



The

Connection

Winter 2013

The National Safe Place Newsletter

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NATIONAL FFA SERVICE PROJECT PROVIDES CLOTHES TO RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS



FFA volunteers pose for a photo after completing their day of service.

On October 31 and November 1, nearly 400 National FFA volunteers sorted and packed brand new clothing items that were distributed to National Safe Place agencies across the country. The project was part of the National Days of Service event at the 86th National FFA Convention & Expo in Louisville.

With the help of CSX, City Year, Dignity U Wear and National Safe Place, nearly 130 runaway and homeless youth agencies received brand new clothing items that will be distributed to youth in need. Dignity U Wear donated the nearly 80,000 items which included socks, undergarments, pants, shirts, boots, gym shoes and coats.

"Sometimes children come to us with only the clothes on their backs," said Laurie Jackson, President/CEO of National Safe Place. "Some have worn the same thing

for several days, even weeks. Through this project, we were able to provide brand new clothes that will help boost their confidence and give them a sense of dignity so they can move forward."

Volunteer Sam Dandridge, 19, was one of those children. He came to YMCA Safe Place Services in Louisville after running away from a troubled home situation in California. He was given a place to stay, new clothes and food.

Today, Dandridge shares an apartment with a friend. He no longer relies on the shelter for clothes and food because he buys his own with money he earns working at Steak n' Shake. He said without Safe Place, he thinks he'd still be on the streets, or worse.

"I'm here to give back for the help that I've been given," Dandridge said. "And I'm very thankful for the students and adults who've teamed up to help the community whether they've been in this situation or not."

Vincent Pollard, Outreach Coordinator for Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth in Las Vegas, is grateful for the donation, which has impacted several homeless teenagers in the community.

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Laurie's Corner



How time flies! It seems like just yesterday I was writing to share the National Safe Place plans for 2013 and now it is colder, the days are shorter, and the end of the year is upon us. While this is the time of year to be thankful and celebrate the many blessings in our lives, it is also the time to be thoughtful about the struggles and challenges faced by many in our communities and across the nation. As many of you know, this is particularly important for the numerous homeless youth who desperately need someplace to go and connect with a person who will listen and provide sanctuary and assistance.

This year brought many changes for National Safe Place. We saw our staff, Board and services increase, but unfortunately we also witnessed a tragic increase in the number of

youth and families who need the services of Safe Place agencies; a rise in the number of youth texting or emailing for help as they do not know where else to turn; and an unfortunate decline in the funding available to sustain Safe Place programs in the United States. During this time it is important to remember to contact our Congressional Representatives regarding the ongoing effort to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act to ensure continuing efforts to fund these vital and necessary programs for young people in need.

As I think back on the highlights of this year and the last several months, I am in awe of our National Safe Place partners who stepped forward to provide assistance not only to the national office but to licensed agencies across the country. As you will read in this edition, an exciting clothing donation project took place in October along with National FFA during their Days of Service. It was a memorable and impactful event that would not have

occurred without generous support from CSX, City Year, Dignity U Wear and National FFA. This year, National Safe Place merged with the Youth and Family Services Network, expanding our ability to assist agencies in their work with runaway and homeless youth. The Family and Youth Services Bureau's annual RHY Grantee conference conducted by RHYTTAC was a huge success with the largest attendance yet. Finally, the Safe Place program and the TXT 4 HELP service continue to be ongoing examples of the necessary safety net for vulnerable youth across the country.

During this holiday season, all of us at the National Safe Place Network wish you a heartfelt thank you for the work you do to support youth and families. We are grateful for your partnership and commitment!

Happy holidays!

Laurie Jackson

Mission Safe Place provides access to immediate help and supportive resources for all young people in crisis through a network of sites sustained by qualified agencies, trained volunteers and businesses.

