



WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN?





**OUR DOORS ARE
ALWAYS OPEN.
EVEN WHEN OTHER
DOORS CLOSE.**

Abuse. Neglect. Drugs.
Violence. Poverty.

For some teens, it simply isn't safe or possible to stay at home. But when these kids take to the streets, the issues and dangers they face there can be just as devastating as the problems back at home.

We all know what can happen to runaway and homeless youth when there's no one to care and nowhere to go home.

But what happens when kids do have a safe place to turn?

When they do have a place they can call home during a crisis? And when they do have people to care, to listen, to support, and to advise?

When troubled teens and their families have a place like Huck House, they have a chance to turn their problems around.

Since 1970, thousands of youth in crisis situations or in need of counseling and support have come through our doors. And our counselors and outreach specialists have reached out to countless more teens in their schools and on our streets.

By working closely with these teens and their families, about 70% of the runaway youth we help have been able to safely return to their own homes or to a relative's or friend's home. Others have developed skills to live successfully on their own.

Many have benefited from intervention that's not only prevented an immediate crisis, but that has affected lifelong, positive change.

Inside this report, you'll hear from four of these teens, and you will see how Huck House changed—and potentially even saved—their lives. Because Huck House cared, these at-risk youth are now happy, healthy, successful adults. And because Huck House continues to care, hundreds of other youth are getting that same opportunity today.

Of course, Huck House can only care because you care. It's through your donations and support that Huck House is able to offer every youth a chance to go home.

We hope you'll take a close look at this report and discover how your caring and compassion have helped Franklin County's youth in 2011 and in the years past. And we hope we can count on you to continue to care for many years to come.

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Crisis Program.

A place to turn when kids need it most.

Why we care:

When they are without a home or when they are struggling with a disruptive, difficult, or dangerous home situation, kids need a safe alternative to the streets. And that's exactly what the Crisis Program at Huckleberry House provides.

This 24/7, 365-day a year program offers a temporary safe place for teens aged 12-17. The program meets kids' basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, and personal hygiene during a period of crisis. However, the ultimate goal is family reunification, which Crisis Counselors help achieve through one-on-one, group, and family counseling.

How we care:

FY2011 Crisis Program Focuses and Achievements:

Crisis Hotline

When callers phone the Crisis Hotline, our staff immediately goes to work to begin to help resolve and mitigate problems during the phone call.

Family Sessions

To increase the number of family sessions before youth reenter the home, the Crisis Program provided transportation for families to Huck House, and in some cases scheduled the session at the family's home. Prior to family reunification, Crisis Counselors helped set up ongoing services and helped families develop safety plans to more effectively deal with future problems.

Safe Places

A significant percentage of crisis youth come to us through our Safe Place partners. Huck House partners with a total of 93 area Kroger stores, White Castle restaurants, and fire stations, providing teens with safe places to go for help contacting Huckleberry House.

This year, Huck House promoted the new national TXT 4 HELP project: kids in crisis can text SAFE and their current location to 69866, and they will receive the address for the nearest Safe Place and the contact number for Huck House.

Group Counseling

The Crisis Program developed a wider range of therapeutic groups for teens to participate in during their time in the shelter. The groups focus on skills such as anger management, healthy relationships, and communication. This year we also provided opportunities for youth to volunteer at other organizations and to participate in community service. These experiences taught kids the value of giving back and also exposed teens to resources, events, and opportunities in Columbus.

Home Improvements

Built in 1903, the Huck House shelter needs updating to continue to meet the needs of the hundreds of teens who call it home each year. Huck House recently renovated the boys' bathrooms and is currently renovating the kitchen. Plans are in place to renovate the girls' bathroom and the building's exterior.

580 youth received crisis services at the shelter in FY2011

Because we care:

1,840 nights of emergency shelter provided (average length of stay = 5 nights)

An estimated 470 youth and family members received help from the Crisis Hotline

73 teens were referred to Huck House by Safe Place partners

73% of teens returned to living with family, another relative, or a friend



Jacki's Story

In the summer of 1975, Jacki was just 16 years old. But she literally believed her life could be over. After suffering a particularly brutal altercation with her physically abusive stepfather, self-preservation instincts kicked in, and Jacki left home.

