelessness, there is another practical reason that functional,

<sup>4</sup> D. Derryck, Research report initiated by the Garden State Coalition for Youth and Family Concerns, Inc. and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Newark, NJ: August 1999).

mature youth become homeless – the shortage of safe and affordable housing. Runaway, street homeless and older foster care youth transitioning to adulthood feel an enormous pressure to achieve economic self-sufficiency in a market with little affordable housing. Mark Kroner, well-known youth development professional and author, notes that nearly 22 million adult children live with one or both parents:

“Young adults from “normal” families are not able to move out on their own due to the high cost of housing and difficulty finding jobs that pay enough. [Older adolescents] who run away from dysfunctional family situations or “age out” of the foster care system face these challenges alone. Unlike most of us, they do not have a parent or a guardian to buffer their experiences as adults-in-transition.”<sup>5</sup>

Federal funds and, in some areas, state money exists to fund programs for runaway and homeless youth (see “Funding and Legislation”). Non-profit providers, though, report that they are only meeting the needs of a small minority of runaway, homeless, and precariously housed youth despite youth funding programs. The primary challenge to youth transitioning from homelessness and street survival to gainful employment and self-sufficiency is the short supply of permanent and transitional housing. “Adolescents who have left untenable family situations adapt to street life with its familiar chaos, unpredictability, and violence. The longer a youth is on the streets, the more entrenched in street life he or she becomes. To obtain money, food, or a place to stay homeless adolescents often resort to such extreme measures as panhandling, theft, drug sales, and prostitution.”<sup>6</sup>

## **Runaway and Homeless Youth: Characteristics and Trends**

Estimates on runaway and homeless youth in America vary widely – ranging from 500,000 to 1.3 million.<sup>7</sup> Youth advocates and providers nationwide contend that the numbers of runaway, homeless and at-risk youth increases each year and far exceeds the estimates that are currently available.<sup>8</sup>

This vast undercounting of homeless youth exists because many youth do not seek emergency shelter out of fear of being returned to the foster care system or home. They are treated as

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<sup>5</sup> M. Kroner, *Housing Options for Independent Living Youth* (Washington, DC: CWLA Press, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> M. Davis and A. Vander Stoep, *The Transition to Adulthood Among Adolescents Who Have Serious Emotional Disturbance* (Delmar, NY: National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness, Policy Research Associates, Inc., April 1996).

<sup>7</sup> See both National Network for Youth website, *Runaway and Homeless Youth RHYA Appropriations*, and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) website, Family and Youth Service Bureau (FYSB).

<sup>8</sup> The standard instrument recommended by HUD to count the homeless is not designed to count the numbers of runaway and homeless youth who typically do not utilize shelters, soup kitchens, and adult service centers. (see Derryck, D. Research report initiated by the Garden State Coalition for Youth and Family Concerns, Inc. and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Newark, NJ: August 1999.). For example, in New York City, estimates on the number of runaway and homeless youth vary widely and, according to the source, number between 5,000 and 20,000. However, the consensus among youth providers and advocates is that the actual number of runaway and homeless youth is closer to 15,000 - 20,000. Michael Clatts of the WNYC *Series on Homeless Youth*, in a report for New York City, estimated that approximately 15,000 youth in NYC are homeless; the Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services also stand by this number.

“status offenders.”<sup>9</sup> If a minor (youth under 18 years old) runs away from foster care and seeks assistance from a shelter/drop in center, the provider is required by law to report the youth to child welfare authorities within 72 hours. While runaway and homeless youth providers attempt to collaborate with child welfare authorities in the best interest of the youth, their mandatory reporting requirements actually discourage many youth from seeking crisis shelter. Failed by the foster care system, these youth often seek refuge in the streets.

Nationwide studies of homeless youth show that most of the older youth/young adults living on the streets and/or utilizing homeless services are aged 13 or older. Studies also indicate that homeless youth are disproportionately of racial or ethnic minority, have histories of residential instability and are more often from low-income families.<sup>10</sup>

Local studies of homeless youth show that gender representation varies depending on the source and age of the sample. In general, samples from shelters suggest either even numbers of male and female homeless or more females, while samples of street youth or older youth tend to include more males.<sup>11</sup> In addition, demographic profiles of homeless youth nationwide indicate that homeless youth and those at risk of being homeless tend to be from the immediate geographic area.<sup>12</sup>

Young people who have run away from foster care placements are perhaps the most underserved subpopulation of runaway and homeless youth. While the percentage of runaway and homeless youth who meet this criteria is difficult to assess, a survey conducted for the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) reported that more than one in five youth who arrived at

*A study of homeless youth in America, conducted by Wilder Research Center in Minnesota, echoes studies of homeless youth in Europe. Both studies found that youth most at risk:*

- *spent much of their childhood in institutional care*
- *had unhappy memories of family life, often because of abuse or neglect*
- *had educational experiences that left them frustrated with school and often labeled as underachievers*
- *had more experience with illegal drugs and alcohol than their peers*
- *more often came from racial or ethnic minorities, and*
- *attempted suicide more often than peers who had housing.*<sup>13 14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> A status offender is a minor who has committed an act that would not be an offense if he/she were an adult. Many states still require that young people obtain a court order or parental permission before they can seek housing in a crisis. States that treat runaway and homeless youth as status offenders permit courts to mandate children into shelters, but few of them allow children simply to walk in the door and receive temporary services on their own. (Covenant House New Jersey, the Youth Advocacy Center, Report on *The Runaway and Homeless Youth Law Project*, 1999, pp. 6–8). In 1999, the Youth Advocacy Center challenged New Jersey’s definition of runaway youth as status offenders. The Center is currently playing a critical role in lobbying to revise the law and establish the New Jersey Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. For more information, contact Kevin Ryan, Director of Youth Advocacy, Covenant House of New Jersey.

<sup>10</sup> Robertson et. al in D. Derryck, Research report initiated by the Garden State Coalition for Youth and Family Concerns, Inc. and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Newark, NJ: August 1999).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, *Summary – Minnesota Statewide Survey of Person Without Permanent Shelter*, vol. 2 of *Unaccompanied Youth* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Wilder Research Center, July 1998).

<sup>14</sup> C. Parmentier, “Homeless Young People: The Tip of the Iceberg,” *Homeless in Europe* 3 (1998): 4-5.

shelters came directly from foster care and that more than one in four had been in foster care the previous year.<sup>15</sup>

The years of deprivation and trauma experienced by the majority of runaway and homeless youth – in the home, in failed foster care placements, and on the streets – compound their dire situation. Sixty to eighty percent of adolescents found in shelters and in transitional living facilities have been physically or sexually abused by their parents or guardians. Another 20 percent have experienced years of family violence.<sup>16</sup> As a result, the majority of runaway and street homeless youth are in need of extensive mental health and support services.

## Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance

Youth with serious emotional disturbance (SED) in transition to adulthood are a particularly high-risk population. While there is no uniform definition of youth with serious emotional disturbance, all federal definitions include “the condition of a *diagnosable mental illness* that has led to functional impairment in various important domains of life for children and adolescents.”<sup>17</sup> Although statistics state that five to ten percent of all American children have serious mental health disorders,<sup>18</sup> many disorders cannot be diagnosed until adulthood.

Within youth with serious emotional disturbance, a subgroup between the ages of 16 and 25 face a significant period of developmental and institutional transition, identified hereafter as “transitional youth.”<sup>19</sup> In a report prepared for the National Resource Center of Homelessness and Mental Illness, the authors define “transitional youth” as those youth who, “by virtue of maturation, policy, or law, are entering young adulthood, and who, by official or practical definitions, are considered to have had serious emotional disturbance before the age of 18.”<sup>20</sup>

To become successful adults, transitional youth must master not only the usual developmental tasks of adolescence, but also the added coping skills needed to counter their emotional disturbance. Additionally, they must make the transition from a system of children’s services to the adult mental health and social service systems. Because neither the child nor adult service systems claim responsibility for helping these children move from one system to the other, the children make the transition to adulthood alone and un-served. They remain largely “unclaimed” – falling through the cracks that exist between the child and adult service systems.<sup>21 22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> National Association of Social Workers, *Helping Vulnerable Youths: Runaway and Homeless Adolescents in the United States* (Washington, DC: NASW Press, 1992). See National Network for Youth Website (February 2000).

<sup>16</sup> National Network for Youth website (<http://www.nn4youth.org>), August 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> C. Goldberg, “Children Trapped by Gaps in Treatment of Mental Illness,” *New York Times* 9 July 2001.

<sup>19</sup> M. Davis and A. Vander Stoep, “The Transition to Adulthood for Youth Who Have Serious Emotional Disturbance: Developmental Transition and Young Adult Outcomes,” reprinted from *Journal of Mental Health Administration* 24 (1997).

<sup>20</sup> M. Davis and A. Vander Stoep, *The Transition to Adulthood Among Adolescents Who Have Serious Emotional Disturbance* (Delmar, NY: The National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness, Policy Research Associates, Inc., April 1996).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> C. Goldberg.

Fledgling efforts to develop housing for this population have been met with a variety of challenges, including the reluctance of both the mental health system and the child welfare system to claim these youth as their responsibility;<sup>23</sup> poor coordination and transfer of services from the youth to adult programs; and the inappropriateness of serving 18-year olds in a traditional mental health setting of much older adults. In other instances, they languish in children's psychiatric hospitals, ready to leave but unable to do so because they are still on a waiting list for outside treatment programs.

Rigid funding streams, stringent eligibility criteria, and practices that fail to recognize the needs of the youth population perpetuate the discontinuity of services. The funding streams fail to recognize the "tremendous overlap of system utilization among youth with serious emotional disturbance"<sup>24</sup> – such as the estimated 150,000 delinquent youth with SED that are detained by the juvenile justice system each year.<sup>25</sup>

Research confirms that these youngsters are particularly vulnerable to poverty, disease, and homelessness.<sup>26</sup> While there are no exact statistics on the number of transitional youth, it is estimated that between one and three million adolescent youth have SED.<sup>27</sup> Little research has been done to quantify the number of foster care youth with mental illness and emotional problems who become homeless; however, studies have shown that at least one third of youth with serious emotional disturbance in both the mental health and foster care system become homeless.<sup>28</sup>

## **The Foster Care System and Homelessness**

The "systems" for serving youth in foster care are fragmented. Four different Executive Branch agencies and five committees in the House of Representatives have responsibility for child welfare. Despite the federal government's efforts to improve children's welfare since the early 1900s, the number of youth in foster care continues to rise at an alarming rate, with more than 560,000 children and youth in foster care nationwide in 1998, more than double the number in 1983.<sup>29</sup> Youth who run away from foster care continue to be among the most under-served of homeless young people.

While the percentage of runaway and homeless youth who meet this criteria is difficult to assess, one survey reported that more than one in five youth who arrived at shelters came directly from

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<sup>23</sup> M. Davis and A. Vander Stoep, *The Transition to Adulthood Among Adolescents Who Have Serious Emotional Disturbance* (Delmar, NY: The National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness, Policy Research Associates, Inc., April 1996).

<sup>24</sup> M. Davis and A. Vander Stoep.

<sup>25</sup> Trupin et al., (1988) in M. Davis and A. Vander Stoep.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> M. Davis and A. Vander Stoep, "The Transition to Adulthood for Youth Who Have Serious Emotional Disturbance: Developmental Transition and Young Adult Outcomes", reprinted from *Journal of Mental Health Administration* 24 (1997).

<sup>28</sup> While few studies have been published that specifically examine the outcomes of youth in the foster care and mental health systems that become homeless, the correlation has been documented (see M. Davis and A. Vander Stoep for a more complete examination of the literature).

