

Using
what's right
to solve
what's wrong.

huckleberry house 2013 annual report



No matter how much is wrong in a life, there's always something right.

As Franklin County's primary provider of shelter and services to runaway and homeless youth, Huckleberry House works with teens and families who contend with serious and sometimes devastating issues. Abuse. Violence. Neglect. Drug addiction. Poverty.

It can be hard to fathom a silver lining in any of these cases.

But over our past four decades addressing these problems, the Huckleberry House staff has come to accept one thing as truth:

No matter how severe a teen's or family's problems, there is always at least a sliver of good in every situation.

At Huckleberry House, we've learned to use the good we uncover for all that it's worth, and to leverage what's right with a teen or family to help resolve what's wrong.

In theory, this approach is called Positive Youth Development. It involves focusing on a teen's strengths as opposed to her risk factors.

In practice, it's an approach that takes a commitment and mindset to look beyond the surface problems, and to understand the many facets at play in a teen's or family's individual set of circumstances. Only by approaching each situation as unique, and taking the time to examine all the pieces of the puzzle, can we identify the positive in a given situation, and use it to put together a tailor-made solution that really makes an impact for the clients we serve.

On the following pages, you will read the stories of four young people who came to Huck House with individual problems—and individual strengths. You'll learn how our counselors and staff resisted one-size-fits-all fixes,

and instead took a customized approach to help each teen turn his or her situation around.

At Huckleberry House, our strengths-based approach to teen and family struggles isn't always the easiest or quickest solution. But it's *our* strength, and it's what makes our programs and services so effective.

We are grateful to the many individuals and organizations in our community who provide the support that makes our customized approach possible. We hope you will continue to believe, as we do, that every teen and every family deserves the best possible chance to succeed.

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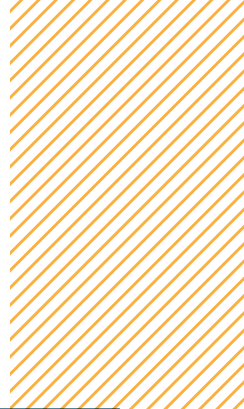
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Crisis Program



Crisis Program

What's Wrong?

Sean's Story

Over the past year, 17-year-old Sean has had many places to live. But no real home.

He was living in Chicago with his mom, until his mom's ex-boyfriend beat him so badly that he spent two days in a coma. Next, he moved to Columbus to stay with a family friend. However, she had five children of her own and only one bedroom. Though she wanted to help, she could not provide for Sean's basic needs.

So Sean tracked down and moved in with his dad, who also lived in Columbus. But dad was selling drugs out of his house. And he physically and verbally intimidated Sean every day.

The streets are dangerous. Unfortunately for some teens, home can be, too.

With no other options, Sean took himself to Franklin County Children Services where he was referred to the Crisis Program and shelter at Huckleberry House.

Teens run away from abuse, neglect, drugs, violence, poverty, and other disruptive, difficult, or dangerous situations at home.

The National Runaway Switchboard reports 3,152 teens as runaways in Ohio last year.

3,152

Other teens 'run' because they have no place to call home.

Crisis Program

What's Right?

Sean's Story

By any standards, Sean's situation was dire. He suffered from depression and posttraumatic stress disorder, and he admitted to selling drugs and stealing at times simply to survive. But this was not the path Sean wanted, and he maintained a strong desire to lead a positive, successful life. He wanted a job, a high school degree, and an opportunity to go to college and study for a career in computer science.

Sean's mother and the family friend wanted his success and were willing to support Sean however they could. The friend regularly talked with Sean by phone during his stay at Huck House and provided an ear whenever Sean needed to talk out his frustrations and concerns.

The caseworker from Franklin County Children Services also played a positive role in Sean's life, regularly checking on his progress and helping develop a plan for his success.

The Huckleberry House Crisis Program provides a safe alternative to the streets for teens ages 12-17.

The emergency shelter is available 24/7/365.

Teens stay an average of five days and can find a warm bed, a hot meal, and help with basic needs including clothing and personal hygiene.

Crisis Program counselors work with shelter teens and their families to address and resolve family problems and put families back together.

