



Champions of Change in the Fight against Child and Youth Homelessness



Champion of Change:
Sherilyn Adams, Executive Director
Larkin Street Youth Services
San Francisco, CA

"All young people—regardless of their life circumstances—deserve the chance to reach their full potential."

Sherilyn Adams, LCSW, is executive director of Larkin Street Youth Services, San Francisco's largest nonprofit provider serving the diverse needs of homeless and runaway youth. Sherilyn has over 20 years of experience in the nonprofit social service sector, where she's managed a variety of programs; she came to Larkin Street in 2003, pursuing a lifelong passion to serve children and teens. Larkin Street Youth Services was founded in 1984 as a neighborhood effort to divert homeless youth from San Francisco's streets and is now San Francisco's most comprehensive non-profit agency committed to meeting the unique needs of homeless and runaway youth, offering 25 programs operating from 15 sites citywide.

Over the past 28 years, Larkin Street has grown into a nationally and internationally recognized leader in the youth services field by offering innovative, effective, and replicable solutions to youth homelessness in San Francisco. The agency provides a robust continuum of services that includes emergency, transitional, and permanent housing; wraparound case management; primary and behavioral health care; and education and employment support to help youth build the skills they need for long-term, sustainable self-sufficiency.

Community Need

Larkin Street estimates that 5,700 youth between the ages of 12 and 24 find themselves without a safe place to call home every year in San Francisco. While there is no standard demographic profile for the youth Larkin Street serves—they represent every race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, and socioeconomic background—they share common histories of abuse and neglect. Many are products of the child welfare or juvenile justice system; most have profound educational deficits and no work history; and few have had any positive adult role models in their lifetimes.

Each week, the White House *Champions of Change* program highlights the stories and examples of Americans, businesses, or organizations who embody 'Innovate, Educate, and Build.' Different groups are highlighted each week ranging from educators to entrepreneurs to community activists. USICH and the White House Office of Public Engagement hosted an event on July 12, 2012 at the White House to honor those who are "Winning the Future" and who further empower and inspire other members of their respective communities. The Champions honored here truly embody innovative, inclusive, and holistic approaches to child and youth homelessness in their communities.

*The keys to Larkin Street Youth Services' success include: a deep commitment to **rigorous strategic planning**, the agency commits significant resources every three or five years to assess successes and service gaps and to create a sound plan to guide future work; **infrastructure investment**, a strong organization requires adequate facilities, administrative support, and technology that keep pace with program growth; and **an exceptional leadership team**, Larkin Street has the right people in place on the senior staff team and Board of Directors to ensure an ambitious, unified vision and the ability to operationalize it.*

Innovation on the Ground

Larkin Street offers an innovative model of care for homeless youth that supports three key long-term outcomes: (1) housing stability, (2) sustainable employment, and (3) completion of at least two years of post-secondary education.

The model is a comprehensive approach offering youth experiencing homelessness everything from emergency shelter to permanent housing, from medical care to life skills training, and from crisis intervention to college scholarships.

Larkin Street offers designated housing programs for HIV+ youth and youth who are LGBTQ, and is at the forefront of pioneering education and employment programs—like the Postsecondary Success Initiative—for this vulnerable and hard-to-reach population.

Impact

Larkin Street Youth Services serves more than 3,000 youth (ages 12 – 24) annually through its programs. Even as the need for services increases and resources dwindle throughout the recessionary economy, Larkin Street's impact is profound: three out of four youth who complete a Larkin Street housing program secures stable housing, leaving the street life behind. As a sign of strength and growth, Larkin Street added 86 new transitional housing beds for youth in San Francisco since 2007, increasing the citywide capacity by 50 percent. Currently, 24 more beds are in the pipeline for 2014.

Community Partners

Larkin Street Youth Services partners widely, working with corporations to place youth in internships, housing developers to ensure youth are part of homeless services citywide, and educators so youth succeed at City College of San Francisco. Larkin Street's goals for these partnerships are to: (1) improve the life chances of homeless and housed disconnected youth citywide; and (2) raise the bar for nonprofit leaders advocating for the sector.

Federal Resources

Larkin Street Services has a \$14 million operating budget supported by a diversity of funding, including approximately 23 percent city funding, 20 percent state funding, 19 percent federal funding, and 27 percent from private funding (foundation, corporate, and individual). Key federal funders include the Health Resources and Services Administration (Part D funding to support services for HIV+ youth) and the Administration for Children and Families (funding supports street outreach, shelter and drop-in services, and transitional housing).



Larkin Street Youth Services, San Francisco, CA



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Champion of Change:
Tim Baack, Executive Vice President
Pathfinders
Milwaukee, WI

“Pathfinders offers safety, hope, and healing to traumatized youth – and it is the youth themselves, as well as the extremely talented, caring, and creative staff I am honored to work with – who most inspire me.”

Tim Baack currently serves as Executive Vice President of Pathfinders in Milwaukee, WI. Under his leadership, Pathfinders added two new major programs: the Youth Outreach Drop-In Center and the Q-BLOK LGBT Young Adults Housing Initiative. A strong advocate on behalf of disadvantaged youth and families, Mr. Baack also serves as Board President of the Wisconsin Association for Homeless and Runaway Services, a statewide membership organization that promotes best practice standards and positive youth development methods on behalf of runaway and homeless youth serving agencies.

Established in 1970, Pathfinders’ broad continuum of services brings safety, hope and healing to thousands of ethnically and culturally diverse, low-income youth dealing with homelessness, family conflict, trauma, mental health issues, and sexual abuse. The organization’s mission is *to help youth and families in need take charge of their lives, connect to others, and contribute to the community.*

Community Need

According to the Milwaukee Public School’s Homeless Education Program, an estimated 3,000 youth under the age of 18 are currently homeless. For transitioning young adults (18 through 25), exceptionally high school drop-out and unemployment rates lead to even greater risk of exploitation and homelessness. Recent research also provides evidence of disproportionately high rates of trauma and homelessness amongst LGBT-identified young people – youth who remain consistently marginalized and discriminated against by both the community at-large as well as by well-intended but ill-informed local service providers.