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, ACF Data and Statistics, Children in Foster Care 1983-1998 at [www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/fc.htm](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/fc.htm) on 4/25/02.

foster care and that more than one in four had been in foster care the previous year.<sup>30</sup> A 1999 report of several states by the General Accounting Office (GAO) indicated that 25-40 percent of foster care youth become homeless.<sup>31</sup> A Chicago study found that 96 percent of homeless youth interviewed reported that they had been wards of the child welfare system.<sup>32</sup> Some New York City youth providers report that over fifty percent of youth who utilize homeless drop-in centers and outreach services have spent some amount of time in foster care.<sup>33</sup> A Minnesota study found that 38.6% of homeless adults reported childhood placement in foster care. Only 2% of the general population reports having ever been in foster care.<sup>34</sup>

Case Study:

*Yvonne first ran away from the North Carolina kinship foster care home of her aunt at age 14. She had entered the system after her mother's death in a car accident. Although she resided with relatives, there was little concern for her; her aunt was too busy raising her own four children, who resented another child in the home.*

*Landing in NYC's Port Authority Bus Terminal with only \$23 in hand, she was soon spotted by police, who turned her over to the NYC child welfare system. Yvonne was returned to North Carolina. Two years and three run away episodes later, Yvonne convinced the child welfare system to allow her to remain in New York where she entered a group foster care home for girls.*

*One week after her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, Yvonne's caseworker came to the home and told her that she was too old to be there anymore. The caseworker gave her cab fare and an address to a women's shelter.*

In addition to homelessness, experts in the field emphasize that youth in foster care with a discharge goal of independent living are particularly at risk of incarceration, dependence on public assistance, out-of-wedlock births and victimization.<sup>35</sup> Studies of 16 to 25-year old youth who aged out of foster care found that 40-50 percent had not completed high school, 20-40 percent had been arrested or incarcerated, 40-60 percent of the women had been pregnant or given birth, and between 15-40 percent received welfare or some form of public assistance.<sup>36</sup>

In 1995, The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) issued a groundbreaking report highlighting the connection between foster care and homelessness. NAEH findings show that a disproportionate number of homeless adults nationwide had experienced childhood trauma, abuse, and foster care placement. Their research conducted between 1987 and 1989 on homeless adults in shelter systems across the nation revealed that anywhere between 10 and 40 percent of the adult homeless population had a history of foster care. In some cases, this was four to seven

<sup>30</sup> National Association of Social Workers, *Helping Vulnerable Youths: Runaway and Homeless Adolescents in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: NASW Press, 1992). See National Network for Youth Website, February 2000.

<sup>31</sup> C.M. Fagnoni, "Foster Care: Challenges in Helping Youths Live Independently," Testimony before the Subcommittee on Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives (United States General Accounting Office, May 13, 1999).

<sup>32</sup> *Alone After Dark: A Survey of Homeless Youth in Chicago* (Chicago: Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, 1991). See National Network for Youth Website, February 2000.

<sup>33</sup> Carl Siciliano, Director of SafeSpace (a.k.a., the Center for Children and Families) estimates that of the thousands of youth his program services each year, the majority of them have spent some amount of time in foster care; most of them left the system prior to legal emancipation.

<sup>34</sup> Nan P. Roman and Phyllis Wolfe, *Web of Failure: The Relationship Between Foster Care and Homelessness*, (National Alliance to End Homelessness, April 1995) citing I. Piliavin, R. Matsueda, M. Sosin and H. Westerfelt, "The Duration of Homeless Careers: An Exploratory Study," *Social Science Review* (1990).

<sup>35</sup> "Youth Leaving Foster Care System with Few Skills or Resources," *New York Times* 28 March 2000, sec A1.

<sup>36</sup> C.M. Fagnoni, "Foster Care: Challenges in Helping Youths Live Independently," Testimony before the Subcommittee on Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives (U.S. General Accounting Office, May 13, 1999).

times greater than the general population's foster care rate.<sup>37</sup> Many researchers also believe that childhood foster care experiences cause longer and more difficult periods of homelessness.<sup>38</sup>

Speaking to the increasing number of children who linger in foster care for as long as ten years and the rise in reports of children who are abused, neglected and even die in care, *TIME* magazine refers to "America's generation of lost children, forsaken and forgotten.... Subject to the system's bureaucratic foul-ups and carelessness... [and] held hostage to abuse and neglect."<sup>39</sup> The article points out that the incidence of neglect and physical and sexual abuse of children in foster care may be significantly higher than the incidence in the general population. With the number of children needing foster care exceeding the number of families available to care for them, more and more children are placed in "multiple placements," or in institutions rather than in family settings.

Given the turbulent nature of foster youth's lives and the significant obstacles they face, the expectation that they will "age out" of the system successfully at the age of 18 or 19 is not realistic. And, as studies and statistics have clearly shown, many of them *do not*.<sup>40</sup> It is perhaps one of the system's primary failures that federal financial support for young people in foster care ends at an age of critical transition from youth to independence (ages 18-21, variable by state). No longer meeting the age requirements for foster care, these youth face the transition to adulthood without the support of family and often without a permanent living arrangement. Research repeatedly shows that the lack of affordable and available housing becomes the primary barrier to completing education, securing and maintaining employment, accessing health care and, in short, making a successful transition to adulthood.<sup>41</sup>

Until recently, many youth who reached the legal age for emancipation from foster care had no help making the transition from foster care to independent living. "Somebody would show up on the doorstep of their foster care homes and tell them to pack their belongings in a plastic bag."<sup>42</sup> While the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act,<sup>43</sup> which provides funds for independent living services, is a step in the right direction, housing options for youth aging out of care are still severely limited. "So many kids are growing up in foster care that social workers are beginning to worry about how they will survive after leaving the state's care."<sup>44</sup> The need for some form of transitional assistance upon emancipation from foster care seems clear.

Experts concur that the number of homeless youth who "age out" of the foster care and juvenile justice system, and those who runaway from foster placements to become homeless, is increasing

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<sup>37</sup> Nan Roman and Phyllis Wolfe, *Web of Failure: The Relationship Between Foster Care and Homelessness* (National Alliance To End Homelessness, April 1995).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Roche, T., "The Shame of Foster Care," *TIME* 13 November 2000.

<sup>40</sup> C. Siggins, "Foster Care Youth in Transition to Independent Living," Testimony (California: 1998).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Nan Roman and Phyllis Wolfe.

<sup>43</sup> The Chafee Foster Care Independent Act was signed into law in 1999 and increased the funds earmarked to support states in providing Independent Living services to youth to \$140 million. For the first time, a percentage of the funds were allocated specifically for youth ages 18 to 21 aging out of foster care.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

at a rapid rate.<sup>45</sup> Each year an estimated 20,000–35,000 young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 are discharged from the foster care system alone.<sup>46</sup>

Although some states require a six-month trial discharge period for all youth preparing for independent living, foster care agencies report that sufficient resources do not currently exist to provide appropriate aftercare services. The age at which the foster care system is no longer responsible for youth varies by state, from age 18 to 21. In New York, foster care agencies are required to provide supervision to young people who have aged out of the foster care system until the age of 21, contingent upon the youths' consent.<sup>47</sup> This legal provision, however, is rarely enforced. In practice, any youth that does not contact the foster care agency for a period of six months is deemed discharged to independent living and follow-up services typically end.<sup>48</sup>

Further, the connection between foster care and homelessness is viewed widely to be an intergenerational problem. Studies have found that homeless parents who had grown up in foster care were almost twice as likely as parents with no such history to see their own children placed into the foster care system<sup>49</sup> or become homeless<sup>50</sup>. According to the study, in New York City, “27 percent of homeless parents with a history of foster care had children in foster care versus 15 percent of homeless parents with no such history.”<sup>51</sup> The developmental consequences for children in such families are so harsh that they are highly likely to be continued users of these systems after they become adults. The costs of inadequate care are therefore not just duplicated, but compounded.

## **Defining a Population: System vs. Non-System Youth**

Clearly, youth become homeless for a variety of reasons and, as such, are difficult to define as one population. For institutional, legal and funding purposes, however, two main paths or categories of homeless youth emerge. They can be broadly defined as *system youth* and *non-system youth*. There are significant funding implications for each. System and non-system youth are defined as:

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<sup>45</sup> For a review of nationwide studies documenting outcomes of emancipating foster care youth see: C.M. Fagnoni, “Foster Care: Challenges in Helping Youths Live Independently,” Testimony before the Subcommittee on Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives (United States General Accounting Office, May 13, 1999). The studies in the 1999 GAO report include: a 1991 study conducted by Westat, Inc. surveying former foster care youth in eight states, a study of former foster youth in Wisconsin conducted by Courtney and Piliavin in 1998, and a 1990 study by Barth of former foster youth in San Francisco. For related outcomes on runaway and homeless youth see: National Network for Youth website, Runaway and Homeless Youth and RHYA Appropriations (2000).

<sup>46</sup> M. Kroner, *Housing Options for Independent Living Programs* (Washington, DC: CWLA Press, 1999).

<sup>47</sup> Citizens' Committee for Children (CCC) of New York Inc., *Can They Make It On Their Own? Aging Out of Foster Care – A Report on New York City's Independent Living Program* (January 2000).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Nan Roman and Phyllis Wolfe, *Web of Failure: The Connection Between Foster Care and Homelessness* (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 1995).

<sup>50</sup> Ellen Hart Shegos, *Family Matters: A Guide to Developing Family Supportive Housing*, prepared for the Corporation for Supportive Housing, citing “Minnesota Statewide Survey of Persons Without Permanent Shelter,” *Adults and Their Children 1* (St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research Center, June 1998).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

**(1) System youth:** Includes youth who are utilizing housing services and resources set up to aid those who are deemed eligible by the state. Examples include youth who have been placed in state custody because they have been neglected or abused, have engaged in criminal behavior, or are suffering from chronic health or mental health problems. These systems are generally thought of as:

- (a) The child welfare/foster care system
- (b) The residential treatment system for youth with chronic health or mental health disabilities (sometimes within foster care system).
- (c) The juvenile justice system<sup>52</sup>

**(2) Non-system youth:** Includes runaway and currently homeless youth living outside of mainstream systems who are utilizing drop-in centers/shelters, are precariously housed (often referred to as “couch surfers”), are runaways or youth that are “thrown away” or are otherwise neglected by their parents to the point of homelessness, and “street youth” who live outdoors and generally survive via the street economy. Overall, non-system youth are defined as homeless because they have voluntarily left their parents’ custody.

While experts who work with youth agree that the system and non-system populations have experienced equivalent degrees of trauma and have essentially the same needs, they note differences in the ways these sub-populations of homeless youth respond to services. For example, youth raised in institutions (foster care, juvenile justice system, and mental health residential treatment) are entitled to state funds and resources and, as a result, often come to expect continued assistance.

*... for the purposes of designing a supportive housing program, it is important to recognize that all homeless youth – regardless of experiences within or outside of mainstream systems – share many of the same concrete and emotional needs and need similar services and supports.<sup>53</sup>*

By comparison, youth who leave or runaway from home must learn how to survive by whatever means possible. For example, a 19-year old female who ran away from home at the age of 16 and now divides her time between the streets and the adult shelter system has developed survival skills where drug sale, stealing, and survival sex (prostitution) are the norm. These survival skills are not necessarily possessed by a female of the same age who has been forced out of her apartment by an angry boyfriend just six months after her “trial discharge” from foster care to “independent living.”

In spite of the differences between the two groups, Dr. Gary Mallon, the founder and Executive Director of Green Chimneys Independent Living Programs, notes that for the purposes of designing a supportive housing program, it is important to recognize that all homeless youth – regardless of experiences within or outside of mainstream systems – have many of the same concrete and emotional needs and need similar services and supports.<sup>53</sup> Many youth advocates in New York echo this sentiment

<sup>52</sup> For the purposes of this paper, use of the term “system youth” shall not refer to youth in the juvenile justice system. Issues relating to the needs of this population require additional research that goes beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>53</sup> Dr. Gary Mallon, the founding Director of Green Chimneys, a New York City provider of transitional housing to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender homeless and at-risk youth/young adults, has noted that New York City-funded Supervised Independent Living Programs (SILPs) and federally-funded Transitional Living Programs (TLPs)

and point out that all homeless youth/young adults present concrete and psychological needs and developmental deficits that require the kind of developmental experience that supportive housing programs provide. While the different sub-populations of homeless youth require different funding and program-specific implementation, they do not necessarily need different overall program policy and design.