Safe Place will be universally recognized and used by youth who need immediate help and safety. **Vision**

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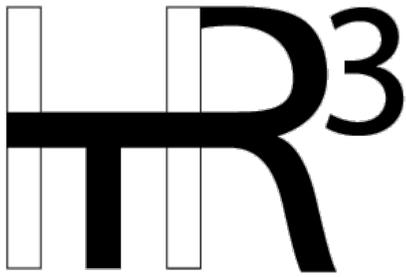
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*Nevada Department of
Child and Family Services*
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NEWS & UPDATES



Human Trafficking Grant

In October, National Safe Place received a one-year, \$351,000 federal grant to provide training to federal runaway and homeless youth grantees to help improve their work with survivors of human trafficking.

Runaway and homeless youth providers who may come into contact with youth involved in human trafficking must have a basic understanding of human trafficking in order to accurately identify victims, provide appropriate and trauma-informed services, and expand the network of services. RHYTTAC will provide human trafficking training resources to more than

400 runaway and homeless youth service grantees. The human trafficking framework to support this initiative focuses on the following areas: recognition, respect and response. The project is officially identified as HT-R3 to reflect the three human trafficking focus areas.

Phoenix's Light Rail System Participates in Safe Place Program

Valley Metro partnered with Tumbleweed Center for Youth Development in Phoenix to establish each of its 28 light-rail stations as Safe Place loca-



tions. Valley Metro is the second light-rail system in the country to participate in the program. Teens in crisis can access immediate help by using an emergency call box at any Valley Metro light-rail station.

Ginny McCormick

National Safe Place is excited to welcome Ginny McCormick to the Board of Directors. She serves as the Senior Director of Digital Marketing for Hasbro, Inc. and is affiliated with the iMedia Summit Board of Advisors, Taproot Foundation of Boston and Child and Family Services of Boston.

Tom Patania

National Safe Place is pleased to recognize the contributions of Tom Patania, who recently resigned from the Board of Directors after two years of service. Tom's talent and insight will be missed. National Safe Place and the Board of Directors are grateful for his leadership and wish him the very best in his future endeavors.

Upcoming Events

National Safe Place Network looks forward to several exciting events in 2014, including a clinician's retreat, "Technical Assistance for Programs by Programs" (TAPP) retreat, executive leadership retreat, and a national conference. The 2014 national conference will take place on Oct. 1-3 in Louisville, Ky.

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Volunteers sorting and packing clothing items.



Teens from Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth pose for a photo with their shipment of new, donated clothing items.

"At the time we received these donations, we were very low on socks, undergarments, and weather-appropriate clothing," said Pollard. "Las Vegas was still reasonable warm at the time we received the donations, but two weeks later the Vegas valley was hit with inclement weather. Without the hoodies, jeans, and other items, we would not have been able to provide so many homeless teens with clothing for the winter."

Jessica Sodeke contributed to this article

TXT 4 HELP Q&A

With: Maria Huebner MSW, LCSW,
Follow-Up Programs Manager, BHR

TXT 4 HELP is a 24/7 text-for-support service for teens in crisis. The service, which is available nationwide, was initially launched in 2009 and then re-launched in 2012 with an interactive texting component. The interactive service is operated by Behavioral Health Response (BHR). Maria Huebner graciously agreed to participate in an interview about TXT 4 HELP Interactive.

A youth uses TXT 4 HELP and decides to text interactively for more help. Please explain the interactive texting exchange, how it works, and talk about the individuals replying to the messages.

Youth in crisis can text the word "SAFE" and their current location to 69866 and they will receive an address to the nearest Safe Place site and contact numbers for the local youth shelters in their area. In cities that don't have a Safe Place Program, users will receive the name and number of the youth shelter or if there is no local youth shelter, the National Runaway Safeline number (1-800-RUN-AWAY) will be provided. At that time, users will also receive the option to engage with a live crisis counselor via text by replying with "2CHAT." Then they will be connected to a crisis counselor at BHR. All inbound texts are answered by a Masters-Level Counselor at BHR, who will determine the teen's needs, assess for any safety concerns, work to develop a plan to address needs and assist with linkage to appropriate referrals. BHR's goal is to get youth linked directly to local resources via brief assessment, engagement and plan development to appropriate referrals.