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There is an important phrase in the RHY field regarding youth work: “No talking about us without us.” When youth are allowed to use their own voice to communicate what services and resources they need, then effective and well utilized programs can result.

Innovation on the Ground

Positive youth development is the cornerstone of the work Pathfinders accomplishes on behalf of its runaway and homeless youth clients. Youth are members of the paid and volunteer staff, and identified “emerging youth leaders” are provided important leadership and program development opportunities. Youth have a real and meaningful say in what services, programs, and resources are developed and provided throughout Pathfinders.

Impact

Outcomes are an essential element to all the programs and services offered by Pathfinders. Annually, over 90 percent of runaway and homeless youth leave emergency shelter care to return to their families or to an acceptable safe alternative, and more than 80 percent of young adults in Q-BLOK demonstrate effective independent living skills, keep their own apartment, and achieve success with school and/or employment. Over 85 percent of youth served via street-based outreach evidence positive changes and reduced risk of sexual exploitation, and nearly 95 percent of case managed youth in the Drop-In Center evidence substantial progress in improving their school status, demonstrating independent living skills, and securing employment.

Community Partners

Collaborations are necessary to effectively utilize limited resources to construct the comprehensive RHY services Pathfinders provides. From the beginning, the agency’s Street Beat street outreach program has been in equal collaboration with another RHY provider in Milwaukee. The Pathfinders Outreach Drop-In Center was designed at every step with community and youth input that was solicited and utilized to build the only drop-in services available for Milwaukee’s homeless youth. Through a network of commitments, educational, employment, physical and mental health, and prevention services are provided at the Drop-In

Center by a variety of community partners. Likewise, Q-BLOK started as a collaboration of a foster care program, an LGBT youth program, and a youth transitioning to adulthood program. It remains so five years after its initial design and three years after its first funding collaboration.

Federal Resources

Pathfinders receives federal funding from a variety resources. HHS, Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs support includes Basic Center Program, emergency Youth Shelter, and Street Outreach Program funds— providing primary resources to both the Street Outreach and Drop-In Center programs.

Federal Title IVB, Community Development Block Grant, and HUD Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding further support the RHY services of Pathfinders. Significant support from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)-HPRP helped launch the agency’s Q-BLOK LGBT Young Adults Housing Initiative, and HUD ESG resources (although on much more modest scale than HPRP) will help to sustain the program.



Pathfinders Youth Street Demonstration, 2011



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Champion of Change:

Steve Bewsey, Director of Housing Lifeworks Youth

Austin, TX

“A ‘Relentless Optimism’ for the capacity of people to change through their own strengths.”

Steve Bewsey is the Director of Housing and Homelessness Services for Youth at LifeWorks in Austin, Texas. He is responsible for the oversight of a comprehensive continuum of programs for runaway and homeless youth which include a street outreach, emergency shelter, transitional living program, a maternity group home, and a supportive housing program. After discharging from the Marine Corps in 1970, Steve began what is now, a 40 year career working with youth.

LifeWorks’ goal is to build strong resilient families. Through a strengths-based and comprehensive manner, Lifeworks programs are designed to provide a holistic approach to care that supports youth and families to achieve their goals and self-sufficiency. LifeWorks has identified four basic cornerstones necessary to this scale of success: Counseling, Housing, Education/Workforce, and Youth Development.

Community Need

The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing and LifeWorks’ Street Outreach Program surveyed Austin’s homeless youth (16 to 20 yrs) and found 27 percent of youth interviewed had been in the foster care system and 51 percent reported a history of sexual abuse. Runaway and homeless youth rarely access wellness services, including medical and dental examinations or counseling services; however, approximately 25 percent of the youth served by Lifeworks are depressed or have suicidal tendencies; 30 percent have disclosed a substance abuse problem; 70 percent have experienced abuse or neglect, and 40 percent have been affected by domestic violence.

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Programming must be client driven and meet the client ‘where they are,’ from the street through the continuum of housing, workforce training, education, and mental health services. Collaboration must occur, not only with the youth, but with their families, with funders, and with the community.

Innovation on the Ground

Lifeworks, Housing and Homelessness division focuses on runaway and homeless youth, youth aging out of care, and young parents. Lifeworks has adopted a strengths-based approach to engaging youth and providing of care. LifeWorks strength-based approach is anchored by the following:

- (1) change will only occur when the youth feels “cared for,”
- (2) “people are not the problem, the problem is the problem,” and
- (3) meet the youth where he/she is in the moment.

In the Housing and Homelessness division, each youth has a dedicated case manager and on-going service plan that sets both short and long term goals and outlines service engagement. The service plan is driven by the needs and goals of the client and is focused on leveraging their strengths and skills.

Impact

Every youth engaged in Lifeworks services, defines success in their own way—if they feel successful, then Lifeworks has made an impact. At LifeWorks, every night close to 100 youth and their families are safely housed. Later this year, LifeWorks will break ground on a 45-unit affordable apartment complex which will expand capacity to provide safe and stable housing for clients.

Community Partners

Lifeworks partners with both the public and the private entities including, the Austin Police Department and St. David’s Foundation, to enhance the provision of services for youth. LifeWorks founded the Street Outreach program—the first only local outreach program for runaway/homeless youth living on the street—as a multi-agency and multi-sector collaboration.

Federal Resources

LifeWorks has an annual budget of \$10.5 million, of which 70 percent is from federal and state funding. LifeWorks receives federal funding from several agencies including, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs, Basic Center, Transitional Living, Maternity Group Home, and Street Outreach Programs. LifeWorks also receives support from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice-Office of Violence against Women.



Champions of Change in the Fight against Child and Youth Homelessness



Champion of Change:

**Frank Cirillo, Director of Welfare
Mercer County Board of Social Services**

Trenton, NJ

"Homelessness is a condition that does not reflect the value of families we serve: the stability of a home and the empowerment of employment can make them realize their full potential."