Currently, services for “system” and “non-system” youth are funded in dissimilar ways. System youth are eligible for services and benefits through federally funded state administered child welfare programs (i.e., Title IV-E Funds), at least until the age of 21. As a result of parental abuse or neglect, the state has become the custodian of such youth until they are either reunified with their parents, adopted, or they “age out” of the system.

Non-system youth who have “voluntarily” left their families are ineligible to receive these mainstream funds. Because most states do not allow those under 18 years of age to walk in and receive temporary services on their own, runaway and homeless youth are often on the streets without access to services. In the minority of states that empower young people to seek crisis shelter, only minimal funding has been established for the homeless youth that exist outside the system.

To illustrate this difference, New York City’s Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) contracts with non-profit child welfare agencies to operate licensed Supervised Independent Living Programs (SILPs) for single youth between the ages of 18 and 21 who are in foster care. At the same time, an array of youth providers receive Federal and/or State Runaway Homeless Youth (RHY) funds to run licensed Transitional Living Programs (TLP) for runaway and street homeless youth between the ages of 16 and 21 who are not likely to reunify with their parents.

One such provider, Green Chimneys, runs both TLPs and SILPs for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth. Their program for youth aging out of foster care is funded through a SILP contract with ACS; their program for self-referred street homeless and runaway youth is funded as a TLP through Federal and State funds targeting runaway and homeless youth. While Green Chimneys’ SILP and TLP programs are scattered-site transitional independent living programs that are programmatically identical, each program has its own budget, eligibility and licensing requirements, and stringent reporting requirements.

## **Service Needs**

The conclusion is clear: homeless youth, regardless of experience in foster care or life on the streets, have many of the same needs and must confront similar challenges as they face the transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency. They need to feel safe and nurtured. In light of these findings, effective models of supportive housing for homeless and at risk youth must include the following:

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are very similar in terms of service design and program expectations. SILPS and TLPs are both transitional residential independent living programs serving youth/young adults up to the age of 21. The primary difference between the two programs is that they are funded by different government entities. For a more detailed description of SILPs and TLPs, see sections of this report entitled: “Funding and Legislation” and “Overview of Existing Models: Transitional Independent Living Programs (ILPs).”

- Safe and affordable housing
- A relationship with at least one responsible trustworthy adult (ideally a mentor)
- Consistent emotional support
- An opportunity to learn and practice independent living skills (i.e., grooming, money management, shopping, cooking, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, parenting skills, employment skills)
- Career counseling and guidance
- Continuing education
- Job-readiness training and occupational skills development
- Medical and dental care
- Access to mental health services (therapy, psychiatric treatment, substance abuse treatment)

Discussions with youth advocates and providers in New York, Minnesota, New Jersey, and California confirm that, homeless youth, regardless of experiences in foster care, the juvenile justice system, or on the streets respond positively to support services attached to safe residential settings. Based on the impact of supportive housing for adults with similar needs and histories, it follows that supportive housing adapted for the needs of older youth/young adults would be an effective model.

## II. Funding and Legislation

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This section provides an overview of federal legislation that affects the policies and programs currently in place for runaway and homeless youth (non-system) as well as youth aging out of the child welfare system and addresses several major pieces of legislation. It concludes with a discussion of funding challenges.

### FUNDING FOR SERVICES

#### Runaway and Homeless Youth

Because homeless youth are vastly undercounted in estimates of the homeless nationwide, they do not command the kinds of service dollars they so desperately need. In New York City, for example, there are less than 400 emergency shelter and transitional beds for homeless and runaway youth and only one permanent supportive housing provider that targets older youth, for an estimated 15,000 homeless youth.

Recognition at the national policy level of youth homelessness came in 1974 with the passage of *The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act* (RHYA). Enacted under the *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974*, the RHYA was amended many times in an effort to amplify the scope of the services it provides. In 1999, it was amended once again under *The Missing Exploited and Runaway Children and Protection Act of 1999* (Public Law 106-71).<sup>54</sup> RHYA funds are appropriated under the U.S. Health and Human Services Administration (HHS) and administered by the Family Youth and Services Bureau (FYSB).

RHYA's language and intent promotes family reunification whenever possible. As a result, the programs funded under RHYA provide only temporary shelter and/or immediate services to youth in crisis until reunification can occur. Federal regulations specify that services must be delivered outside of mainstream systems (i.e., law enforcement, child welfare, mental health and juvenile justice systems) and ultimately work toward the goal of family reunification. Independent living and permanent housing on their own are not goals of RHYA. Specifically, the goals of RHYA programs are to:

- Alleviate problems of runaway and homeless youth
- Reunite youth with family and encourage resolution of intra-family problems
- Strengthen family relationships and encourage stable living environment for youth
- Help youth decide on constructive course of action

*The stated goal of the RHYA legislation is "family reunification," therefore limiting the resources available for housing and support services for youth who will not be reunified with parents. Youth advocacy groups have been lobbying for years to change the legislation to reflect the needs of the homeless youth that have no home to which to return.*

RHYA see *National Network for Youth* ([www.nn4youth.org](http://www.nn4youth.org)) or *Empire State Coalition for Youth and Family Concerns* ([www.empirestatecoalition.org](http://www.empirestatecoalition.org)).

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<sup>54</sup> The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) of 1974 was the primary impetus behind all federal funding for the runaway and homeless youth population. Youth advocates nationwide continue to advocate for increased funding and regulatory changes. For a full discussion of the RHYA see *National Network for Youth* ([www.nn4youth.org](http://www.nn4youth.org)) or *Empire State Coalition for Youth and Family Services* ([www.empirestatecoalition.org](http://www.empirestatecoalition.org)).

RHYA funds three primary programs: Youth Centers (also referred to as the Basic Center Program), Street Outreach, and the Transitional Living Program:

- **Youth Center Program (Basic Centers)** – Provides outreach, clothing, food, crisis intervention, individual counseling, shelter, referral services and aftercare to runaway and homeless youth until the age of 18. Federal guidelines specify that shelter can be provided for up to 15 days; extensions are essentially unlimited, but must be requested in writing and documented in case records.
- **Street Outreach Program (a.k.a.: Sexual Abuse Prevention Program)** – First authorized in the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 as an amendment to the RHYA; funds street outreach (street-based education, crisis intervention, engagement techniques) to runaway, homeless and street youth who are subjected to or are at risk of sexual abuse, prostitution, and sexual exploitation.
- **Transitional Living Program (TLP)** – Helps older, homeless youth achieve self-sufficiency and avoid long-term dependency on social services. TLPs provide shelter, skill building, and support services to homeless youth ages 16–21 in a structured environment. Youth live in apartments (3-5 per apartment) throughout the community. TLPs are time-limited (18-months) because their intention is to prepare youth to move on to independence. Youth are referred here when family reunification does not seem likely. Competitive funds are awarded to grantees directly by the federal government (FYSB). The number of applications exceeds resources and many local service providers do not receive funding.

Funds for the three program areas above are awarded directly to community-based, not-for-profits who are experienced providers of services to runaway, throwaway and street homeless youth. Unfortunately, the funds available at the national level are insufficient to address the needs of runaway and homeless youth throughout the United States. While states have the discretion to establish their own funding streams, many states have not yet done so.

For the states that do provide additional funding, there are often other barriers to accessing the funds. For example, two years after the RHYA was passed, New York State created its own RHYA funding stream requiring local youth bureaus to provide a 40 percent match in order to access the 60 percent state contribution.

Unfortunately, many small counties do not apply for state RHYA funds because they cannot provide matching funds. New York City is more fortunate because the Department for Youth and Community Development (DYCD) provides more than the minimum 40 percent match to the agencies that are selected through an RFP process. Unfortunately, the funding cycle is every six years and the state regulations are more rigorous than the federal.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> For more information on RHYA funding cycle and regulatory considerations, contact Margo Hirsch, Executive Director, Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services, 121 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013 or [www.empirestatecoalition.org](http://www.empirestatecoalition.org).

## Foster Care Youth Discharged to Independent Living

The next significant piece of national legislation dates to 1985, with the passage of the *Independent Living Act* (ILA), signed into law in 1986 as an initiative of New York Senator Patrick Moynihan. “The impetus for this program was the realization that children who are aging out of foster care were...disproportionately homeless, unemployed, involved in the criminal justice system, and had a variety of other not good outcomes.”<sup>56</sup> The Act earmarked approximately \$70 million to support states in their efforts to provide Independent Living services to youth in their care.

National attention to the plight of youth aging out of foster care gained new momentum with the passage of the 1999 Chafee Foster Care Independence Act. Signed into law by President Clinton in late 1999, the Act increased the \$70 million to \$140 million for independent living programs. For the first time, a percentage of the funds were allocated specifically for youth ages 18 to 21 that have aged out of foster care and for room and board (The Act specifies that states may use 30 percent of their allocation towards room and board for youth ages 18-21).<sup>57</sup>

## Family Unification Program (FUP) / Section 8

Last year, HUD announced the awarding of approximately 4,000 new Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers,<sup>58</sup> which, for the first time, included a pilot set-aside of 500 Independent Living vouchers nationwide for youth aging out of foster care. The FUP Independent Living (FUP IL) vouchers provide an 18-month time-limited Section 8 voucher<sup>59</sup> for youth 18-21 years old who have left foster care at age 16 or older. In New York City, ACS will verify eligibility of youth applying for FUP IL vouchers; the New York City public housing authority (a.k.a. NYCHA) administers the FUP program.

Another promising rent subsidy for youth aging out of foster care in New York City has recently become available through the Section 8 program. Youth currently in foster care, who have a discharge goal of “independent living,” receive “Priority 2” status (within the Section 8 voucher prioritization list) for permanent, tenant-based, Section 8 vouchers. Also administered through NYCHA, these vouchers are effectively available on an “as-needed” basis to youth aging out of foster care.

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<sup>56</sup> The Policy Exchange of the Institute for Educational Leadership, *The Federal Role in Helping Youth People Transition From Foster Care* (Washington, D.C.: Conference proceedings, July 23, 1999).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> FUP is a program within Section 8 legislation and funding that has the purpose of promoting family unity. The FUP rental subsidy vouchers are earmarked for families that, due to their lack of adequate housing, are at risk of, or involved in, the child welfare system. This voucher is available for as long as the family is financially eligible. The vouchers are administered through the public housing authorities.

<sup>59</sup> Section 8 vouchers are federal housing rent subsidy vouchers for low-income families and individuals. The recipient pays 30% of their income towards the rent and the program pays the excess rent needed – up to the maximum of the Fair Market Rent (FMR) of the area. The term of the voucher varies from one to ten years, depending on the type and source.

## New Opportunities in TANF

Another potential funding opportunity has emerged under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. PRWORA changed public assistance (formerly AFDC) from an entitlement program to a block grant to the states, renamed “Temporary Assistance to Needy Families” (TANF). TANF, unlike its predecessor, AFDC, has changed from merely a cash assistance program to one with expanded goals that include assisting needy families to achieve self sufficiency; reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and promoting marriage.

Two aspects of the TANF legislation allow funding for youth supportive housing. First, under the “reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies” purpose, the federal government has allowed states broad discretion to create programs that engage those at high risk of out-of-marriage pregnancy (both males and females) in activities – be they educational, vocational, and/or recreational. Programs under this purpose are not limited by the age of participants, nor economic status (although, New York state has opted to add its own criteria, limiting eligibility to those households up to 200% of the federal poverty line). The open-age use of these funds is critical, since many of the potential existing funding sources restrict their use to youth 21 years of age or less.

The second part of the TANF legislation that may be of assistance is a little-known clause that allows children in foster care to be considered a “family of one” for the purposes of receiving TANF-funded services. In practical terms, this clause allows children who are placed with a middle-income foster care family to receive services, despite the ineligibility of the family (because of income).

Through this clause, however, youth aging out of foster care may also be eligible, depending on the state’s definition of “foster care.” The interpretation of the legislation is up to each state’s social service agencies. For example, in New York, youth can be on “trial discharge” from foster care until the age of 21. The State still considers them to be in the care of the child welfare system, although they may be living on their own. The challenge is to have the local department of social services accept the child welfare system’s definition of “a child in foster care.” New York City’s department of social services (Human Resources Administration) considers anyone over 18 and not in high school to be an “adult,” and therefore not eligible.