What is the most common issue teens are struggling with when they use the TXT 4 HELP interactive service?

The main trend we see is youth seeking emergency housing because they report their parents have kicked them out of their home. Most of these youth are reporting no safety concerns, but requesting emergency housing.

What protocols do the operators follow when they believe a

young person's life is in danger due to thoughts of suicide or allegations of abuse?

BHR's main goal is to ensure a young person's immediate safety. BHR will first determine a teen's reason for using TXT 4 HELP and assess whether the youth is currently safe. If the teen reports they are not safe, the crisis counselor will explore more about the nature of their safety concerns before taking appropriate action. The crisis counselor will explore the following safety questions: any current thoughts of suicide and/or thoughts of self-harming behaviors, any current homicidal thoughts, being abused and/or at risk of violence by others and/or is there any medical emergencies that needs to be addressed. If a youth reports any of these immediate safety concerns, and is unable to develop a collaborative safety plan and/or a youth is under 18, being abused and is with the abuser, then BHR will begin to ensure the youth's safety. BHR's crisis counselors will reach out to a teen via phone, if the teen agrees, to gather more appropriate assessment information. If not, the crisis counselor will continue to build rapport via text to get the necessary assessment information and will contact local emergency services with the teen's location information. The crisis counselor will also make an emergency hotline report to the young person's local state child/abuse hotline when warranted. BHR always follows up on cases where local emergency services are contacted to obtain the final disposition of the situation.

Do you feel the interactive service is an effective way to help youth in need?

National Safe Place's TXT 4 HELP service is very beneficial for youth who are homeless, have immediate safety concerns, and/or being abused. Teens can easily access immediate help via TXT 4 HELP to connect with a crisis counselor 24/7 wherever they are. With the expansion of technology, youth are more comfortable and receptive to texting for help versus using the phone to call for help. Youth also find texting to be a safer way to express their needs, as they can remain anonymous when trying to get appropriate referrals. They like the non-judgmental approach of texting for help.

Do you have a TXT 4 HELP interactive success story to share?

Client Information:

Age: 17 years old

Location: Memphis, Tennessee

Gender: Female

A youth used TXT 4 HELP Interactive and reported that her mother had threatened to hurt her. She was requesting somewhere urgent to stay. The crisis counselor inquired if she had called the police and she denied. The counselor then asked the girl if she could go to a neighbor's house or a friend's house, and she denied. The teen agreed to speak with the crisis counselor on the phone and she reported her mother has taken the doorknob off her door and she does not feel comfortable sleeping at her house tonight. The teen agreed to make a three-way call with the crisis counselor to local police in her area and the counselor waited on the line with the girl until police arrived. A week or so later, the counselor followed up with local police to get final disposition and they reported that they talked to the youth and her mother and no further action was taken.

TXT 4 HELP

**TEENS
TEXT THE WORD
"SAFE"
AND YOUR
CURRENT LOCATION
(STREET ADDRESS, CITY, STATE)
TO
69866
FOR IMMEDIATE HELP
NOW WITH THE OPTION FOR
INTERACTIVE TEXTING**

SAFE PLACE

For more information contact National Safe Place
1-888-290-7233 or www.nationalsafeplace.org

RHYTTAC

Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center

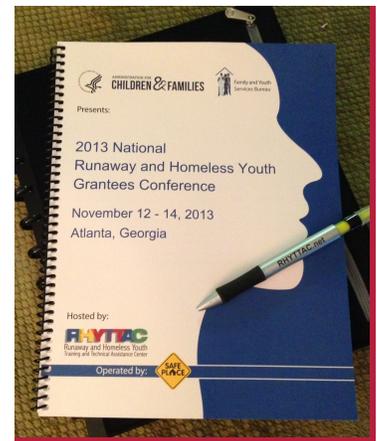
RHYTTACmosphere Review

2013 National RHY Grantees Conference

The 2013 FYSB RHY Grantees Conference held November 11-14 in Atlanta, Georgia was well received by the more than 600 attending grantees and Federal partners. The conference featured Federal updates on Human Trafficking and the Affordable Care Act, 54 training workshops, and two pre-institute trainings on LGBTQ issues and Child Sex Trafficking, eight roundtable discussion sessions and featured keynote sessions by D.J. Eagle Bear Vanas and Kevin Ryan who was joined by Tina Kelley. Three community site