Frank Cirillo is the Director of the Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBOSS). He has over 40 years of experience at MCBOSS in administering a variety of social service programs, including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, NJSNAP (Food Stamp Program), General Assistance, Adult Protective Services, Work First New Jersey (WFNJ), and Child Support. Under his direction, MCBOSS has continued and expanded upon its tradition of developing strong and effective governmental and community partnerships in implementing program reforms and advocating for new and creative efforts in addressing the challenges confronting poor and working poor individuals and families.

Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBOSS) and its funding and provider partners have an agreement to use their roles to re-shape services to homeless families in the community. The county was one of 23 communities selected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to implement the federal Rapid Re-housing Demonstration for Families. MCBOSS received permission from the State of New Jersey to use the 18-month rental assistance vouchers, normally reserved for families transitioning off TANF cash assistance, to help homeless families reconnect to housing as part of the pilot initiative. MCBOSS uses its role to educate local partners about rapid re-housing, testing the new approach, monitoring implementation, and evaluating program and system-level outcomes.

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A comprehensive evaluation and determination of the most effective interventions for preventing and ending homelessness are essential to successful outcomes for families. Family homelessness can be addressed using existing resources by effectively reorganizing current staff and taking a systematic approach to providing targeted services. Rapid re-housing, and an aggressive use of Temporary Rental Assistance and other emergency assistance alternatives can be extremely effective when used as front-end interventions in combating family homelessness.

Innovation on the Ground

Using TANF resources, the MCBOSS has been able to provide direct services to homeless families and successfully link them to employment services to create an effective path to self sufficiency and permanent, sustainable housing.

Housing Now and the *Family Housing Initiative* are successful in rapidly re-housing families and have them transition off of TANF through employment. The Family Housing Initiative is unique because MCBOSS was also able to divert families at imminent risk of homelessness by the use of temporary rental assistance and more intensive case management. The Family Housing Initiative allowed MCBOSS to reshape the way they provided assistance to TANF families, and further drive down cost by using existing agency staff to provide the services.

Community Need

A year-long study (2008-2009) of the family homeless services system raised concerns about how the homeless system functioned in preventing and ending homelessness. In addition to the high cost of “services as usual,” (\$6 million in public expenditures for shelter and transitional housing) families’ needs were not uniformly assessed or met, and there seemed to be little correlation between the complexity of families’ needs and the duration of homeless episodes, or the intensity of services delivered.

Impact

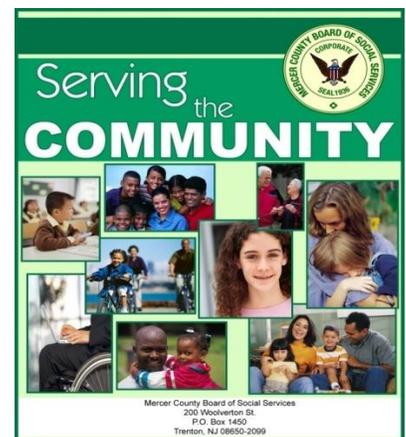
The *Housing Now* and *Family Housing Initiative* have demonstrated significant cost savings in combating family homelessness by reducing the number of families served by shelter and transitional housing programs by nearly one-third on any given day over the last three years. Since the implementation of *Housing Now*, 53 percent of the participants are independent of housing and TANF supports, while their monthly income increased on average by \$1200. Fifty-one percent of 124 TANF families served by the *Family Housing Initiative* have gone off assistance, and 71 families are still using temporary rental assistance while receiving case management services to increase income through employment.

Community Partners

MCBOSS collaborates with variety of state and local partners, including the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness, the State of New Jersey, Division of Family Development, the County of Mercer, the City of Trenton, and Catholic Charities.

Federal Resources

MCBOSS supports its services for families experiencing homelessness through several federal funding sources, including TANF funds and HPRP funds.





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Champion of Change:
Sol Flores, Executive Director
La Casa Norte
Chicago, IL

"We believe that housing is a human right, which all people deserve to have, regardless of their condition. It is my greatest personal and professional privilege to be of service to others and live out my personal values of justice and love."

In 2002, Sol Flores became the founding Executive Director of La Casa Norte (LCN), a community based organization whose mission is to serve youth and families confronting homelessness. Since opening their doors, LCN has helped more than 20,000 homeless and at-risk individuals. By offering access to stable housing and delivering comprehensive services, LCN acts as a catalyst to transform lives and communities. With Sol's infectious enthusiasm, boundless energy, intelligence and entrepreneurship, LCN is reshaping the physical infrastructure of the Humboldt Park neighborhood and rebuilding broken lives to foster hope, stable homes, and healthy communities.

La Casa Norte has created a continuum of program services serving unaccompanied homeless youth and children in a culturally competent manner. services include: Casa Corazon, a homeless youth engagement initiative focused on outreach, case management, and drop in center services; the Solid Ground Program, a two year transitional housing facility for male youth aged 16-21; a Scattered Site permanent supportive housing program, for chronically homeless youth aged 16-24; and a housing advocacy program, for youth and families involved in the child welfare system with a housing crisis.

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La Casa Norte recognized the critical importance of doing advocacy with and on behalf of youth and families. We learned early on that funders and policy makers did not always comprehend our client's needs and strengths, so the onus was on us to educate and advocate for policies, resources and services. The other major lesson learned was the importance of our human capital development; nurturing and supporting excellent professional staff that act in partnership with clients to drive outcomes and positive change.

Innovation on the Ground

A major element of La Casa Norte's innovation in serving youth and children is the intentional integration of trauma-informed care and harm reduction services. In order to drive client-centered positive outcomes, this model is integrated at every level of the organization. Positive staff and client interactions are key to engaging youth and families experiencing homelessness.

To address the shortage of housing available for chronically homeless youth, La Casa Norte helped to create a permanent supportive housing track for chronically homeless youth (single and family households) in Chicago, which until recently, was an unrecognized and underserved population.