There are, however, limitations to TANF funding, regardless of the purpose or clause under which the program falls. Most importantly, TANF cannot be used to fund capital costs or other construction or major renovations. TANF funds may be used to pay for minor renovations to program space – generally interpreted as no more than \$5,000.

TANF regulations also make an important distinction between “services” and “assistance”; “assistance” mandates certain regulations whereas “services” do not. Any TANF funds used to provide on-going needs (such as rent or cash assistance) require that the “welfare regulations”<sup>60</sup> begin. Case management, training, tuition, etc. are considered services, not assistance, and do

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<sup>60</sup> “Welfare Regulations” is a term used to refer to three TANF regulations: the 5-year time limit of federal TANF assistance; work participation requirements; and assignment of child support payments received to the state.

not begin the welfare regulations. Note, also, that one-time rental assistance, emergency cash, etc. (up to 3 months in a 12-month period) are also considered to be services.

The New York State legislature has been supportive of funding services for youth through TANF monies. In their FY 01/ 02 budget resolution, the Assembly, at the request of the New York Program of CSH and several providers, had allocated \$5 million for services for youth and family supportive housing (\$3 million in surplus TANF funds and \$2 million in general funds). However, due to the late passage of the state budget and the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, no new programs were funded. In their FY 02/03 Budget Resolution, the Assembly again proposed using TANF funding for youth and family supportive housing. The legislative request had the support of the Governor's office. In May 2002, the state adopted a final budget that included \$2 million in TANF funding for this initiative. A Request for Proposals (RFP) is due to be released in August 2002.

Nationwide, many advocates, and state departments of social services are requesting that current flexibility of the TANF regulations continue, and that rules regarding housing and TANF become more flexible when the bill is re-authorized in 2002.<sup>61 62</sup> Changes include a request to better define "minor rehabilitation" with a specific dollar allotment. More importantly, many are requesting a change in the definition of rental subsidy to be an essential "service" (versus "assistance" as it is now defined), just as childcare and transportation are considered "services" because they are so critical to employment.

## **SHORTCOMINGS OF EXISTING LEGISLATION**

With such legislation and programs in place, what is the need for supportive housing for older homeless and at-risk youth? While these programs do, in fact, provide needed support for both youth who age out of foster care and older runaway and homeless youth, they are drastically under-funded and limited in scope.

### **Financial Shortcomings**

Despite the enactment of RHYA, Moynihan's ILA, and the Chafee legislations, resources still fall woefully short of need. In FY 2000, \$64.1 million was available through the Federal Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) to support Basic Center and Transitional Living Programs and \$15 million was available for Education and Prevention Grants to Reduce Sexual Abuse of Runaway, Homeless, and Street Youth. Due to the advocacy efforts of groups like the National Network for Youth, the FY 2001 budget allocations to these two programs were increased by \$5 million and \$15 million respectively.<sup>63</sup> Yet, in FY 2000, the FYSB received approximately 700 applications for TLP program funds, of which only 78 grantees were funded nationwide.

According to FYSB, the number of youth served by all three federal programs in 1999 was 70,000. In light of the estimated 500,000 to 1.3 million runaway and homeless youth across the nation in need of housing and support services, the number receiving services is drastically low.

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<sup>61</sup> "Hearing on TANF Work Requirements," *CLASP Update* 15, no. 4 (April 2002): 5.

<sup>62</sup> Barbara Sard, *A Housing Perspective On TANF Reauthorization And Support For Working Families* (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, March 12, 2002).

<sup>63</sup> Cassandra McKee, National Network for Youth, interview by author, New York City, February 14, 2001.

Additionally, at least a portion of the 25,000 youth who leave foster care nationwide each year because they have reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday are in need of housing services.<sup>64</sup>

Adding to the difficulty created by limited federal RHYA funding and quite small TLP funding allocations (allocations do not exceed \$200,000), many states still have no dedicated funding streams for runaway and homeless youth. Faced with a competitive application process for federal funds and lack of resources at the state level, many small counties have no shelters or support for their runaway and homeless youth population.

## **Regulatory Shortcomings**

There are also federal and state regulatory barriers to providing services. First, all RHYA programs must be licensed and regulated under the states' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse or Office of Children and Family Services. Licensing requirements present additional obstacles to application and implementation.

Although the federal government passed the RHYA to aid homeless youth, states differ in their implementation. Many states continue to treat runaway youth as status offenders: minors who have committed an act (i.e., leaving home) that would not be an offense if they were adults. In fact, "a number of states still require that young people obtain a court order or parental permission before they can seek housing in a crisis."<sup>65</sup> In addition, while some states have passed their own funding legislation, limited state funds and the required 40 percent match by counties act as a disincentive for many small counties to apply for state money.

Furthermore, the stated goal of the RHYA legislation is "family reunification," therefore limiting the resources available for housing and support services for youth who will not be reunified with parents. To combat this problem, youth advocacy groups have been lobbying for years to change the legislation to reflect the needs of the homeless youth that have no home to which to return.

In addition, the funding streams that are currently available to service the older youth/young adult population specify age limits and client characteristics that tend to fund "pieces of the young person."<sup>66</sup> For example, the federal Independent Living Program that provides funds to states for foster youth preparing to emancipate from care limits the target population to older youth between the ages of 18 to 21. Likewise, the funds available to serve runaway and homeless youth do not allow shelters and other youth providers to assist youth above the age of 21. Many providers, particularly in New York, report that the homeless youth/young adult population is changing. Providers such as SafeSpace, Green Chimneys, and Covenant House are seeing more and more homeless older youth between the ages of 21 and 24. Expanding services for those up to 25 years old needs to be a key systems change agenda item.

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<sup>64</sup> Child Welfare League of America, Inc., Press Release, October 19, 2000.

<sup>65</sup> The Youth Advocacy Center, *Report on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Law Project* (NJ: Covenant House, 1999).

<sup>66</sup> Margo Hirsch, Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services, interview by author, New York City, January 2001.

One of the most significant problems lies in the fact that no current federal youth legislation allocates money for capital expenditures. This leaves providers competing for existing funds with other populations also in need of housing.

Given the increasing numbers of homeless youth – both those who age out of the system and those who are classified as street homeless – and the limited funding available nationwide, there is a clear need for additional transitional and permanent supportive housing options for at-risk and homeless youth/young adults. The next question to be addressed is: how would such a program be financed?

## **FUNDING FOR CAPITAL AND OPERATING EXPENSES**

The focus of this report is on service strategies and funding for youth supportive housing, since capital programs, albeit needing expansion, are currently available.

In New York State, capital funds are available through the Homeless Housing and Assistance Program and the Division of Housing and Community Renewal. The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development's Supportive Housing Loan Program funds projects that can incorporate community units dedicated for young adults.

Nationally, federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits and other capital funding streams for low-income housing could also be applied to construction costs.

### III. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING MODELS

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Following is an overview of existing program models in several states and Europe that currently provide some form of supportive housing to homeless and at-risk youth/young adults with a variety of needs.

#### **Independent Living Programs (ILP)**

Throughout the country, public and private non-profit agencies are currently serving at risk and homeless youth/young adults in Independent Living Programs (ILPs). A range of housing/service models have been adapted for ILPs across the nation: residential treatment centers, shelters, boarding homes, semi-supervised apartments, SROs and transitional living programs (TLPs) for older youth. While it is beyond the scope of this report to examine the full range of residential and non-residential Independent Living Programs nationwide, the current residential ILP models that have developed strategies to prepare older youth for the transition to independent living are explored.<sup>67</sup>

Residential youth programs that define themselves as ILPs meet two criteria: they are time-limited and their purpose is to help at-risk and homeless youth negotiate a successful transition to adulthood.<sup>68</sup> Depending on the funding source, transitional ILPs generally serve one or another sub-population of homeless youth (i.e. single youth preparing to emancipate from the foster care system; homeless female youth/young adults with children; youth diagnosed with serious emotional disturbances; gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth who are aging out of the foster care system).

Primarily, it is the differences in funding, target population, number of youth served, level of supervision required, and physical design (i.e. scatter site vs. congregate) that distinguish one program from another. While Transitional Living Programs (TLPs) are recognized models of service provision that, in many ways, look like supportive housing, they have age and time limits, in addition to funding constraints that hinder their capacity to meet the needs of older youth/young adults who have already emancipated from care.

#### **Permanent or “Trans-Permanent” Supportive Housing for Youth**

A handful of youth service providers have developed innovative congregate supportive housing programs for older homeless and precariously housed youth. In such programs, youth/young adults who are ineligible for traditional Independent Living Programs (either because they are above the age of 21 or do not meet stringent admission criteria) are provided with safe, affordable housing and the range of services and supports that characterize supportive housing

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<sup>67</sup> Mark Kroner, a widely recognized authority in the ILP field, addresses the needs of homeless and at-risk youth in his book, *Housing Options for Independent Living Programs* (CWLA Press, 1999). Mr. Kroner’s book provides a detailed account of the range of housing/service models that have been adapted for ILPs across the nation. Mr. Kroner provides learned insights into the realm of ILP design and offers insights into the way in which young people learn and change. His understanding of youth development and human motivation provide guidelines for other providers venturing into youth supportive housing.

<sup>68</sup> Shelter Partnership, Inc, *A Report on Transitional Housing for Emancipated Foster Youth in Los Angeles County* (April 1997).

for adults. Depending on project funding and state child welfare laws, these programs provide housing and supportive services to youth/young adults between the ages of 16 and 25. Unlike transitional Independent Living Programs, these programs are typically lease-based. As such, while this model of supportive housing is “program-based,” (that is, the access to housing is conditioned on program participation) youth/young adults are treated as residents and have more autonomy in terms of designing their service goals and objectives.

This type of congregate housing is funded as “permanent” supportive housing; however, it is not permanent in the traditional sense of the word. While the programs do not force youth to move on prematurely, they are geared towards helping youth develop and/or improve independent living skills. This means, programmatically, at least, that the housing becomes transitional for many of its residents. One provider refers to this model as “trans-permanent”<sup>69</sup> highlighting the fact that youth/young adults are in a period of transition and, ultimately, want to move on.

Importantly, the few programs that identify as permanent or trans-permanent have struggled with a variety of programmatic issues that closely resemble the challenges faced by providers of adult supportive housing. In working with groups to design and refine models of supportive housing for youth, providers must consider these issues – i.e., tenancy issues, lack of motivation among residents, peer pressure, and drug/alcohol abuse – in addition to the challenges presented by housing youth in single-site settings (see further exploration of these issues in the section outlining existing programs nationwide).

### **Foyer: A Model of Supportive Housing in Europe**

*Foyer* is an innovative service delivery model in which young adults in their late teens and early twenties live in a residence in the community and receive on site case management services and linkages to rigorous job training and placement, education and life skills development resources. Long established in France, Ireland and England, *Foyers* help older young adults – who for a variety of reasons cannot live at home – gain the competencies necessary for long-term independence and self-sufficiency. *Foyers* provide a holistic and integrated continuum of services to help young people transition to independent living and successful adulthood, thus reducing their vulnerability to homelessness, unemployment, poverty, substance abuse and violence.

A hallmark of the *Foyer* is the integration of young people with “high, medium and low levels of functioning.”<sup>70</sup> For example, a high level functioning youth may be emotionally stable and engaged in higher education, but needs affordable, stable housing and occasional mentoring to reach his or her full potential. A low level functioning youth may be one who needs to master daily living skills such as how to clean an apartment and budgeting, or perhaps learning to control anger and transfer it into positive action. They may be emotionally under-developed, displaying behavior more typical of a 14 or 15-year old. Experience has shown that youth in such a setting can positively affect each other’s healthy growth, development, and understanding of social norms.

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<sup>69</sup> The term “trans-permanent” is used to describe *The Archdale*, a supportive housing program in Minnesota. The Archdale is described in further detail in the section of this report “Minnesota.”

<sup>70</sup> Foyer Federation for Youth, *Foyer Handbook: A Guide for Developers and Managers of Foyers* (November 1997). For more information about the Foyer model, contact Carolyn Hayman in London at 0171 833 8616.