Someone told Jacki about Huckleberry House. And from the moment she walked through our front doors, Jacki's life began to take a turn for the better.

"Nobody judged me. They just offered me a safe place to stay," says Jacki. "When you come from such an abusive situation and you come across adults who actually care, it makes you feel like there is a solution to your problem."

Jacki stayed at the shelter while working through the court system to emancipate herself. After leaving the shelter, Jacki stayed in a group home until she turned 18. She then secured her own apartment in Columbus. Jacki graduated from high school, attended Nationwide Beauty Academy, and launched an exciting career, which included owning and operating her own salon. In 1987, she met and married her current husband, a client at the salon where she then worked.

Twenty-four years later, Jacki lives in Newark, Delaware with her husband and their two daughters. Jacki currently works as an in-home head lice removal specialist, where she puts her expertise as a licensed cosmetologist to work to help families and schools in her community.

“I knew that I wanted to stay in school and that I wanted to succeed. Huck House was the catalyst that pointed me in the right direction and gave me the ability to reach my goals,” Jacki says.

Jacki has remained involved with Huck House. She spoke at the 10th annual Turn Around Columbus Awards Banquet, an event that recognizes youth who have overcome obstacles in their lives. Jacki and her family also established the Pay if Forward Scholarship Fund, which has provided monies for education and living expenses to Huck House youth who plan to ‘pay it forward’ in the future.

“As a community, we need to support organizations like Huck House,” Jacki says. “There are many negative influences in the world today, and children in crisis need to know they have positive options.”



“As a community, we need to support organizations like Huck House”



Transitional Living Program. Helping teens make it on their own.

Why we care:

Sometimes it simply isn't safe or possible for teens to return home. The Transitional Living Program gives these teens, ages 16.5 to 19, the support and resources they need to obtain secure living arrangements of their own.

The 18-month program helps teens achieve success in school and in life by building independent living skills, including grocery shopping, cooking, budgeting, and parenting. Through the Transitional Living Program, Huck House helps break the cycle of generational poverty and helps today's homeless teens transition into self-sufficient, successful adults.

How we care:

FY2011 Transitional Living Program Focuses and Achievements:

Parenting Skills

Since a significant percentage of youth in the Transitional Living Program have children of their own, learning essential parenting skills for raising and enjoying children is a key part of the program. The parenting track teaches parenting skills through group sessions and one-on-one mentoring. Because of the success of this program, all Huck House staff members now receive parenting techniques training, allowing the entire staff to work with and support young parents in our programs.

Education Goals

Education goals, including obtaining a diploma, were a key focus for Transitional Living Program participants this past year. The vast majority of teens in the program—83 percent—made progress in this area. Huck House developed relationships with high schools and guidance counselors and worked with them as well as the teens to increase school attendance and high school graduation. A handful of our teens went on to take college level courses or seek professional or trade certifications.

Employment

To help teens in the program meet their financial goals, the Transitional Living Program asked our supporters in the community to provide job opportunities for our youth. We worked with youth to apply for and maintain these positions.

**Because
we care:**

51 youth received Transitional Living services in FY2011

24 homeless teens completed the program

96% (23 of 24) of teens completing the program obtained permanent housing

6 program participants graduated from high school or obtained a GED

3 program grads began college courses after high school graduation

8 program graduates obtained new jobs

Terresa's Story



Terresa began running away from home when she was 13 years old. At the time, she was arguing a lot with her mother. She had problems with her mother's boyfriend. And she was skipping school on a regular basis.

Terresa first learned about Huck House through a Safe Place partner—the firehouse on East Main Street. Throughout her early teens, she was in and out of the shelter multiple times.

“It was really nice to have a place to come for a few day and just get away from the worry and stress of everything going on at home,” says Terresa.