Community Need

Chicago Public Schools reports 3,682 students were homeless during the 2009-2010 school year. The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless estimates that 11,471 youth ages 18-21 were homeless during that same time period. To date, Chicago only has 189 beds dedicated exclusively for youth experiencing homelessness.

Impact

On average 84 percent of youth exiting La Casa Norte's transitional housing program move to permanent housing. Ninety-two percent of these youth also experience housing stability in the year following their departure from La Casa Norte. On average 45 percent of youth who engage in case management through the drop in center program move off the streets to a housing placement. La Casa Norte has an 87 percent retention rate in housing stability for families with children who receive homelessness prevention assistance.

Community Partners

La Casa Norte works closely with shelters and services providers and various other public and private collaborative working groups which have been instrumental in coordinating and building Chicago's response to youth homelessness. A strong partner of particular note is the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness, the local Continuum of Care.

Federal Resources

Approximately 20 percent of La Casa Norte's total budget is federal funding. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provides funding for project based youth housing and the scattered site youth housing. In FY12, La Casa Norte also received a DHHS-HRSA planning grant to explore the development of a federally qualified healthcare center for homeless youth and families in La Casa Norte's target area in Chicago.





Champions of Change in the Fight against Child and Youth Homelessness



Champion of Change:

Paul W. Hamann, President and C.E.O.

The Night Ministry

Chicago, IL

"Everyone deserves to have a chance to develop their full potential as a member of society and as a human being; I try to create the environment or context for that to happen."

Paul W. Hamann is the President and C.E.O. of The Night Ministry. Founded in 1976, The Night Ministry is a Chicago-based nonprofit organization that provides housing, healthcare, and human connection to members of the Chicago community who are struggling with poverty or homelessness. Paul joined The Night Ministry in 2002 as Director of Finance and Administration and has led the organization since 2007. As President, Paul provides leadership and vision for The Night Ministry, working closely with the Board of Directors. After graduating Suma Cum Laude from Ohio Dominican College, Paul obtained two graduate degrees: one in Theology with an emphasis on social justice teachings and the other in Nonprofit Administration. Prior to joining The Night Ministry, Paul was Executive Director of Families on Track, a San Francisco nonprofit. In addition, he served on the faculty of the University of San Francisco, teaching Public Administration.

Through The Night Ministry's Health Outreach Bus, Youth Outreach Van, and four Youth Shelter Programs, The Night Ministry works on the ground in Chicago's neighborhoods to reach vulnerable adults and teens.

Community Need

Every year in Chicago approximately 10,000 youth experience homelessness. However, there are less than 250 shelter beds to serve this vulnerable population.

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Create a programmatic environment in which **participants are accepted for who they are** at this particular point in their lives and accept them without question. **Be flexible in programmatic design** so as to be able to respond to changing environments. **Be relentless and unflinching** in the quest to improve service delivery, to achieve excellence, and to meet the needs of various constituents.

Innovation on the Ground

The Night Ministry provides homeless and precariously housed youth with a continuum of services that addresses their immediate needs while affirming their sense of humanity.

Our Response-Ability Pregnant and Parenting Program (RAPPP) is the only shelter in Chicago that will work with pregnant or parenting teen girls as young as 14. RAPPP empowers homeless, pregnant and parenting girls by providing them with resources to meet their basic needs and build a sense of competence, usefulness, control, and belonging. The program increases housing safety and stability, strengthens family relationships, and teaches life and parenting skills.

Transitional Living Program. The Night Ministry also benefits from the Community Development Block Grants that are awarded to the City of Chicago. FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program supports the work of the pregnant and parenting program.

Impact

As a result of RAPPP's services, 85 percent of minors served in the shelter were reunified with a family member or a family-agreed upon placement. Only 11.8 percent of the residents experienced a subsequent pregnancy. At entrance, 13 percent of the girls had earned a high school diploma or GED, at follow-up this increased to 43.1 percent. At intake, 13 percent of the girls reported employment, and, of the unemployed, only 19 percent were rated "job ready." At follow-up, 33.3 percent of the young women were employed with 62.5 percent of the unemployed rated as "job ready."

Community Partners

The Night Ministry considers collaborations within the community to be essential partners in service delivery. Through partnerships with service providers and community volunteers, The Night Ministry shelters become places where youth sleep safely, learn to live independently, build positive relationships with members of the community, and engage with community-based resources that will provide them with health care, counseling, child care, and social services when they move into their own apartments.

Federal Resources

The Night Ministry's work receives funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Night Ministry receives HHS, Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program support, including two Basic Center Program grants, one Street Outreach Grant, and one Transitional Living Program Grant. Housing and Urban Development's Supportive Housing Program supports one of the 120-Day housing programs and the



RAPPP Baby Shower



Champions of Change in the Fight against Child and Youth Homelessness



Champion of Change:

Sparky Harlan, Executive Director and C.E.O.

Bill Wilson Center

Santa Clara, CA

"Watching a child who is experiencing homelessness and who is without hope, become a bright and happy member of a stable family inspires me."

Sparky Harlan is CEO of the Bill Wilson Center (BWC) in Santa Clara, California. Bill Wilson Center provides comprehensive services for homeless youth and young families – from street outreach to permanent supportive housing. Under her leadership, Bill Wilson Center recruited other nonprofit, community and corporate leaders to work together in a county-wide initiative focused on ending youth and family homelessness by 2020.

The Bill Wilson Center's Family Advocacy Services Team (FAST), a school-based homeless prevention and intervention service, was developed by the Bill Wilson Center in 2011 to address the needs of extremely low-income families with high school-aged children enrolled in two local school districts who were either homeless or on the verge of homelessness. FAST provides strengths-based case management to connect families to community and public resources to prevent repeated episodes of homelessness. All case managers/advocates are English/Spanish bi-lingual, bi-cultural and work one on one with the family, who are often mono-lingual Spanish, to address the issues that are impacting their lives and housing stability.