A key component of the program's success is the requirement that all young people who participate in the *Foyer* devise and follow an "Action Plan" which outlines specific career and personal goals.

There is great interest in adapting this model to serve homeless and aging out of foster care youth in New York City. The Housing and Preservation Department (HPD) is funding the City's first *Foyer*. The *Foyer*'s combination of affordable housing linked to the full array of support services that homeless and disadvantaged young people need would fill a significant gap in New York City's current continuum of care.

### **Supportive Housing for Youth with Special Needs**

Essentially, supportive housing for youth with special needs is very similar to the permanent/trans-permanent model described earlier. The primary difference is that the target population of congregate supportive housing consists of youth/young adults who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness.<sup>71</sup>

Non-profit providers who serve this population have taken the lead in developing housing for youth with serious emotional disturbance who are typically excluded from the adult supportive housing network. Research has shown that youth with mental illness between the ages of 18 and 25 voluntarily discontinue their treatment and/or reject the idea of living with older mentally ill adults, pointing to the need for specialized resources targeted to this age group.<sup>72</sup>

As a relatively new model, only a few providers have ventured to develop supportive housing for youth and even fewer for youth with special needs. They continue to struggle with project financing – funds have not yet been targeted for youth aging out of the child mental health system (typically at the ages of 18–21). Further, adult providers of mental health supportive housing often lean towards applicants over the age of 25 in their screening process.

The fledgling efforts to develop housing for 18-year olds aging out of the youth mental health system have been met with additional challenges, including the reluctance of both the mental health system and the child welfare system to claim these youth as their responsibility;<sup>73</sup> poor coordination and transfer of services from the youth to adult programs; and the inappropriateness of serving 18-year olds in a traditional mental health setting of much older adults.

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<sup>71</sup> "Mental Illness" includes both primary and secondary mental illness as classified in the 4<sup>th</sup> version of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM-IV) for psychiatric disorders. The DSM IV classifies primary psychiatric disorders as "Axis I" disorders. For example, major depression and schizophrenia are Axis I disorders. Borderline Personality Disorder and childhood conduct or antisocial behavioral Disorders are coded on Axis II or are referred to as other mental disorders that can be a focus of clinical attention.

<sup>72</sup> C. Siggins, "Foster Care Youth in Transition to Independent Living," Testimony (California: 1998). Maura McGraff, former Director of ICL's 100<sup>th</sup> street supported residence has witnessed this phenomenon.

<sup>73</sup> M. Davis and A. Vander Stoep, *The Transition to Adulthood among Adolescents Who Have Serious Emotional Disturbance* (Delmar, NY: National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness, Policy Research Associates, Inc., April 1996).

## REGULATIONS

### Licensing

The issue of licensing should be addressed briefly. Like group homes for youth under 18 years of age, TLPs are licensed. The licensing requirements vary by state; they usually require certain building codes, space requirements, and service provision. The International Foyer Federation licenses all *Foyers* in Europe.

In the United States, like supportive housing for adults, no licensing or formal regulations exist for permanent or trans-permanent youth housing, including the *Foyers* in development.

### Rights of Tenancy

While tenants' rights vary by state, usually a tenant that has a current and valid lease can only be evicted from the apartment for lack of payment, illegal activities or other serious violations. In some instances (such as for rent-controlled and rent-stabilized apartments), landlords are required to offer lease renewals. As a result, if the youth has a lease for the apartment, they cannot be evicted for noncompliance with "program rules," such as non-participation in paid work or employment services.

Some youth supportive housing providers are experimenting with "master leases." In this situation, the housing provider leases the building to a service provider. The service provider then operates a "youth supportive housing program." The service provider does not issue sub-leases to the youth, which, in turn, allows the service provider (the leasee) to evict the youth/tenant for noncompliance. While this lease arrangement is preferred by many organizations, care must be taken that this does not lead to "creaming."<sup>74</sup>

If service providers are unable to discharge a youth/tenant for non-compliance, they will be less willing to accept potentially difficult-to-serve youth. The service provider's fear is that such a youth/tenant will undermine the stability of other tenants and the overall "atmosphere" of the building.

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<sup>74</sup> "Creaming" occurs when only the easiest-to-serve clients are accepted into a program.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

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Overall, awareness of the difficult issues facing a subset of young adults – that is, those that are homeless and aging out of foster care and other institutions – must be raised among legislators and the general public alike. Only through greater awareness will the necessary legislative, programmatic, and funding changes be made.

### FUNDING

First and foremost, additional funding is necessary to adequately address this growing problem. Given that only one-tenth of applications for TLP funding in 2000 were funded, and that services for a mere 70,000 runaway and homeless youth were funded by all three federal programs combined despite FYSB's estimate of 500,000 to 1.3 million youth in need, it appears that funding must be increased at least 10 times beyond present levels to meet the need.

Such additional funds should not be seen as adding costs to government and the taxpayers. To the contrary, these funds should be seen as an investment in the youth of today; the payoff will come a few years later, in the context of reduced service needs and costs when they become adults.

Other funding changes which will also enhance services to this population:

- ▶ **Coordination of funding streams:** The varied funding streams that service this age group must be coordinated. As is common in human services, sources of funding for capital, services and operating expenses are determined by the needs of the population served and the goals and objectives of the program model. Funding for runaway and homeless youth should be coordinated with funding for youth aging out of foster care and corrections funding for post-release services. This coordination should include program requirements, regulations, and reporting requirements that are the same across funding streams.
- ▶ **Set-aside funding:** Within the funding streams that could currently be accessed for supportive housing for adults, funds should be specifically set-aside (not competitive with other adult populations) for young adults.
- ▶ **Capital dollars:** Capital dollars must be included in the expansion of funding. Existing capital funds for housing development are already strapped, and are unable to provide the necessary funds to create housing for young adults in need.
- ▶ **Matching requirements:** Local funds matching requirements in order to access RHYA funds should be eliminated. Stated simply, small localities are not able to provide such funds and therefore the youth in those communities go unserved.
- ▶ **TANF funds:** In the 2002 reauthorization, clarification should be made to allow for several necessary changes:

- TANF and MOE funds should be made available for services for this population (as many states have begun to do, yet others continue to interpret the legislation more narrowly).
- TANF dollars can be used for rent subsidies – a necessary work support, just as childcare and transportation are currently viewed in TANF legislation.

These changes can also be accomplished by aligning the definition of a “dependent child” within the local social service districts and TANF regulations (generally 18 years or younger, or 19 years if still in secondary education) with the definition of a “dependent child” within the foster care system (generally up to the age of 21).

- ▶ **Coordination of operating and service dollars:** HHS and HUD should coordinate the availability of the FUP/Section 8 vouchers with service dollars; without services attached to the rental subsidy, the youth remain lost between systems, albeit with an apartment to start.

## SYSTEMS CHANGE

Several changes to the systems that are involved with this population are key to improving services, reducing the risk of homelessness and future dependence on government supports:

- ▶ **Foster care:** The foster care system must be held accountable to ensuring the well-being of young adults in their care until at least the age of 21. While legislation already requires this, enforcement is almost non-existent.
- ▶ **Corrections:** There must be a seamless transition from the corrections system to post-incarceration systems and services for young adults:
  - For those still on parole or probation – the parole and probation service must include more than a periodic “checking-in” with the corrections officers; it must include case management services and a vocational plan together with the support services necessary to achieve their vocational goals;
  - For those who have served their mandated time in the correctional system, it is neither the role of corrections to work with them post-incarceration, nor would the youth likely respond well to such continued involvement of the correctional system. However, pre-release planning and the establishment of appropriate linkages, prior to release, are critical. Such pre-release planning should be done within the correctional facility by community-based non-profit service providers and facilitated by the correctional system.
  - The penal system must recognize that youth under 18 years of age who run away from home or are thrown out of their home by their parents, did not choose this option. Currently, such youth are considered “status offenders;” the penal system must allow for services to be individualized to meet the best interest of the youth, including not being returned to their “home.”

- ▶ **Mental Health Systems:** The mental health system must be held accountable for providing the services necessary for a smooth transition of the young adults from the mental health systems that serve children with psychiatric disabilities to the adult systems that serve those with psychiatric disabilities.
  - These transitional services should be provided within the adult systems, but within special programs that address the special needs of a young population 18-25 years old, separate and apart from other adult mental health service programs.

## V. CONCLUSION

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In the past few years, increasing attention has been paid to the plight of youth aging out of foster care. In addition, national and local policy initiatives have addressed the needs of at-risk and homeless youth outside of the foster care/child welfare system. In light of recent initiatives, there seems to be the critical momentum needed to move ahead in the design and implementation of a multi-site demonstration project targeting homeless and at-risk youth, within and outside of the child welfare system.

The reasons for moving forward are twofold: first, there is a significant overlap between the population of homeless single adults and at-risk youth – that is, a client in one category today may be in the other category tomorrow. Second, and perhaps more important to government policy makers, homeless youth present an enormous cost to society. For states and localities, the economic burden on child welfare systems is compounded by other institutional costs that apply to at-risk and homeless adolescents, primarily in the mental health, criminal justice, and shelter systems. By stabilizing at-risk and currently homeless youth/young adults, improving young people's developmental environment, and providing youth with employment and life skills training, supportive housing could contribute enormously to a reduction in youth and adult homelessness and society's future costs.

For over ten years, CSH has faced the daunting challenge of seeking, advocating for, and working with government to expand and create new sources of funding for homeless single adults and, more recently, families. CSH has been successful in systems change to bring together disparate, often short-term, funding streams to create long-term and larger funding across several single adult populations: the mentally ill; homeless; and/or those with HIV/AIDS. CSH can draw on this successful experience to “add value” to existing and new projects for youth: funding coordination; developing and encouraging awareness and interest in the issue; educating and advocating for necessary program changes.

Lastly, the fledgling efforts to develop housing for 18-year olds aging out of the youth mental health system have been met with a variety of challenges, including the reluctance of both the mental health system and the child welfare system to claim these youth as their responsibility;<sup>75</sup> poor coordination and transfer of services from the youth to adult programs; and the inappropriateness of serving 18-year olds in a traditional mental health setting of much older adults. Serving young adults with SED and/or diagnosed psychiatric disabilities is a need that has only been addressed to a limited degree in this paper. This is a possible area for further research and program planning with providers serving this population.

This is an opportune time to help design and develop supportive housing for young adults in need. It would be wise to take advantage of the energy and exploratory work underway to seed, study, replicate, and disseminate information on successful models and methods.

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<sup>75</sup> M. Davis and A. Vander Stoep, *The Transition to Adulthood among Adolescents Who Have Serious Emotional Disturbance* (Delmar, NY: National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness, Policy Research Associates, Inc., April 1996).

## VI. APPENDIX: CASE STUDIES

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### NEW YORK

The plight of runaway, street homeless, and older youth “aging out” of the foster care system is by no means a new phenomenon in New York City. Yet, housing assistance for this population in New York is almost non-existent. There are less than one hundred SILP beds (Supervised Independent Living Program) for the approximately 1,300 youth that age out of New York City’s foster care system every year. While the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) offers a rental subsidy program to Independent Living youth on trial discharge (up to \$300 per month for up to three years), this financial entitlement program is highly underutilized. In addition, there are under 400 shelter and transitional beds for the estimated 15-20,000 runaway and homeless youth living on the streets, utilizing crisis shelters, or staying with friends throughout the City. Almost all of the meager resources that exist provide youth with short-term shelter or transitional housing.

In the last two years ACS has begun to address the connection between the foster care system and the incidence of youth homelessness. ACS recently issued a report that identifies “housing” as one of the primary needs of youth aging out of foster care, estimating a housing need of approximately 3,700 units for youth aging out of the foster care system between the year 2000 and 2004.<sup>76</sup> To address this need, ACS recently formed a dedicated housing unit in their office of Management, Development, and Research. This unit is responsible for identifying resources that can be accessed and systems change agendas that can be implemented in order to ensure housing opportunities and services for youth aging out of the foster care system.