Crisis Program

FY 2013 Program Focuses

FY 2013 Program Successes

What Worked?

Sean's Story

During his time in the Crisis Program, Sean's Crisis Counselor focused on Sean's strengths and his family's desire for Sean to succeed. Sean developed a feeling of belonging and was able to stay focused on employment and education goals.

Sean's mother gave consent for Sean to be linked to two other Huck House programs, Youth Outreach and Transitional Living—her way of helping her son succeed. When Sean left Huck House, he moved back in with the family friend, who had found a new apartment with more room. While with the friend, Sean will work with a Youth Outreach Program specialist to stay on a positive path until he can enter the Transitional Living Program and secure housing of his own.

The Crisis Program implemented a new daily schedule with therapeutic themes of the day, such as Future You, Self Care, Express Yourself, and Culture and Family.

Teens participated in physical activity, outings corresponding to the day's theme, and special groups led by community organizations on topics ranging from sex education and human trafficking to college life and yoga.

The Crisis Program staff received training on topics including Integrating Consequences into Treatment, the Stages of Change, and Avoiding Power Struggles with Youth.

532 crisis episodes addressed

2,505 nights of emergency shelter provided

540 Crisis Hotline calls answered

416 referrals received

70% of Crisis Program teens returned to living with family, another relative, or a friend



Transitional Living Program

Transitional Living Program

When going home isn't an option, transitional-age youth **need a way to make it on their own.**

What's Wrong?

Rob's Story

Sometimes it's not the dog that gets kicked—it's the teenager.

As the target of the disdain his mother felt for his father, 17-year-old Rob's home life was a constant struggle. He was told on a regular basis that he was just like his father and unable to do anything right. This ongoing emotional neglect and ridicule left Rob feeling unloved and unworthy, escalating into depression and leading to truancy issues at school and problems with personal hygiene.

Some teens can't go home because they simply don't have a home.

Family problems—like poverty, drug abuse, violence, or neglect—can leave teens homeless with no safe place to live.

Transitional Living Program

Whats Right?

Rob's Story

Rob was no quitter. Upon entering the Transitional Living Program, his counselor, Community Support Provider, and Independent Living Mentor were quick to recognize his willingness to try new skills—and stick with them—no matter how slow his progress seemed at times.

Rob pushed himself to practice new coping strategies. Despite how difficult or uncomfortable a situation was for him, Rob followed through and made the effort to go to school, apply for jobs, and develop necessary independent living skills. He never missed an appointment during his 18 months in the program.

The Transitional Living Program team admired Rob's motivation. They saw within him an ability to take charge of his life—he simply needed the right support.

The Transitional Living Program helps transition-age youth who do not have a safe place to call home to establish homes of their own.

TLP does more than secure housing—it helps teens develop the independent living skills they need to thrive.

The 18-month program teaches teens to manage their finances and their health. It provides support for educational and employment goals. Teen parents learn how to care for and enjoy their children.

Transitional Living Program

FY 2013 Program Focuses

FY 2013 Program Successes

What Worked?

Rob's Story

Understanding that commitment to change is most powerful when it comes from within, Rob's counselors and mentors took a collaborative approach and involved him in identifying the barriers to his success and developing a plan to overcome challenges.

Rob graduated from the Transitional Living Program and found stable housing for himself. He also secured a full-time job at a sub shop as well as a part-time position at a convenience store. Today Rob is able to enjoy limited positive communications with his mother, a significant improvement for the family.

TLP consolidated from two locations to one, improving face-to-face time with youth and increasing group activity attendance.

TLP improved collaboration with community agencies including Center for Family Safety, Gracehaven, Action For Children, and Aids Resource Center. These agencies worked with youth to address issues such as dating violence, sexual health, and parenting skills.

Teens in the program focused on employment goals and attended an employment event with The Limited, where seven Huck House youth obtained jobs.

52 transition-age youth received independent living support

24 youth graduated from the program

92% of program graduates secured permanent housing

8 TLP teens landed new jobs

3 youth obtained a high school diploma or GED

2 youth entered college



Family Support Program

Family Support Program

What's Wrong?