Community Need

Latinos are over-represented in the homeless family population; in two local high schools 50 – 100 at-risk or homeless children were identified with attendance and academic/behavior problems. Seventy percent were Latino/Hispanic. Research

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*The key to the success of FAST is **linking families to the resources** that prevent multiple moves and family homelessness. To ensure the families get connected to services, they **need to be provided at school, in homes, or on the streets** – wherever the families are located. In order to end the generational pattern of homelessness and enable the children to be successful in school, the families must secure stable housing, food, healthcare, improve parenting skills, address substance abuse issues, and address and resolve immigration issues.*

indicates that 43 percent of homeless students repeat a grade, 25 percent are placed in special education, and 50 percent are failing academically.

Innovation on the Ground

The collaboration with two school districts and Bill Wilson Center to form the Family Advocacy Services Team (FAST) prevents family and youth homelessness and, for those already homeless, provides the rapid return of families to stable housing. BWC's Family Advocacy Services Team is innovative in that it provides an on-site social worker to work with the family, not just the identified troubled student. Additionally, FAST provides training to school personnel so that they are more knowledgeable and capable to work with families experiencing homelessness.

receives HHS Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) foster care funds and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding.

Impact

The FAST program will impact families facing homelessness by assisting 75 percent of the families in regaining or maintaining a stable living environment; 80 percent of students from these families will maintain or improve academically, and 80 percent of students will improve their attendance by reducing truancy, call outs, or tardiness.

Community Partners

The Bill Wilson Center works with a variety of community partners in the public and private sector. Community partners that support the work of the FAST program include the Lincoln High School (San Jose Unified School District) and Mt. Pleasant High School (Eastside Unified School District).

Federal Resources

Bill Wilson Center receives funding from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development, including Supportive Housing Program, Community Development Block Grant, and Emergency Shelter Grant. They also receive funding from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services HHS, Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs, including Runaway and Homeless Youth Basic Center, Street Outreach, Transitional Living Program, and Maternity Home Transitional Living Program. Additionally, Bill Wilson Center





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Champion of Change:

Beth McCullough, Homeless Education Liaison & Grant Coordinator

Adrian Public Schools

Adrian, MI

“There is tremendous energy when we make wrong things right.”

Beth McCullough is the Homeless Education Liaison for Adrian Public Schools and the Homeless Education Coordinator for Lenawee County in Michigan. Beth is a certified Montessori Teacher, a limited license psychologist, was the director of a domestic violence shelter, and worked as a psychotherapist and a college instructor for 12 years. In her eleven years in this role, she has crawled under porches to find homeless youth and visited aluminum sheds to rescue children who are using a blue tarp as a blanket. “Education is the answer” is her mantra.

Adrian Public Schools runs the Homeless Education Program for all the public schools in Lenawee County. In addition to ensuring that all homeless students in the county are identified and provided the McKinney-Vento mandates, the Homeless Education Program offers school supplies, clothes, personal care items, and assistance navigating the system of agencies that lead to permanent housing. Parents of students are offered transportation to school events, practices, parents-teacher conferences, and other school related events.

Community Need

In the 2011-2012 school year, Lenawee County identified and served 671 homeless students in the public schools. The Homeless Education Program rallied the community to provide basic needs for these students from food to school supplies, and eventually employment and housing. They currently assist homeless students from Head Start to grade 12.

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*“Listen to the people you are working with. Most homeless individuals I work with are absolutely amazing and I have just met them at the most difficult times of their lives. **Stories are powerful.** I tell these stories, with permission from the students and families, in my weekly essay called *The Sanity Project*. **When people hear these stories, they respond.** They want to help.”*

Innovation on the Ground

With the assistance of the Homeless Youth Committee and Catholic Charities the Homeless Education Program started the "Roadmap to Graduation" program, much like a foreign exchange student program. Families house, mentor, and teach independent living skills to homeless unaccompanied youth. Goodwill Industries also started a program to employ homeless unaccompanied youth.

The Homeless Education Program also started the Homeless Youth Committee, a sub-committee of the local Continuum of Care. There is no youth shelter in Lenawee County and homeless unaccompanied youth were sleeping outside and in abandoned buildings. Through this committee, the Homeless Education Program has been able to develop new ways to assist these students with shelter and employment. The Homeless Education Program offers counseling and therapy to youth, tutoring services, and assistance with enrolling in Head Start.

Impact

The Homeless Education Program's "Roadmap to Graduation" program has been operating for seven years. During that time, 100 percent of students enrolled in the program have graduated high school and 87 percent of these students have gone on to higher education. Last year the Head Start program, in collaboration with the Homeless Education Program, placed a Family Worker in their largest shelter to assist families to enroll in Head Start. In one year they doubled the homeless students enrolled.

Community Partners

All of the school districts in Lenawee County are active in the Homeless Education Program. Catholic Charities, Goodwill Industries, and Dochas II (the Homeless and Runaway Youth Contractor) all have specific programs for homeless youth. The local faith community and business community have also contributed through funds and donations.

Federal Resources

The Homeless Education Program is financially supported through U.S. Department of Education McKinney-Vento funds and 31A at-risk funding. All county school districts use Title 1 homeless set aside funds as well. The Homeless Education Program did receive American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding and all three staff positions added at that time have remained in place, after the end of ARRA funding.



Pajama Rama PJ Pileup



Champions of Change in the Fight against Child and Youth Homelessness



Champion of Change:

Tricia Raikes, Co-founder
Raikes Foundation
Seattle, WA

"We believe in the infinite potential of young people and are committed to finding solutions to catch them before they fall into homelessness. We are inspired to do this work because we know that by working together, across sectors, we can create a system that is better than the sum of its parts."

Tricia Raikes is co-president of the Raikes Foundation where she leads the Foundation's efforts to be a catalyst for innovative, collaborative and pragmatic solutions to helping young people reach their full potential. The Foundation has three core grant-making strategies: a national strategy to develop agency in early adolescents, a Washington-state strategy to strengthen the quality of out-of-school time programs serving youth, and a regional strategy to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness in King County.