visits were sponsored including trips to the Carter Center Library and Museum, the King Center, and the Young Adult Guidance Center. The event provided opportunities for sharing and support among all participants, relationship building and networking, and time to practice much needed self care and care for others. Thanks to everyone for making the event a productive and rewarding experience.



Upcoming Events



Facilitated and Recorded Webinars are routinely available. Please visit our events calendar on rhyttac.net for details and to access eLearning.



Join us for "Talk It Out Thursdays"! These conference calls are opportunities for staff from RHY programs to join in for an hour long discussion regarding a variety

of topics. We look forward to "Talking it out" on Thursdays at 3:00pm Eastern Time.

Connect with Us

We want to hear from you! We are available at rhyttac.net and info@rhyttac.net. You can engage with our team and other grantees through:



[facebook.com/rhyttac](https://www.facebook.com/rhyttac)



[@rhyttac](https://twitter.com/rhyttac)



[/watchrhyttac](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhyttac)



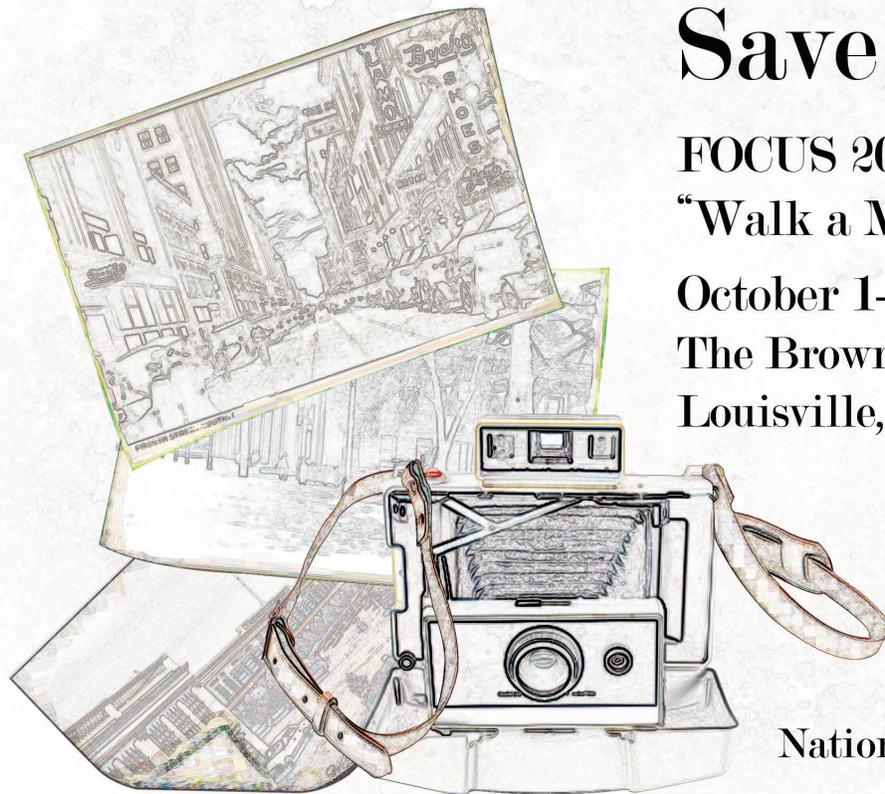
Available to RHY Grantees at rhyttac.net

Operated by



The *Connection*

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Louisville, KY 40217



Save the Date

FOCUS 2014

“Walk a Mile in My Shoes”

October 1-3, 2014

The Brown Hotel

Louisville, Kentucky

Presented by:



National Safe Place Network