When the problems at home didn't get any better, Terresa's mother agreed to let her enter the Transitional Living Program. Terresa got her first apartment at age 17, and she thrived in the program. She finished high school, secured a job at Huck House working in the Crisis program, and learned to maintain her budget.

“I had a mentor, Melanie, who I'm still in touch with today,” says Terresa. “We did a lot of things together and it was really nice to have someone to talk to other than my mom. I know there's someone in the world who cares about me and recognizes that I'm doing better, and that's really a positive in my life.”

Since completing the Transitional Living Program, Terresa has earned her State Tested Nurse Aid (STNA) license and will graduate from nursing school at the end of this year. Terresa plans to pursue a career in mental health nursing and hopes to have the opportunity to work with teens in need.

“Had I stayed at my mom’s, I’m not sure I would have even finished high school,” she says. “Not having to deal with the problems at home really helped me focus on school and on my life.”

Having gone through the program herself and having worked at the Crisis Program and experienced other teens’ problems firsthand, Terresa is an avid believer in the importance of the services Huck House provides.

“A lot of teens face some pretty bad problems,” she says. “I think they need outlets, and that’s what Huck House gives them.”



“It was really nice to have a place to get away from all the stress at home”



Family Support Program. Building stronger families.

Why we care:

Problems like crisis, trauma, substance abuse, identity confusion, immigration and assimilation problems can tear families apart. Huckleberry House works hard to keep families together through our Family Support Programs.

The program offers family and individual counseling at our Counseling Center as well as Home-Based Intervention to families who do not have the resources or availability to come to Huckleberry House. Our counselors and case managers provide crisis intervention services at homes and schools. And they work closely with the teens in our Crisis and Transitional Living Programs, serving as advocates and supporters for youth during their time at Huckleberry House. The goal of the program is to create a more stable home life for our clients by helping teens and families identify strengths, resolve problems, develop coping skills, and make long-term positive changes.

How we care:

FY2011 Family Support Program Focuses and Achievements:

Trauma Informed Care

In many cases, families seeking counseling have suffered some kind of traumatic experience. To better support teens and families in these situations, we are working to increase our counselors' trauma expertise through additional trauma-related training. This past year, our counselors worked closely with Crisis Program counselors to streamline teens' transition between the Crisis Program and outpatient counseling.

Transitional Age Youth

Our counselors worked closely with teens in the Transitional Living Program as well as recent program graduates. We provided counseling and support to meet the unique developmental needs of older teens attempting to live independently.

Community Outreach

To foster greater awareness of our counseling services and position Huck House as more than just a crisis shelter, our counselors distributed counseling cards and spoke at Parent Teacher Organizations, Whetstone and Tuttle Park Recreation Centers, the faith shelter, and diocesan and public schools with high populations of at-risk youth.

Continuing Education

Counselors received training on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) issues and alcohol and other drug awareness.

**Because
we care:**



**168 families received
counseling services**

29 families received home based interventions

**46% of families served included
transitional age youth**

**9 community outreach/in-service events were
conducted by Family Service Program counselors**



Shandell's Story

Shandell's childhood was marred by abuse and neglect. Her school became aware of the problem and contacted Franklin County Children Services, who placed Shandell at Huckleberry House.

Shandell spent her 14th and 15th years in and out of the shelter and her subsequent high school years couch surfing at friends and experiencing homelessness from time to time. Yet she continued to go to school, to be involved in school activities, and to work hard at her job.

"Huckleberry House provided a safe place to lay my head at night. People don't realize how important that is until they don't have it," says Shandell. "Without that infrastructure in place, I think the streets would have eaten me alive."

Shandell eventually found stable housing with a friend's parents. She graduated from Independence High School with honors and received a scholarship to the University of Akron, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Interpersonal and Public Communications and a master's degree in Applied Politics. She is currently taking coursework in preparation for a Ph.D. in Public Administration.