Ana's Story

It's hard to adjust to a move. Especially across the country. It's even worse when you're a teenager trying to fit in at a new school where you look and act differently than everyone else.

When 14-year-old Ana was referred to the Family Support Program at Huckleberry House, her family had recently moved from California to Dublin, Ohio, and then once again to central Columbus. Ana was having trouble at her new inner city school, and trouble at school led to trouble at home.

The good thing about family problems? They can be solved.

Ana felt sad and irritable, and she began acting out more and more. She even felt hopeless at times and was having trouble eating and sleeping. Ana felt alone and misunderstood by her family and her peers at school, and for good reason. Her mother didn't understand what Ana was going through and didn't know how to help.

Everyday, Central Ohio families deal with crisis, trauma, school problems, substance abuse, housing issues, mental health issues, coming out problems, and immigration and assimilation difficulties.

When families don't have healthy ways to cope, problems can tear families apart.

Family Support Program

What's Right?

Ana's Story

Despite Ana's current troubles, she had a past history of success at school along with a genuine desire to feel better. She was also insightful and able to identify specific situations that were contributing to her sadness and leading to troubles at home and school.

Ana's family was open to counseling and willing to take the advice and direction of the Family Support Program counselors.

Following a crisis, trauma, or other family problem, the Family Support Program offers ongoing individual and family counseling to help families resolve problems.

Family Support counselors help teens and families identify strengths, develop coping skills, and change negative behaviors.

Family Support Program

What Worked?

Ana's Story

The Family Support Program counselors leveraged Ana's ability to identify triggers to depression and conflict, and worked closely with her to develop healthy coping strategies for difficult situations.

Ana's counselor helped Ana and her family explore alternatives to her current school and assisted with enrolling Ana at a charter school focused on the arts. The new school was a much better fit for Ana, and her counselor worked with school staff to ensure Ana's successful adjustment to the new environment.

The counselors also worked with Ana's parents to educate them about depression and help them better understand and support Ana's struggles.

Because Family Support Program counselors were able to identify and work with Ana and her family's strengths, today Ana is feeling better. She is thriving in her school, making new friends, and getting along much better at home.

FY 2013 Program Successes

122 families received ongoing counseling

76% of clients reported improvement in family functioning

68% of clients reported a decrease in family problems

FY 2013 Program Focuses

Crisis Program counselors linked teens with Family Support counselors to provide ongoing support for family problems and to help prevent future crises and returns to the shelter.

The Family Support Program strengthened relationships with Transitional Living Program teens and provided ongoing support to ensure successful transitions to independent living.

The program offered community-based counseling in homes or schools to model and reinforce skills learned during counseling sessions.

Youth Outreach Program



Youth Outreach Program

What's Wrong?

Jessica's Story

At times it can feel like nothing is going your way. And that can lead you right down the path to depression.

For 18-year-old Jessica, life at home was rough. She didn't get along with her new stepfather, and her relationship with her mother was accusatory and strained. She felt she had no one to talk to at home. Outside of the house, things weren't much better. Jessica was having troubles with her on-again, off-again boyfriend, and she had very little social life. She had virtually no aspiration to do anything with her life and felt she didn't have much of a future.

Sometimes teens can't come to Huck House. **That's when Huck House goes to them.**

When Jessica's school referred her to the Youth Outreach Program, she was feeling severely depressed and contending with suicidal thoughts.

Some teens don't get the help they need simply because they don't know it exists. Other teens are too proud or too distrustful to ask for help.

Some young people believe they have to settle for the minimum in life because that's all they've ever known.

Youth Outreach Program

What's Right?

Jessica's Story

Jessica's Youth Outreach Counselor was quick to recognize the one bright spot in Jessica's life. Jessica's family had a background in car racing, and Jessica attended the Eastland Career Center where she thoroughly enjoyed learning how to work on and repair cars.

In spite of her depression and other problems, Jessica remained focused and engaged at her auto repair classes.

The YOP is the only local program that brings counseling services and support directly to teens on their own turf—at schools, community centers, playgrounds, shopping centers, and on the streets.

Youth Outreach counselors connect teens with community resources that meet their needs and that can provide ongoing support.