The trip to the United Kingdom in early 2000, which CSH sponsored, is also a factor in the recent momentum in New York to create supportive housing for youth. In recent months, CSH, HPD and ACS have come together to plan and discuss strategies for the development of an adapted *Foyer* to house homeless and at-risk youth in New York City. Efforts beyond these, however, will be necessary to address the 15–20,000 runaway and homeless youth that are subject to life on the streets. Disturbingly, New York City youth service providers report that 70 – 80 percent of New York City youth who utilize homeless drop-in centers and outreach services have spent some amount of time in foster care.

### **Discipleship Outreach Ministries, Inc. (DOMI)**

Discipleship Outreach Ministries, Inc. (DOMI) was the first provider in New York City to recognize the need for permanent supportive housing for homeless young adults. DOMI operates a 30 unit permanent supportive residence for youth/young adults located on Henry Street in Red Hook, Brooklyn. The residence at Henry Street was conceptualized as an outgrowth of Discipleship’s experience running a six-month transitional housing program for homeless youth known as *Turning Point*. Frustrated by the lack of permanent affordable housing in New York City – particularly, supportive housing available to young adults – Discipleship decided to design and develop a permanent supportive residence for the young graduates of their

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<sup>76</sup> New York City Administration for Children’s Services, Office of Management, Development, and Research (New York, NY: 2000).

program, as well as for homeless youth referred directly from both the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), the community, and the Department of Probation and Correctional Alternatives. The residence opened its doors in January 1996 and reached full capacity within three months. Capital funding for the project was provided by HPD with additional financing from low-income housing tax credits.

While the Henry Street residence is funded as *permanent* supportive housing, the programmatic goal of the project is to assist youth/young adults in establishing themselves as self-supporting, gainfully employed adults within a five year time period. While the program's goal is to facilitate the residents' eventual move and integration into the community at large, Henry Street is not "transitional housing" in the traditional sense of the term because it is not time-limited. Residents have a lease, maintain their apartments independently, and assume all the rights and responsibilities concomitant with tenant-based housing. The distinguishing feature of Henry Street is that the social services staff is on-site to help the young residents maintain financial and emotional stability and ultimately attain self-sufficiency – at their own pace.

Henry Street's service model is structured around the goals of employment and self-sufficiency. Thus, the program is geared toward young adults who are employable and can live independently with minimal to moderate support. Eligible residents are youth aged 18–25 who are homeless or at risk, and do not have a major psychiatric or physical disability. The young adults are encouraged to work and, if unemployed or interested in higher education, referred to Discipleship's Career Placement Program. Monthly meetings of the Tenant Association serve as a forum to discuss community issues, resolve conflicts and share resources.

While the Henry Street residence was not designed to work with youth/young adults with "special needs" (i.e., mental retardation, mental illness, substance use/abuse, HIV/AIDS), some residents do have intensive needs that were not necessarily identified during the screening/admission process. The Director estimates that, if the population were to be categorized in terms used by *Foyer* (high, medium and low needs) 10 percent of the residents would be considered high need (DSM IV Axis I diagnosis), 50 percent would be low need (career/educational advisement, general case management), and the remaining 40 percent would be medium need.

The length of time a young adult spends at Henry Street is largely determined by the resident's progress in meeting the goals outlined in his/her individualized service plan. The average length of stay is approximately 2–3 years, although some residents (about 30 percent) have been at Henry Street for over five years and a number of residents have left within six months (usually as a result of rent arrears or criminal activity).

Like all newly established programs, the Henry Street residence has undergone a variety of "growing pains" since its inception. The primary challenge has been financial viability due to both project financing and a greater than anticipated problem with rent arrears. A lean operating and services budget (primarily comprised of \$75,000 SRO support subsidy) and long-standing challenges enforcing rent collection have contributed to a financial deficit.

Henry Street's financial status has contributed to its struggle with staffing issues. Currently, the full-time social services staff consists of only two full-time employees: the Director and the Case

Coordinator. Lack of clinical staff on-site and a vacant Activities Coordinator line (closed for over a year due to lack of funding) exacerbate other programmatic challenges in working with the youth/young adult population. According to the Director, the primary challenges have been: substance use/abuse among the residents, undiagnosed mental health problems, and the difficulty in generating internal motivation among the residents to participate and follow-through in off-site programs.

Despite the challenges outlined above, the Director is a committed, creative person who has been able to strengthen the program through well-established ties with community agencies and Discipleship's own assortment of off-site social services and career training programs. In an effort to create an atmosphere of belonging and congeniality, the Director has hired an AmeriCorps\*VISTA staff person to resume some of the responsibilities of the previous Activities Coordinator. In addition, the Director has been able to integrate the Building Superintendent as a central part of the staff. Despite these creative alternatives, the Director believes that increased service funds would allow him to improve the program's outcomes. In late 2001, they were awarded \$100,000 in funding for employment services.

While Henry Street continues to face a variety of fiscal and staffing challenges, for the most part, the majority of the youth/young adults are stable and working. The few residents who are mentally or physically challenged are not management problems and a number of "problem" residents have recently been evicted. More clinical staff and an effective property management system would strengthen the program and steps in this direction have been made. The ongoing challenge is to balance the program's ability to create opportunity and nurture youth/young adults who might not make it unless they were in a supportive environment with the need to maintain the project's financial viability. The tenancy and substance abuse issues that Henry Street has encountered highlight a number of issues that others should consider in their own program design for future youth supportive housing initiatives.

## **Institute for Community Living**

Several years ago, the Institute for Community Living (ICL), a well-respected, well-established mental health and supportive housing provider in New York, received a grant from the state Office of Mental Health (OMH) to house approximately six young adults aged 18 to 22 in its 100<sup>th</sup> Street/Broadway Residence; this adult CR/SRO<sup>77</sup> traditionally served adults only. ICL coordinated the transfer of three young men and three young women from a local Residential Treatment Facility (RTF), a highly restrictive, treatment-intensive residential facility that serves youth with psychiatric disabilities, into permanent placement at the 100<sup>th</sup> Street/Broadway Residence.

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<sup>77</sup> CR/SRO is a hybrid model of permanent, congregate (apartment building style) housing designed to serve residents with significant mental health needs, licensed and funded by the State Office of Mental Health and operated by nonprofit organizations. Services are more intensive than those offered in supportive housing, but unlike Community Residences, participation is not mandated. They include 24-hour staff coverage, meal plans offered in an on-site dining area, assistance with basic living skills, money management, case management, crisis intervention and recreational activities.

What occurred was something of a generation clash. Essentially, the existing chronically mentally ill adult residents (the majority of whom were between the ages of 30 and 50) were intimidated by the younger residents, who were, for the most part, healthy, active, vibrant, and often seen as aggressively intimidating. Over time, the younger adults increasingly engaged in typical age-related “acting out” behavior (physical posturing, fights, loud music), most likely as a result of the drastic change in their lives (i.e., the move, the exposure to chronically mentally and physically ill adult neighbors). In addition, the young adults seemed to be frightened by the chronic nature of the illnesses in the older residents.<sup>78</sup>

Lessons learned from this experience should prove instructive to other mental health providers venturing into the field of youth supportive housing. ICL’s experience is supported by research indicating that “young adults with mental illness do not typically do well in service settings designed for the general adult mentally ill population. Their high energy level and lack of basic living skills make those programs a poor fit for these clients.”<sup>79</sup> A supervised setting designated for youth only – that is, separate and distinct from supportive housing for adults – is the recommended model to meet the housing, social, and psychological needs of older adolescents “aging out” of residential treatment facilities.

The research and anecdotal reports from providers serving youth with mental illness indicate that a small separate setting (maximum 24 youth) is an ideal model. Supportive housing programs for youth/young adults with mental illness should be more staff intensive than standard adult supportive housing programs, particularly at the outset. It is also recommended that supportive housing projects for mentally ill youth establish a strong connection to a community-based referral source so that the housing becomes something of a continuation of those programs, and supports the transition to adulthood during the critical years of 18-25.

## **The Bridge**

In the summer of 2000, The Bridge, an established community-based mental health agency and provider of supportive housing to homeless and dually diagnosed adults, opened New York’s first permanent supportive housing program for young adults with serious and persistent mental illness. The 12-unit project, the Bridge’s first venture into supportive housing for youth, is located in East Harlem and targets males between the ages of 18 and 21 with a DSM IV Axis I psychiatric diagnosis. The program is funded as “supported” housing, a distinction that results in a reduced budget for on-site support services.

To offset the reduced staffing pattern allowed in the limited supported housing budget, The Bridge hired a live-in Program Director who serves as a “house parent” in addition to providing clinical services to the residents. While the initial plan was for all potential residents to be referred via ACS, City foster care agencies have not, to date, been making enough appropriate referrals. That is, many of the youth they refer need higher levels of support than supported housing is funded to provide. For this reason, the Program Director opened the referral process to non-ACS residential treatment facilities (OMH-funded group homes for youth with

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<sup>78</sup> Maura McGraff, the previous Director at ICL for this site.

<sup>79</sup> C. Siggins, Testimony.

psychiatric disabilities) and currently the program is accommodating both ACS and non-ACS referred youth with an Axis I psychiatric diagnosis.

The Bridge is leasing the building from a private landlord and receives funds for services from the Department of Mental Health (DMH). No capital investment was involved. To offset operating costs, the Bridge relies on ACS' \$300 monthly rental housing subsidy for the ACS-referred youth and the services of two workers provided by the Manhattan Psychiatric Center (paid for by the State).

Today, the Bridge's primary challenge is the lack of service dollars needed to fund program staff (particularly staff with expertise in vocational rehabilitation and life skills) to provide additional supervision of the young adults.

### **Common Ground Community/Good Shepherd Services**

Over the past year, CSH has worked with Common Ground Community (CGC), a leading supportive housing provider, and Good Shepherd Services (GSS), a prominent social service and youth development agency, to develop a *Foyer* in New York City. CGC's expertise in providing supportive housing for single adults will be instructive as they partner with the child welfare system. This nationally recognized developer owns and operates the Times Square and the Prince George supportive housing residences.

Good Shepherd Services currently runs a variety of citywide residential and foster care services, including several diagnostic and residential treatment centers for adolescents. GSS's experience operating SILPs will provide an invaluable contribution to the ultimate success of the program.

Based on the European *Foyer*, the CGC/GSS proposed program would assist 40 older teens and young adults to gain the skills and confidence necessary for long-term success in education, employment, and positive family and community life. The initial program design adapts a hallmark of the European *Foyer* – the integration of youth who need a range of support, from minimal to intensive services. The proposed program will serve youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who require transitional supportive housing – adolescents who have aged out of child welfare services, runaway homeless youth, a small percentage of homeless youth with mental or physical disabilities, and a few college-age students who will act as mentors. The apartments will be efficiencies and shared apartments.

A primary goal of this initiative will be helping young people develop the skills necessary to prevent homelessness as adults. To this end, the *Foyer* will integrate services that have traditionally been provided separately and without a vision for meeting the needs of young adults who are at a critical stage of growth and development. The *Foyer* will maintain an open-door policy for former residents – that is, vocational, educational and employment support will be offered to graduates who are successfully living independently and want to continue utilizing the *Foyer*'s vocational resources.

As of April 30, 2002, CGC has purchased a building located in the Chelsea section of Manhattan. HPD has committed a total of \$17.5 million for the project, NYS HHAP has conditionally awarded \$5.4 million and The Federal Home Loan Bank of New York has awarded

\$1,000,000. The building has just over 200 units of housing in total, of which 10 are suites, located in a distinct arm of the building. The *Foyer* will be located in these suites, each containing 4 bedrooms (one person per bedroom), two bathrooms and a kitchenette. GSS has received a HUD services grant to serve the 40 youth. The project is slated to open in spring 2003.

### **Edwin Gould Academy/Housing and Services, Inc.**

Interest in the *Foyer* in New York City has catapulted other groups into action. One such group, the Edwin Gould Academy, is currently in the pre-development stage of a 51-unit permanent supportive housing project for homeless older youth/young adults, to be located in East Harlem. Edwin Gould, a co-educational residential school for adolescents in the foster care/juvenile justice system, has partnered with Housing and Services, Inc. (HSI), a not-for-profit developer of housing for homeless, low-income, and elderly individuals.