Shandell's political aspirations landed her a position in former congressman Ted Strickland's gubernatorial

campaign. After the election, she rose through the ranks to become Chief Program Officer in the Governor's Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives. Today, Shandell owns her own consulting company, Brainstorm Consulting Network, LLC, which serves a number of businesses and organizations including non-profits that help youth. She was recognized as one of the "Women Who Win" at the 2010 Women's Living Expo. She is also a past Political Leaders Fellow for the Center on Progressive Leadership and she volunteers with various youth-serving organizations.

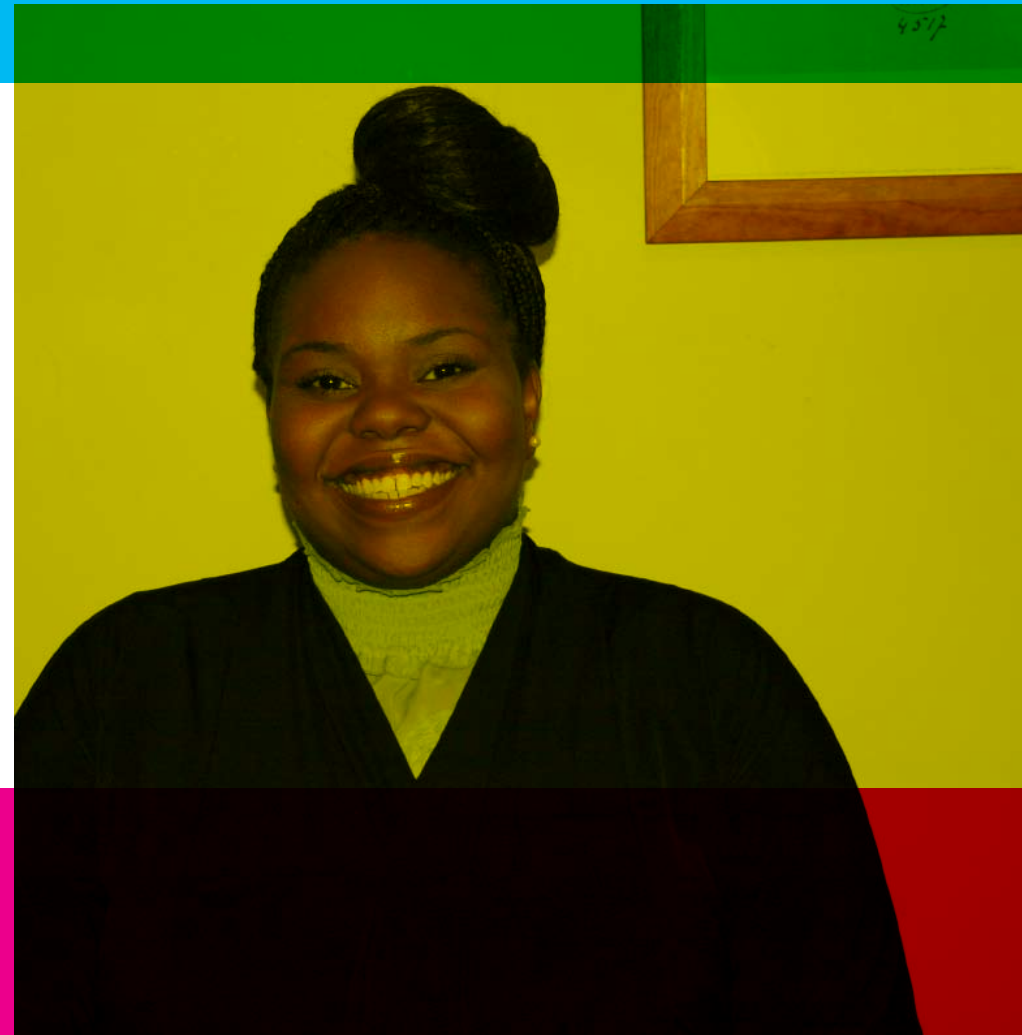
With all Shandell has been through, she is grateful for the care and support she received at Huck House and the opportunity to give back.

"One of my greatest blessings is that my political career has given me a lot of public speaking opportunities. I can be the voice for other young people and help shape policy on youth homelessness," Shandell says.