YOP targets at-risk youth ages 12-22.

Youth Outreach counselors empower youth to think differently about their situations and to use their will to succeed to tackle home, school, employment, and housing problems—before they run away or find themselves in crisis.

Youth Outreach Program

What Worked?

Jessica's Story

Over a period of six months, Jessica's Youth Outreach counselor regularly met with her at her school and at community locations. The counselor leveraged Jessica's interest in her technical classes to build her self-esteem. The counselor helped Jessica recognize that her skills were valuable and unique, and that they could be her ticket to a rewarding career and a successful future.

With life after high school looking more promising, Jessica and her counselor were able to work on Jessica's immediate employment needs, her personal image and style issues, and on rebuilding family relationships. Jessica reported

that her family dynamics improved significantly and that she felt more included in family activities.

With the help of her counselor and the support of her mother, Jessica applied to and was accepted at a technical college in North Carolina. She continues to develop her auto repair skills and is working toward her future goal of owning and operating her own shop.

FY 2013 Program Events

**Flip the Script Rebel
Movement Youth Summit
National Night Out
Hot Times Festival
Save Peace March
Whole Foods Non Profit
Market Day
Health Department
Resource Fair
Focus Dress for Success
Girls Empowerment Seminar
Bridgescape Enrollment
Rally
Lifeskills Enrollment Picnic
Parent Resource Fair
Columbus City Schools
Transition Night
Strength to Rise
Fashion Show
Shalom Zone Community
Fair
Hip Hop Expoing**

Youth Outreach Program

FY 2013 Program Focuses

Via in-school presentations and one-on-one counseling, YOP helped teens recognize the impact of their daily choices on their own futures and well as on others.

YOP spread an anti-bullying message and helped teens create 'safe zones' in their schools and communities.

Staff developed relationships with community organizations to increase referrals to YOP's unique brand of street-based counseling.

YOP hosted the fourth annual Flip the Script Rebel Movement Youth Summit to give teens a safe and supportive environment to rebel against violence, peer pressure, and other problems in their schools and communities.

FY 2013 Program Successes

Made 13,683 youth contacts

Conducted 1,715 hours of youth outreach via 417 youth outreach runs

Opened 70 new individual cases

Logged 934 hours of street-based individual case management

Delivered 97 in-school presentations

Supported and participated in 15 community events to increase awareness of Huck House services

Huckleberry House Scholarship Program

What's Wrong?

Too often, money is the only thing standing between a young person and his or her educational goals.

What's Right?

Last year Huck House administered \$11,000 in scholarship funds to youth in our programs. The money helps remove barriers to educational aspirations and puts deserving young people on a path to a solid future.

Without the right support, a bright future can go dim. **Huck House helps keep the lights on.**

Scholarship funds include:

William R. McNamara Scholarship

Established in 2000 by Bill McNamara, this award provides two new scholarships per year to teens participating in Huck House programs. Scholarship winners can renew their scholarships annually.

The Soltis/Homer Scholarship Fund

As long time contributors to Huckleberry House, the Soltis family established a scholarship fund in 2008. The fund awards an annual scholarship to a deserving young woman.

Huckleberry House Scholarship Program

What Worked?

Huckleberry House awarded three new scholarships in FY2013 and is supporting five former Huck House teens who currently attend colleges and universities.

2013 Scholarship Recipients:

William R. McNamara
Scholarship—
Shawna Santurello

William R. McNamara
Scholarship—**Asia Morton**

The Soltis/Homer
Scholarship Fund—
Jameisha Morgan

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Financial Information

Revenue

2013

Grants	\$	1,661,659
United Way		180,467
Medicaid		418,579
Purchase of Services and Discretionary Funding		130,711
Contributions		216,833
Interest and Dividend Income		46,659
Net Gain on Marketable Securities		94,259
Total revenue	\$	2,749,167

Expense

Transitional Living Program	\$	950,552
Crisis/Shelter Program		940,861
Home-based intervention		20,764
Counseling		143,896
Youth Outreach Program		290,814
Scholarship		11,310
Fundraising		69,693
Administration		244,921
Total expense	\$	2,672,811

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