The residence will have 32 studio apartments for singles; 16 one-bedroom units, primarily for pregnant and parenting single parents; two 2-bedroom units, and a live-in superintendent's 2-bedroom apartment. Half of the residents will have incomes no greater than 30% of median income; the other half will have incomes no greater than 40% of median. The first floor of the residence will house services for the young adults, and staff offices. Anticipated services include counseling, peer support groups, educational and vocational placement, career counseling, employment and training referrals, and mental health and substance abuse counseling and treatment referrals. Referrals will come from the Academy, the City's Administration for Children's Services, and other non-profits that work with homeless youth.

Edwin Gould has received a pre-development loan and they have preliminary site control for the land, contingent on completing capital financing for the project. To date, they have funds committed from: NYS Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (\$3,675,000), and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (estimated at \$491,965 annually over ten years, expected to generate \$3,864,123 in private investor equity). Additionally, HIS submitted an application on behalf of the Academy for a Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program (\$500,000 grant). Total project development costs are estimated at \$8,539,123; Edwin Gould is currently seeking an additional \$500,000 in equity to complete the necessary financing.

Operating and service funds are expected to come from a combination of rents paid by the residents (at 30% of their income); a \$300/month Independent Living Housing Allocation provided by ACS for residents still in the foster care system; and the Section 8 vouchers set-aside for youth aging out of foster care. Some service funds are yet to be raised, with hopes of accessing TANF funds.

### **Other New York Programs**

There are several programs throughout New York City that provide both residential and outreach services to street homeless and runaway youth (i.e., Promesa, Inc in the Bronx and SafeSpace in Manhattan) and several others provide support and/or outreach services only.

The following New York City programs have patched together a variety of City, State, Federal, and private funds to operate shelter, outreach and/or residential programs for runaway and homeless youth. While the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) provides funding to not-for-profits to run crisis and transitional beds for the City's runaway and homeless youth population, the programs outlined below do not necessarily receive DYCD funding. In fact, while there are currently approximately 400 "beds" for runaway and homeless youth citywide (this number includes both 30-day crisis beds and 12-18 months transitional beds), only approximately 140 of these beds are funded via DYCD.

The programs outlined below are examples of both DYCD and non-DYCD-funded crisis and transitional residential programs citywide:

- The Lantern Group operates a 91-unit permanent supportive housing project, of which twenty-five units are set aside for youth aging out of foster care, pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City's child welfare agency, ACS. ACS refers youths that have, as a result of aging out of foster care, received prioritized Section 8 housing vouchers. The Lantern Group secured capital and operating funding for the project through HOPWA and HOME programs and low-income housing tax credits. The Lantern Group is currently working to secure services funding for the twenty-five youth units.
- SafeSpace (also known as the Center for Children and Families) operates a 24-hour drop in center/shelter, a scatter-site Transitional Living Program (TLP), and a 12-unit congregate TLP for homeless youth/young adults diagnosed with AIDS/HIV. SafeSpace receives funding from HUD, DYCD, Federal RHYA funds, HOPWA and Ryan White funds;
- Green Chimneys, the New York City branch, operates a wide range of residential, social service and educational programs that specifically focus on the needs of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered or Questioning (GLBTQ) youth and their families. Programs specific to homeless and aging out of foster care youth include the following:
  - Gramercy Life Skills Residence, located in East-Midtown Manhattan, serves 25 GLBTQ males ages 16-21 years. Gramercy is a 24-hour structured and supervised residence.
  - Supervised Independent Living Apartment Programs (SILP), the seven apartments serve 14 GLBTQ youths ages 18-20 years; 10 male, 4 female, in Upper Manhattan. The program offers a 15-unit course which is based on Green Chimneys' own curriculum, *Life Skills for Living in the Real World*. Residents then implement this course living in a furnished apartment with one other resident.
  - Triangle Tribe Apartments, the three Transitional Living Apartment Programs (TLP) serve 10 runaway and homeless GLBTQ youth ages 17-21 as part of a Federal RHYA grant in Upper Manhattan. The primary goal of the program is to move homeless GLBTQ towards independent living after 18 months by teaching them how to live in the community as self-sufficient adults. The fully furnished apartments are all located in Manhattan. Life skills training are provided; staff supervisors and mentors monitor each person's progress.

- Audre Lorde School, a Board of Education GED Preparation program for GLBTQ youth, ages 16-21, located at the Gramercy Residence. This program provides High School Equivalency Diploma instruction and college/career counseling from 8:15 am to 2:00 pm and encompasses all subjects that are tested on the NYS GED exam.
- Hettrick-Martin’s Project First Step provides outreach services to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth;
- Covenant House is the single largest provider of services to homeless youth in New York City, operating a crisis shelter, a transitional residence, and employment training programs. 90% funded through private sources, they receive some funding from HUD and a small amount from DYCD;
- Seamen’s Society for Children and Families in Staten Island provides Voluntary Interim Homes (or “Host Homes”) for up to 10 runaway youth up to 18 years of age for 30–60 days;
- Promesa Inc operates drop-in centers and TLPs in the Bronx;
- St. Christopher-Otilie runs several TLPs;
- Safe Horizons provides outreach and operates a drop in center for runaway and street homeless youth.

In addition, several other community outreach and post-adjudication programs provide services to runaway and street homeless youth, often without specific funding to do so. For example, Friends of Island Academy provides services to adjudicated youth, many of whom are homeless.

While the programs described here provide critical services to New York City’s homeless youth, in light of the estimated 15–20,000 homeless and runaway youth in New York City, the services and transitional beds mentioned here are only able to assist a small fraction of the youth and young adults in need.

## **MINNESOTA**

Following is a brief overview of several youth supportive housing projects in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Minnesota has long recognized the challenge of youth homelessness, particularly in the Twin Cities; the CSH Minnesota office has been a partner in the State's efforts to create supportive housing for this population.

### **Central Community Housing Trust/YouthLink**

Archdale Apartments is a youth supportive housing project in Minneapolis that provides 30 affordable housing units for formerly homeless youth, aged 16-20. Central Community Housing Trust (CCHT) is the developer and YouthLink, a non-profit youth development agency, is the project's new service provider.

The building design consists of 30 efficiency units, each equipped with a full kitchen and bathroom. Seventeen of the units are permanent housing with project-based Section 8 and 13 of the units are transitional housing units. There are an additional seven scattered site units that are part of the transitional housing program. Four of the transitional units at the Archdale and all of the scattered site units serve teen parents.

Supportive services at the Archdale consist of case management, instruction in independent living, and extensive employment and training services. Residents work closely with staff to devise individual case plans to meet their self-sufficiency goals. Youth are expected to be employed or in school unless they need reasonable accommodation of a disability. The program's intensive staffing pattern includes three Independent Living Skills Counselors, each of whom carries a caseload of approximately ten residents and runs Life Skills classes. In addition, there is 24-hour supportive staffing, which provides overall supervision, trouble-shooting, and monitoring of resident behavior. Residents in the transitional housing units participate in the on-site supportive services program. Residents who transfer from transitional housing or move directly into permanent housing receive six months of supportive services.

YouthLink, which began services at the program on March 1, 2002, is bringing resources from its drop-in center, HIRED, to Archdale residents. An employment counselor from HIRED is working with residents struggling to maintain employment. Cultural and recreational activities are available through the Kulture Klub. A computer resource room is available for GED studying and online research.

The Archdale, in its six years of operation, has experienced major transitions, most recently with the change of social service providers. The Archdale has also had frequent turnover of property management companies. As a result, a lot of attention is being given to increasing the joint decision-making process between the social service provider and the property management company. Additionally, the Archdale needs to secure additional funding to sustain the operating costs of the property in order to remain open.

CCHT, St. Barnabas, Episcopal Diocese of MN, Allina Foundation, and others are working together to create an affordable housing project focused on youth, St. Barnabas. The project is proposed as a 52-unit housing project to be built in downtown Minneapolis. St. Barnabas will

consist of efficiency units, ranging from 280 to 400 square feet, each with its own kitchen and bathroom facilities. There will be shared community space and programming space in the garden level of the building, and a green space for outdoor activities.

Thirty-nine of the units at St. Barnabas are expected to serve those youth, 16-21 years old, whose family is unable or unwilling to provide housing. This program will provide independent living skills and supportive services in conjunction with affordable housing. YouthLink, a non-profit provider of outreach, shelter and transitional housing services for homeless youth, will provide on-site support services at St. Barnabas.

### **Life's Missing Link/RS Eden**

Lindquist Apartments is a collaborative effort of Life's Missing Link, Inc. (LML) and RS Eden, Inc. The project will develop 20 efficiency units of safe, affordable housing for young adults, ages 16-21, who are homeless and have disabilities, including youth who currently live on the street and those in emergency shelters. All 20 housing units will include private bathrooms and small kitchens to ensure that the residents experience independent living. Office space will house a full-time Housing Services Director, two full-time Support Services Case Managers, one full-time Residential Counselor/Community Liaison, and several part-time weekend/evening staff for 24-hour coverage of the front desk. There will also be office space for a full-time property/site manager and one full-time maintenance person. Each resident will have their own private apartment but will also have access to shared spaces that provide opportunities for interaction: a large living room, a laundry room, computer lab, exercise area, storage space, a community room for meetings, program activities and neighborhood use, and outdoor courtyards.

Lindquist Apartments will help to promote the transition to self-sufficiency living, reduce dependency on entitlements and institutions, increase personal accountability, reduce recidivism, and increase a sense of positive community involvement for program participants. The Health Realization Model of Prevention and Treatment (also called Psychology of Mind) will be at the core of the service plan for our residents. Health Realization is a simple, common sense, eminently practical way of teaching people the relationship between their thinking and their experiences. It does not tell people how to think or what to think – it simply gives them an “owner’s manual for the mind.” Thus, they are able to tell when their thinking is in their best interest and when it is not.

The key to the success of this project is providing an aggressive support service strategy the young adults need to become productive and independent members of the community. Two Support Service Case Managers will provide assistance and guidance in job training, job placement, GED classes, alternative educational opportunities, and chemical dependency treatment. LML has established a strong network of resources and referral relationships in these areas. Residents will be encouraged to include other goals in independent living skills such as parenting education, emotional or behavioral issues, family issues, or other goals surrounding personal growth.

## **Growing Home/RS Eden**

Early in 2001, Growing Home and RS Eden collaborated to plan the development of a 12-unit supportive housing program for youth with serious emotional disturbances preparing to emancipate from foster care. Seventh Landing will be new construction, designed for this project. Growing Home, the service provider, is a therapeutic foster care agency that provides out-of-home care to children and youth in the Twin Cities, who are at risk of institutionalization or homelessness. The agency also provides care throughout the state of South Carolina. RS Eden is the project developer and will provide the property management for the project.

Closing and groundbreaking for the two-story building, located in St. Paul, is expected in mid-July 2002. The design includes a Resident Manager's apartment, community space, and a Resource room (computers, library, and vocational/training/employment resources) on the first floor.

One-third of the first floor will be leased to a business proprietor of a popular restaurant, the Mildred Pierce Café, with two locations in St. Paul. The proprietor will open a satellite catering kitchen in the building, renting approximately 1,500 square feet. This is a promising opportunity for Growing Home, as the proprietor currently employs at-risk youth and plans to provide training/employment opportunities to interested youth in the Growing Home residence. The CSH Minnesota Office and RS Eden are working with the proprietor to develop the financing for the commercial kitchen.

In preparation for this project, the Youth Development Director of Growing Home has had conversations with more than a hundred at-risk and homeless youth in shelters, foster homes, and the streets. The predominant concern expressed by the youth is their lack of connection to anyone, as the only significant adults they have in their lives are social workers (who eventually leave). It is this sense of isolation and lack of support that has led Growing Home to focus on "building community." As such, the program will supplement the standard independent living skills curriculum (budgeting, money management, household maintenance, elemental resume writing and employment skills) with opportunities for youth to build a support network of peers in the program and adults through the use of mentors. Youth will be supported in "giving back" to the community through a variety of service opportunities appropriate to each youth's interests and skills. The program will provide youth with individual and group supports that promote interdependence and community building. They will receive community-based mental health services (an estimated 90 percent have mental health diagnoses) within the context of a strength-based holistic service model. There will be one full-time social worker assigned to provide supportive services and case management for the youth at Seventh Landing.