Shandell frequently references the Huckleberry House and the importance of supporting organizations like it in her speeches.

"A lot of times, people look at kids in situations like mine as throw away youth," she says. "But we can grow into people who impact our society for the better. Huck House gives kids that chance. It's a rainbow after the storm where kids can see that even when things are bad, they can get better."

"A lot of times, people look at kids in situations like mine as throw away youth"



Youth Outreach Program.

Taking our
message
to the
streets.

Why we care:

Sometimes teens in trouble don't ask for help because they don't know it exists. Other times, they're simply too proud or too distrustful. The Youth Outreach Program is the only program in town that takes counseling services and support to these kids where they hang out—in their schools, community centers and playgrounds, shopping centers, and on the streets. By finding creative ways to engage youth and exercising patience and persistence, Youth Outreach workers have helped countless teens before they run away or find themselves in crisis situations.

The Youth Outreach programs targets youth ages 12-22. Workers provide advice and support to help kids deal with family issues, trouble in school, finding a job, or finding housing. Workers also point kids toward resources that meet their unique needs, such as the programs available at Huckleberry House.

How we care:

FY2011 Youth Outreach Program Focuses and Achievements:

Summer A.P.P.S. (Application for Purpose, Pride and Success) Program 2011 This past summer, the Youth Outreach team joined forces with the mayor to reduce teen violence and loitering in our city. We provided street outreach in four target neighborhoods, spreading the word about extended evening hours at the local recreation centers. We also provided some of the evening programming. The program gave teens safe, positive, and rewarding options for spending their time.

Community Education

To spread awareness of Huck House programs, the Youth Outreach Program invited school counselors, social workers, Boys and Girls Club representatives, and other community organizations to learn more about our agency. We offered tours of the shelter, explained the referral process, and provided information on all agency programs. We also provided education on the types of issues teens face.

Social Media

The Youth Outreach team leveraged social media channels, including Facebook and Twitter, to help spread the word about Huck House and forge connections with young people and their parents. Huck House currently has more than 600 Facebook friends. Find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.



Flip the Script Rebel Youth Summit

On June 24 2011, Huck House held its second annual youth summit at COSI. The event was a major success with 183 attendees. Youth picked the topics: youth violence, healthy relationships, and being yourself, and they participated in workshops, a town hall forum, and a youth-led think tank. The event empowers youth to rebel against negative influences and to be their true, positive selves.

Youth Advisory Board

Made up of 15 youth from high schools and middle schools throughout Franklin County, the Advisory Board provides Huck House with important insight into teen problems. This past fiscal year, the board focused on closing the communication gap between parents and teens.

Community Events

Huck House played a critical role in a variety of community events, including:

- Find Your Voice: **Youth Speak Out Against Child Abuse & Neglect Through Art**—Held at COSI, this event gave youth the chance to express their feelings about abuse via song, skits, fashion, dance, and more.
- Off to a Great Start Conference—This event provided training for teachers and youth service providers on how to engage youth and have more meaningful interactions with young people.
- Columbus Urban League City Wide Talent Show—Youth Outreach Program workers helped plan, market, recruit talent, and judge the show. During the event we provided information about Huck House services.
- OSU Youth Violence Prevention Annual Conference—A panel of our young people helped our staff present information on how to avoid violence when handling difficult situations. We helped spread the word about resources available to young people who want to get off the streets and improve their lives.

Run Away Prevention

To create awareness of runaway prevention month, Huck House sponsored a Rock the House Jazz Benefit concert for the community in November. We also spread the message of prevention in school presentations held throughout the year.

Because we care:

540 outreach runs made

776 food/drink items distributed

1,940 hours of youth
outreach conducted

659 hours of street based
individual case management logged

7,581 youth contacts were made in FY2011

63 individual cases opened

12,337 pieces of literature
and 2,274 sexual assault
brochures distributed

84 in-school
presentations made

10 community events
hosted or supported

247 health and hygiene
packets handed out

LaKenya's Story



LaKenya was just 16 years old when she quit school and went to work full time to care for her six-month old baby. She was living with her mother, but their arguing became so intense that her mother insisted LaKenya leave home. LaKenya moved in with a friend who told her about Huckleberry House. She began seeing a Huck House counselor who got her involved with the Transitional Living Program.