Last year, the Raikes Foundation joined other funders, providers, organizations and youth to support an extensive community process to create a plan to tackle this complex problem. *Building Changes*, an intermediary whose focus is to end homelessness in Washington, facilitated a 6-month process to identify an action plan to significantly enhance prevention, coordinated engagement, and data coordination in King County. Over 15 funders, both private and public, convened to help guide the development of the action plan that was unanimously adopted by a group of funders, providers and community partners in spring 2012.

Community Need

It is a tragedy that in King County alone, on any given night, there are at least 1,000 youth experiencing homelessness. And as many as 10,000 youth experience homelessness at some point in the year. Youth homelessness greatly impacts the individual and the community.

Each week, the White House *Champions of Change* program highlights the stories and examples of Americans, businesses, or organizations who embody 'Innovate, Educate, and Build.' Different groups are highlighted each week ranging from educators to entrepreneurs to community activists. USICH and the White House Office of Public Engagement hosted an event on July 12, 2012 at the White House to honor those who are "Winning the Future" and who further empower and inspire other members of their respective communities. The Champions honored here truly embody innovative, inclusive, and holistic approaches to child and youth homelessness in their communities.

Think big and **identify the specific system changes** that need to happen in order to prevent and end youth homelessness but do not try to change everything all at once. Identify and engage **the right people to come to the table** so diverse stakeholders who represent different systems and groups are represented. **Structure a process with clear goals and scope**, a finite timeline, commitment to transparency, and clear roles for different stakeholders. Continue to build on that success for future phases.

Innovation on the Ground

Through *Building Changes*, funders and providers have worked collaboratively and iteratively since fall 2011 to develop a more effective, coordinated regional response to youth/young adult homelessness that knits together and aligns the work of individual service providers and public agencies.

This example of collective impact has brought together an unprecedented number of stakeholders to tackle youth homelessness while leveraging the “lessons learned” from the region’s successful efforts to address chronic adult homelessness and family homelessness. It’s our hope that the “upstream” investments in systems enhancement strategies will divert youth/young adults from becoming homeless; decrease the length of time youth/young adults are homeless; and decrease the chance that they will return to homelessness.

Seattle/King County community benefit from various federal funding sources that support youth/young adults who are experiencing homelessness including HHS, Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs, HUD programs, Child welfare programs, etc. but the local planning effort was supported primarily with private funder support.

Impact

The ultimate success is to prevent and end homelessness for youth. While Washington is in the beginning stages of its systems work, there are encouraging signs of early success. Providers have committed to formalizing cross-program engagement, assessment and coordination, to improving data coordination, and to expanding prevention efforts. King County has committed to playing a leadership role in working with providers, the City of Seattle, and other funders to implement the three priority strategies, and to develop a long-term plan for housing and services. Multiple funders including the Raikes Foundation, United Way of King County, Medina Foundation and the Giddens Foundation have identified over \$3M in support of the plan’s implementation. King County and King County Housing Authority has also identified some funding to support this work.

Community Partners

Ending youth/young adult homelessness in Seattle/King County is a broad community effort that includes over 15 different private and public funders, including King County’s Committee to End Homelessness. The overall community effort was led by United Way of King County on behalf of King County’s Committee to End Homelessness and facilitated by *Building Changes*, who gathered input from over 100 different stakeholders, including homeless youth and almost all of the agencies/providers who work with youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in the region.

Federal Resources

The nonprofit organizations in



Youth Funder and Task Force meeting where funders, providers and community stakeholders, unanimously adopted the action plan.



Champions of Change in the Fight against Child and Youth Homelessness



Champion of Change:

Margaret Schuelke, Executive Director
Project Community Connections, Inc.
Decatur, GA

"I am inspired each and every time we are able to get a family out of homelessness and into a stable permanent housing."

Margaret Schuelke is the Executive Director of Project Community Connections, Inc., (PCCI). PCCI operates a permanent housing program, that provides a unique and crucial service to the homeless services provider community and its clients. Through rapid re-housing, the program allows homeless service providers to focus on stabilizing clients with case management, while PCCI assumes the task of placing clients into appropriate permanent housing settings within the community. PCCI's comprehensive housing placement program incorporates housing assessment, housing counseling, housing locator services, landlord liaisons, and facilitation of a financial assistance component that supports client move-in costs.

Inspired by a mother and teen-age son struggling with homelessness in 2010, PCCI and four other well-established organizations in Decatur, Georgia joined forces to create the DeKalb KidsHome Collaborative. "KidsHome" partners cross the traditional boundaries between educational and homeless/housing programs to improve student and family outcomes while leveraging resources and eliminating redundant efforts.

Community Need

DeKalb County School social workers report that the number of students identified as homeless has increased by approximately 40 percent over the past three years, surpassing over 2,000 students last year. Unfortunately, schools, housing agencies, and homeless service providers have historically referred families back and forth for resources but rarely worked hand-in-hand to meet the particular needs of school-age children experiencing homelessness. KidsHome came together to serve families that needed shelter, employment, educational support services, and housing search and rental assistance.

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*The key to implementing the KidsHome Collaborative was **identifying the services that are vital to stabilizing homeless families** and then **building partnerships** among organizations that provide those services. Because most communities have organizations that provide each service component that is included in the Collaborative model, forming this kind of collaborative should be possible anywhere. You simply need to be **focused on the mission** and have the **commitment to ending homelessness for children and their families.***

Innovation on the Ground

The KidsHome Collaborative emerged out of recognition that agencies serving people experiencing homelessness need to partner to provide a holistic, yet targeted set of services to their clients. Rather than relying on a long list of local community service organizations, the KidsHome Collaborative members decided to formalize their relationships with each other, creating a sense of trust among partners and comfort knowing that clients will be served appropriately and in a timely manner. Partners have signed formal MOUs, communicate often, and utilize standardized forms and procedures to ensure consistency across

Impact

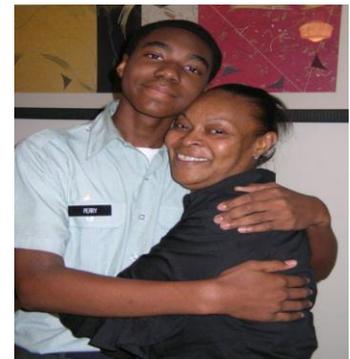
During program design, KidsHome Collaborative members worked with a consultant to help them develop a logic model, that includes the outcomes the Collaborative want to achieve. Currently, partners are developing a shared data management system that is focused on the key outcomes, and each partner needs to track the data necessary to collect and report on those outcomes, including housing stability, income stability, and stable school attendance and performance. To date the Collaborative has successfully placed over 150 individuals into permanent housing.