All of the services and interventions to be employed are based on an adaptation of the "Circle of Courage," a model for "reclaiming" at-risk youth, which is derived in part from the Native American medicine wheel and developed by long-time youth work/education professors at Augustana College. This strength-based model is rooted in a holistic approach to youth development, the objective of which is to "restore value to our kids" by focusing on four major developmental tasks:

- *Belonging* – connectedness and relationship building (including family, cultural and ethnic identity and community connections)
- *Knowing* – skill building and recognizing that individuals have the capacity to learn; developing mastery of skills
- *Becoming* – future focus; developing an internal locus of control; taking on responsibility for selves and treatment; knowing that their future can be positive
- *Giving* – giving back to the community; creating the expectation that youth in care can help others

Growing Home received a grant from the Bush Foundation to pilot an innovative assessment tool which utilizes creative interviewing techniques to elicit information from youth about the four spheres described above. The service model also includes an extensive mentoring program, believing passionately that adult mentors play a critical role in optimal youth development.

Capital financing for the model, totaling \$2,893,900, has been secured from a number of sources: HUD-SHP funding, the Federal Home Loan Bank, MHFA, Ramsey County Endowment Fund, Star Program and the City of St. Paul. Operating reserves are part of the capital budget. Project-based Section 8 has been granted for all twelve of the units, and will be the primary source of operating funds.

Growing Home is currently seeking service funding. A small amount of service money will come from HUD, as Seventh Landing was the number one ranked project in the Ramsey County Continuum of Care Application and was thus granted \$100,000 above what was requested for capital. The excess funds must be used for services and will likely be distributed over a three-year time period. A variety of other sources, primarily private foundations, are being explored, including three that have supported Growing Home's development of mentor orientation materials that will be used at Seventh Landing. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act funds will also be pursued to find support. The project's commercial component, the satellite kitchen, will be financed separately. The project is expected to open in mid-2003.

## **Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army proposes to create one of the first *Foyer* housing programs in the United States, to be located in St. Paul. The project would be situated on a major street and bus line, offering access to many amenities and resources, including the University of Minnesota. This *Foyer* will offer housing and services to young adults ages 18-22 who are looking for their first home and temporary assistance in their emancipation and development. The *Foyer* will serve a cross-section of youth with a range of educational, employment, development and mental health needs.

The Booth Brown *Foyer* will assist young people to transition to independence by providing affordable housing, training and linkages to employment as part of an integrated package of support services. Each resident will be assigned a "primary worker" who works with youth to devise an "Action Plan," supportive counseling will be provided on an ongoing basis, and linkages will be made to mental health, substance abuse, and specialty services in the community. The *Foyer* will engage all youth in intensive life skills training. The curriculum

utilizes experiential learning techniques to teach skills such as money management and conflict resolution. Training and employment services will be provided in-house and via supported access to community resources. Services will include basic skills training, vocational training, higher education, work experience placements, voluntary work, and job preparation and job search training. It is expected that many residents will secure jobs and save money while living in the program.

## CALIFORNIA

In the last five years, addressing youth homelessness in California, particularly in Los Angeles County, has become a government priority. Private-public collaborations have developed, particularly among agencies that serve emancipating foster youth. According to the County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in 1996, there were nearly 45,000 youth in out-of-home foster care placements. Of the approximately 1,000 youth under the care of DCFS who emancipate from the system annually, 45 percent become part of the homeless population of Los Angeles.<sup>80</sup> In addition, over-age youth (ages 18-24) are among the fastest-growing segments of California's homeless population.

Emancipated foster youth have now become a priority for public funding sources. During the 1996 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Supportive Housing Program (SHP), "homeless youth, including unaccompanied youth and emancipated foster youth" were locally established as one of the top four areas for project selection. Additionally, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles adopted program guidelines for use of funds from the City of Industry which are targeted to the development of low-income housing for "special needs" populations, which include emancipated foster youth.<sup>81</sup>

### **Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp./Larkin Street Youth Center**

Ellis Street Apartments is permanent supportive housing for young adults in San Francisco. The project consists of 24 studio units that house homeless young adults, some aging out of foster care, and some runaways. Six of the units are set aside for youth with HIV/AIDS. The property was an un-reinforced masonry building, which sustained a fire in 1997 and was rehabilitated by the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC), a non-profit housing development corporation. In addition to the 24 studio units, the ground floor has a service staff office and community space. Rental subsidies are in place through the McKinney Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program. Additional financing came from HOPWA and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program.

Larkin Street Youth Center (LSYC) provides the on-site support services. Their main offices and the Lark-Inn, a homeless youth shelter, are located across the street. On-site services include case management, employment services, residential guidance, links to off-site services (education, medical care, HIV/AIDS services, recreation), daily living skills training and support (money management, conflict resolution). The full-time on-site Case Manager meets with residents individually at least once a week and again in group sessions. The Case Manager is the point of contact for access to all services as well as the provider of in-depth individual and group counseling and instruction in basic life skills (e.g., money management, conflict resolution). An Employment Specialist assists with vocational counseling, group workshops, and skill development. Two part-time Resident Advisors assist with management of daily practical living needs (e.g., shopping, laundry). These two positions, which will foster leadership skills in the community, will rotate on a yearly basis to allow different residents to take on these

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<sup>80</sup> Shelter Partnership, Inc., *A Report on Transitional Housing for Emancipated Foster Youth in Los Angeles County* (Los Angeles, CA: 1997).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

responsibilities. An initial intake and assessment and a more comprehensive psychosocial assessment will result in highly individualized treatment plans, with short- and long-term goals to address service and housing needs. Treatment plans will be evaluated weekly and changed only with the consent of both parties. Plans will focus on goal-oriented, time-limited accomplishments in order to help youth develop a sense of achievement and progress. Weekly program staff meetings, weekly community meetings, quarterly written surveys, and Resident Councils will evaluate programmatic issues and suggest changes.

LSYC has over 14 years of experience in developing and providing services for homeless and runaway youth, including four residential programs and an array of direct social services. In addition, LSYC operates a full continuum of non-residential direct social services. LSYC sees an average of 100 young people daily and provides comprehensive services to over 2,000 each year. Last year, 77% of youth in the counseling program permanently exited the streets.

TNDC is the housing developer for the project. TNDC has over 17 years experience in affordable housing development, property management and social service delivery. TNDC has acquired and completed major rehabilitation of 15 buildings, over 1,060 units, and provides technical assistance to other nonprofits in developing low-income housing. TNDC currently manages 12 properties, totaling nearly 700 units.

### **Fred Finch Youth Center**

In 2000, the Fred Finch Youth Center (FFYC) opened Coolidge Court, an 18-unit permanent supportive housing program for 18–24 year olds who have aged out of foster care and/or have significant mental health issues. Believed to be one of the country's first low-income housing developments for young adults with psychiatric disabilities, Coolidge Court opened through a combination of private and public funds, including support from the HUD Section 811 program, the City of Oakland, the Alameda County Division of Behavioral Care's Early Prevention, Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment Program, and CSH.

Through intensive case management, FFYC offers Coolidge Court tenants the support and assistance they need to access existing community resources. The goal is to increase their self-sufficiency and to assist their transition to independence. Although the primary focus is on low-income young adults between the ages of 18 to 24 who are at risk of homelessness, Coolidge Court complies with HUD requirements that prohibit age discrimination.

FFYC was founded as an orphanage in 1891, and has been providing a continuum of high quality mental health and social services programs for the care and treatment of severely emotionally disturbed children, adolescents, and young adults, and their families. The staffing of Coolidge Court includes a full-time case manager, and a half-time case manager/independent living counselor.

Unfortunately, FFYC has not been successful in its efforts to convince Alameda County to continue to provide funding. CSH and other nonprofit agencies have been engaged in an ongoing effort to convince the County to invest in, and increase local government support for, services in supportive housing. To date, this effort has not been successful. Because EPSDT funds are only available to persons who are 21 or younger, to the extent that tenants age in place,

it is likely that over time fewer and fewer will be eligible for the EPSDT support. Therefore, it is important that, over time, other sources of services funding be identified. Efforts to work with the County will continue, as well as efforts to seek funding through the State's Supportive Housing Initiative Act.

### **First Place Fund for Youth**

The First Place Fund for Youth (FPFFY) operates a scattered site housing program which currently serves thirty-five to forty youth at any given time. The youth are 18 to 21 years old and homeless or at risk of homelessness. They have been former foster care participants; 66 percent are single young adults and 33 percent are parenting youth. The program serves youth transitioning from foster care to independent living throughout the Bay Area, including San Francisco, Alameda, and Contra Costa Counties.

FPFFY is a private non-profit organization that receives funding from foundations, individual contributors, corporations, and the City of Oakland. Founded in 1998, FPFFY seeks to reduce the rates of homelessness and poverty among youth transitioning from foster care to independent living. At the present time, the group is seeking to expand its capacity through the new development and management of permanent supportive housing.

### **Adolpho Housing Program**

The Adolpho Housing Program (named after a well-known and respected foster mother) operates in Sacramento County. The program provides permanent housing for 18 to 24 year olds who are aging out of foster care and will be homeless. It is funded with \$499,000 in Supportive Housing Program funds and serves 24 youth in nineteen scattered-site apartments: 14 one-bedroom units and 5 two-bedroom units. The program has 4.8 FTE Case Managers, 1 FTE Program Manager, .5 FTE Outreach Worker and 1 FTE Housing Specialist. The program is operated by the County Department of Human Assistance.

The greatest challenge is finding housing in this housing market. Many of the cities in this County have a high-priced rental market, which is further challenged by low vacancy rates. While there are rental subsidies, finding units that meet code requirements for a price that allows the rent to be significantly reduced for the youth is difficult. In addition, the units need to be located near transportation, as the youth generally do not have cars and rely on public transportation to get to services, employment and/or school.

## **NEW JERSEY**

New Jersey's HUD Continuum of Care Consolidated Plan has traditionally not identified homeless youth as a priority. In fact, in 2000, less than \$500,000 of the New Jersey's \$21 million HUD allocation went to youth programs, greatly limiting the housing services available for youth.

There are no permanent supportive housing units for homeless youth and only 292 in-state shelter beds and 690 transitional living beds for the state's 13,000 homeless and runaway youth<sup>82</sup>. However, recent developments are promising, including increased funding via New Jersey's Department of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) and a burgeoning awareness among government and providers that crisis/transitional shelter is not enough. In addition, lobbying efforts – spearheaded in large part by the Covenant House New Jersey Youth Advocacy Center – have resulted in the enactment of New Jersey's Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. This legislation gives homeless and runaway youth under the age of 18 the right to seek emergency shelter without requiring that the youth be under the supervision of the state's child welfare agency (Division of Youth and Family Services) nor the local Family Crisis Intervention Unit (FCIU). As part of this effort, DYFS and Covenant House are partnering to establish more transitional beds for New Jersey's runaway homeless youth population.

### **Covenant House**

Covenant House New Jersey operates programs throughout Atlantic City and Newark that provide emergency shelter, food, clothing, job development and counseling to hundreds of homeless and runaway youth each year. The Covenant House Youth Advocacy Center is a project devoted to public education and direct legal aid. The Center's mission is to ensure that policy makers and citizens learn about the issues which homeless youth/young adults confront, particularly the shortage of emergency and transitional living placements for older adolescents, throughout the State. The centerpiece of the Center's legislative agenda is the passage of the New Jersey Homeless Youth Act. If passed, this legislation (which the Center developed in 1998 in partnership with the Garden State Coalition for Youth and Family Concerns) could facilitate the expansion of state resources for outreach, basic center shelters and transitional living programs for runaway and homeless youth between the ages of 16 and 21.

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<sup>82</sup> Dennis Derryck, *Jersey City's Homeless Youth and Youth at Risk of Being Homeless* (Newark, NJ: Garden State Coalition for Youth and Family Concerns, Inc. and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999).

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