LaKenya had her doubts about the program at first, but it ended up being a great experience. She learned about managing her stresses, managing her money, and managing being a working parent.


“But the most important thing I learned was how to be on my own and how to deal with problems I never thought I’d be able to deal with, like my baby being sick,” LaKenya says. “Huck House turned me into a way stronger woman.”

Today LaKenya has her own apartment where she lives with her three children. She’s rebuilt her relationship with her mother. She has a steady job and her own car. She’s working toward her GED and has plans to begin LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) courses.

“When you’re young, you don’t really know what’s in the world until you get older,” she says. “There’s a lot more to come for me. But I know where I was when I first got in the program and how I am now; I can deal with a lot more stressful things. I keep moving and doing what I need to do every day.”

LaKenya says she is motivated by the desire to provide a better life for her own kids. Even though she’s graduated from the Transitional Living Program, she still stays in touch with the staff, and she knows she can count on Huck House to help her deal with any problems.

“Everything is going great for me now. I’m supporting my kids and they have what they need. But Huck House is always there if I need them,” she says. “It’s a great program that helps young women who want to do something right for themselves and just need help getting started.”



“Huck House turned me into a way stronger woman”



Huckleberry House Scholarship Program. Making dreams possible.

Why we care:

In FY2011, Huckleberry House received more applications for our scholarships than ever before. Each year, we administer up to \$7,500 in scholarship funds to support the youth in our programs and help them finance college expenses. Through our scholarship program, we can help remove one of the greatest barriers standing between our youth and their educational dreams.

How we care:

FY2011 Huckleberry House Scholarships:

William R. McNamara Scholarship

In 2000, Bill McNamara established a scholarship fund to provide two scholarships per year to teens participating in Huck House programs. Scholarship winners can renew their scholarships each year. The financial support makes it possible for teens to reach the educational goals they set in our programs.

The Soltis/Homer Scholarship Fund

Established in 2008 by the Soltis family, long time contributors to Huckleberry House, this fund awards scholarships annually to deserving young women. The scholarship helps achieve the Soltis family's mission of giving teens a great start toward future accomplishments.



Because we care:

2011 Scholarship Recipients:

America Fown

\$2,500 William R. McNamara Scholarship

Essence Johnson

\$2,500 William R. McNamara Scholarship

Christopher Jurgens

\$2,500 William R. McNamara Scholarship

Kaitlin Dilts

\$1,000 Soltis/Homer Scholarship

Miya McDaniel

\$1,000 Soltis/Homer Scholarship

2011 Contributors

Huckleberry House is grateful for the many individuals and organizations who care.

A T & T
Aaron's Inc.
Abbott Laboratories Fund
James & Claudia Abrams
Rachel Adkins
AEP-Columbus Southern
Power - District
Jazmin Aguirre-Moreno
George Anderson
Anonymous
Maria and Mark Armstrong
Margret Ashbrook
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The Scott Family
The Skashank Redemption
Theresa Harris
Tracy Thorton
Trater Tots
Veena Brannon
Venue Lounge
Vorys, Seymoore and Pease
Walmart

Financial Information

Revenue

Grants.....\$1,624,929
United Way.....\$217, 743
Medicaid.....\$593,381
Purchase of Services and Discretionary
 Funding \$89,770
Contributions.....\$91,313
Interest and Dividend Income.....\$26,695
Net gain on marketable services\$164,626

Total Revenue\$2,808,457

Expenses

Transitional Living Program.....\$866,004
Crisis Program.....\$800,886
Home Based Intervention.....\$73,649
Counseling\$192,732
Youth Outreach Program.....\$220,681
Scholarship Funding\$13,906
Community Education.....\$41,826
Administration.....\$273,625

Total Expense\$2,483,309

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