Community Partners

The DeKalb KidsHome Collaborative addresses the rising needs of families that are homeless and have children enrolled in the DeKalb County School District. Collaborative partners include Project Community Connections, Inc. (PCCI), Decatur Cooperative Ministry (DCM), DeKalb County Public Schools Foundation, and First Step Staffing. All KidsHome Collaborative partners signed formal Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), communicate often, and utilize standardized forms and procedures to ensure consistency across agencies.

Federal Resources

In general, each partner in the DeKalb KidsHome Collaborative utilizes its own resources to support its role in the program, rather than the partners sharing a pool of funds dedicated to program activities. Federal funding for the partners of the Collaborative comes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S.



The family that inspired the KidsHome Collaborative in 2010.

Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant(CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and U.S. Department of Education McKinney-Vento and Title I funds.



Champions of Change in the Fight against Child and Youth Homelessness



Champion of Change:

Deborah Shore, Founder and Executive Director
Sasha Bruce Youthwork
Washington, DC

Sasha Bruce Youthwork holds itself accountable not just for action, but also results. We are driven by a commitment to make a difference in the lives of at-risk youth, families, and communities.

The mission of Sasha Bruce Youthwork is to improve the lives of runaway, homeless, abused, and neglected and at-risk youth and their families in the Washington area. The Sasha Bruce House is the only youth-specific emergency shelter in the nation's capital. SBY seeks to support and empower vulnerable young people and families, return youth to strengthened families whenever possible and provide healthy alternative living for youth and young families when return is not possible.

Community Need

Youth experiencing homelessness in Washington, DC face numerous, concurrent problems such as substance abuse; heightened stress and health problems related to unstable and impoverished living conditions; social isolation exacerbated by a high level of mobility and few social supports; educational deficits and lack of work experience; heightened risk of HIV infection; poor interpersonal and life skills for coping with everyday practical demands; and emotional and behavioral problems related to low self-esteem, depression, suicidal ideation, difficult family circumstances with histories of physical and/or sexual abuse; or other issues needing attention. Few have the experience to make healthy choices without support and, in turn, take more risks to survive which can lead to retraumatization.

Impact

Sasha Bruce Youthwork provides shelter, counseling, life skills training, and positive youth development activities to approximately 1,500 youth and 5,000 family members annually. The organization's work helps young people find safe homes, achieve and maintain good health, create and strengthen supportive and stable families, explore opportunities in education and careers, and become tomorrow's leaders.

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“We have learned that strengthening youth and families supports the development of strong communities. And we believe that we should provide leadership in identifying gaps in the service community and responding when possible with relevant efforts. As an agency, Sasha Bruce Youthwork is committed to putting the power into the hands of the youth – not just for their sake, but for their families as well.”

Innovation on the Ground

For over 30 years Sasha Bruce Youthwork (SBY) has used an approach called *competency-based counseling* which combines a family therapy model (jointly pioneered with the Family Therapy Practice Center, a major contributor to the field of family therapy), and Positive Youth development techniques. This combined approach to clinical support has made SBY an innovator.

The organization has developed a continuum of services to meet both the urgent and longer term needs of clients. We provide an individualized pathway toward self-sufficiency.

To address the needs of youth and families who have experienced trauma or are currently at risk, our approach emphasizes connection and awakening a client’s agency, which fosters critical thinking and motivation to make positive decisions.

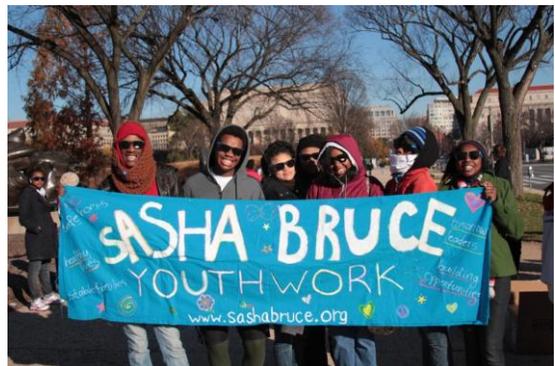
Staff members – counselors, directors or advocates receive considerable training to help clients realize their capacity to grow and imagine a more positive future.

Community Partners

Over 38 years of operation, SBY has developed many significant collaborative relationships with the public and private sectors. SBY’s work with families in Washington, DC’s most troubled communities have fostered strong relationships with a wide range of organizations for client referrals and other service coordination. Partners of particular note include, Riverside Hospital, the Latin American Youth Center, D.C. Central Kitchen.

Federal Resources

Sasha Bruce Youthwork has an annual budget of \$8 million from diverse funding sources including the federal and District government, as well as considerable private sector funds. SBY has long been supported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for its service-enriched supportive housing for homeless teens; the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for emergency shelter and transitional living operations; the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for a variety of HIV prevention and other health promotion services; and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) for workforce development training.



A group of SBY young people at the National Mall doing community service with the National Parks Service.



Champions of Change in the Fight against Child and Youth Homelessness



Champion of Change:
Carl Siciliano, Founder and Executive Director
Ali Forney Center
New York City, NY

“My central inspiration was enduring the tragic deaths of Ali Forney and six other homeless LGBT youths during a time when New York City had no safe shelter for LGBT youth. I never want to see that happen again.”

Carl Siciliano is Executive Director of the Ali Forney Center and a nationally recognized advocate and provider for homeless LGBT youth. He began his career helping to manage shelters, soup kitchens, and residential programs for homeless individuals in New York, Washington, D.C., and Connecticut. His programs have been widely recognized for their quality and innovation. In 2002, Mr. Siciliano founded the Ali Forney Center (AFC), which has grown to become the nation’s largest and most comprehensive housing program for homeless LGBT youth.

Ali Forney Center (AFC) offers a clinically infused comprehensive service model for homeless LGBT youth. Programs include outreach and drop-in services, an emergency shelter, and 30 transitional living beds that are complimented by volunteer life coaches with goals towards independence. AFC also offers outreach and technical assistance to other organization currently servicing or looking to service homeless LGBT youth. Additionally, AFC is dedicated to promoting awareness of the plight of homeless LGBT youth both in NYC and nationally.

Community Need

There are an estimated 3,800 homeless youth on the streets of NYC; 1,600 identified as LGBT. On average, AFC sees 1,000 unduplicated clients a year through their scattered site program (outreach, drop-in, shelter, and housing sites). In 2011, they found that nearly half of the young people came from outside of the Greater New York City area and the other half came from within New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

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It is important to accept and affirm LGBT youth for who they are. It is important to recognize the impact of trauma and rejection in their lives. It is important to empower them to envision a successful future for themselves.

Innovation on the Ground

AFC offers a complete spectrum of supportive services for these young people. AFC has developed the first and only comprehensive model for homeless LGBT youth that provides wrap around services including outreach, mental and medical services, including crises intervention, from the moment contact is made. AFC is the only homeless LGBT agency that offers programs that support youth from the streets and all the way to independence. This step-by-step approach proves to be most beneficial in helping young people transform their lives with a constant support system.

Impact

At the present time 75 percent of the young people Ali Forney Center encounters on the streets or who are referred to them continue to participate in programs for more than a year. Seventy-seven percent of clients living in AFC's transitional living program are enrolled in college or higher-learning and 99 percent are employed.

Community Partners

The Ali Forney Center collaborates with well over a dozen government, community, and nationally based organizations to not only provide the most comprehensive and tailored services for homeless LGBT youth in its program, but to also further systemic change for this issue. Key service partners include Care for the Homeless and the Anti-Violence Project to provide AFC clients with on-site medical services and relationship/interpersonal violence management.

Federal Resources

Ali Forney Center receives funding from two U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding sources under the Continuum of Care (COC) to benefit their housing program. AFC also receives funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMSHA) and Office of Violence against Women (OVW) towards case management and other supportive services.



A graduation ceremony for youths moving on to their own apartments upon completing their stay in the Ali Forney Center Transitional Living Program



Champions of Change in the Fight against Child and Youth Homelessness



Champion of Change:

Lisa Stambolis, Director of Pediatric and Adolescent Health

Health Care for the Homeless, Inc.

Baltimore City, MD

"I'm inspired by the passionate and caring people I work with at HCH and in my community. This of course includes the youth I work with whose determination and zeal for improving their lives and those of their peers is seemingly infinite."

Lisa Stambolis, RN, CPNP, is the Director of Pediatric and Adolescent Health at Health Care for the Homeless, Inc (HCH) in Baltimore City, Maryland. Lisa has been exclusively in the field of public health for nearly 20 years and in her role as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, she has been providing health care to children and youth in Baltimore City, settings which include school based health centers, emergency shelters, and street reach. She has helped create an innovative primary care clinic for homeless children and was instrumental in helping legislation get passed in Maryland that will allow unaccompanied youth the right to consent to their medical treatment.

For 26 years, Health Care for the Homeless has been Maryland's leading provider of comprehensive primary care, addiction treatment, mental health, and case management services for men, women, and children experiencing homelessness. HCH has long been committed to the integration of advocacy and direct service, facilitating broader changes needed to prevent and end homelessness.

Community Need

In 2009, two point-in-time studies found 781 young people, age 10-24, homeless or unstably housed in Baltimore City, and 22 percent of all shelter users under age 17. Few shelters can accommodate youth, and there is often little transition planning when youth leave state custody. The youth that the clinics see tend to be young parents who have not completed high school, youth who have been abandoned by their parents because they are LGBTQ, and youth that are in and out of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

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*Consistency is everything. We are successful because we have a program that **emphasizes continuity of care** by health care professionals, to homeless youth, in the clinic and out in the streets. Consistency extends outside the parameters of our clinic walls as our clinicians are actively involved and engaged in advocacy and coalition building, which has been instrumental in getting legislation passed on a state level. By **pooling our resources and working together with our community partners**, we are able to accomplish more than we ever would have on our own.*

Innovation on the Ground

The integrated clinic-outreach model is the key to engaging homeless youth. The nurse practitioner or social worker that the youth sees at the shelter is the same provider they will see in the clinic. This consistency builds trust and makes it less threatening for the youth to come to the clinic where s/he can receive an array of preventive health care. This approach is also innovative in that it facilitates the trust needed for youth to participate in the public policy decisions that impact them.

Services Administration (12 percent of their annual budget). They are also funded through the Ryan White Care Act and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funding (PATH and block grant funds). HCH also receives Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement for allowable services provided to those who are eligible and enrolled.

Impact

HCH has long provided services, outreach and advocacy, but in the past two years, they have expanded the number of children and youth served as well as passed legislation specifically aimed at reducing barriers to medical care for homeless youth. Moreover, youth connected to HCH are developing their own drop-in center—a level of engagement that would not have been possible absent the principled commitment to outreach and advocacy.

Community Partners

HCH works directly with shelters and other service providers, a wide array of coalitions working to address issues of poverty and poor health and homelessness. Of particular note are the Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative, the Coalition for Homeless Children and Families, and the Youth Empowered Society. HCH is particularly proud of their relationship with funders, who enable their work, including CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield who sponsored the capital costs of building their pediatric clinic.

Federal Resources

HCH has over 40 funding streams; however, the largest federal funding source is the health center grant from Health Resources and



Young patients like Amanda get both smiles and a well-baby check from Nurse Lisa.