

Transitional Living Program

Family and Youth Services Bureau Transitional Living Program for Older Homeless Youth

History

Thousands of young people run away from their homes or become homeless in the United States each year. Since 1975, under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (JJDPA), as amended, the Federal Government has funded emergency shelter programs for runaway and homeless youth that provide for the immediate needs of these youth and their families and promote family reunification. Unfortunately, however, many young people living on the streets today cannot return to their homes. Some have escaped abusive situations; others are the victims of neglect, abandonment, or severe family conflict.

In response to the growing concern for these youth, Congress determined that many young people need long-term, supportive assistance that emergency shelter programs were not designed to provide. As a result, Congress created the Transitional Living Program for Older Homeless Youth (TLP) as part of the 1988 Amendments to Title III of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act within the JJDPA. The TLP was modeled after several successful demonstration projects funded in the early 1980s by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Congress assigned administration of the TLP to the DHHS. The DHHS' Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) funded the first TLP projects in 1990.

Purpose

The Transitional Living Program is part of FYSB's Runaway and Homeless Youth Program. Through the TLP, FYSB supports projects that provide longer term residential services to homeless youth ages 16-21 for up to 18 months. These services are designed to help youth who are homeless make a successful transition to self-sufficient living.

TLP grantees are required to provide youth with stable, safe living accommodations and services that help them develop the skills necessary to move to independence. Living accommodations may be host family homes, group homes, or supervised apartments. (Supervised apartments are either agency-owned apartment buildings or scattered site apartments, which are single-occupancy apartments rented directly by young people with support from the agency.)

In addition, FYSB encourages its grantee programs to support young people through a youth development approach. That approach suggests that the best way to prevent young people's involvement in risky behavior is to help them achieve their full potential. Youth development strategies, therefore, focus on giving young people the chance to exercise leadership, build skills, and become involved in their communities. The youth development approach also acknowledges that helping young people requires strengthening families and communities.

Services Provided

TLP grantees all offer the following services, either directly or by referral:

Basic life-skill building, including consumer education and instruction in budgeting, using credit, housekeeping, menu planning, and food preparation

Interpersonal skill building, including enhancing young people's abilities to establish positive relationships with peers and adults, make decisions, and manage stress

Educational opportunities, such as GED preparation, postsecondary training, or vocational education

Assistance in job preparation and attainment, such as career counseling and job placement

Mental health care, including individual and group counseling

Physical health care, including routine physicals, health assessments, and emergency treatment

FYSB's Grant Award Process

FYSB solicits applications through an annual *Federal Register* announcement. Applications are competitively reviewed by peer panels, and successful applicants receive 3-year grants.

Sources of Additional Information

National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth; P.O. Box 13505; Silver Spring, MD 20911-3505; (301) 608-8098; fax: (301) 608-8721; E-mail: Info@ncfy.com

Family and Youth Services Bureau home page on the Internet's World Wide Web: www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb

Re: Transitional Living Program for Older Homeless Youth (TLP)

TLP provides youth ages 16-21 with living accommodations and services (for up to 18 months) that help them develop the necessary skills to transition to independence. The materials that HHS sent included general information (history, purpose, services provided, etc.) and the following articles/newsletters:

- *The Exchange*, Spring/Summer 1997 (recent news regarding TLP): feature article focused on TLP's approach to adolescent pregnancy such as integrating pregnancy prevention activities into their core programming, providing parenting services to adolescent mothers, and removing obstacles to family planning information.
- *FYSB Update*, December 1995: update discussed collaboration projects between independent living and transitional living programs in order to provide a comprehensive array of services under both programs to youth in need. The National Resource Center for youth services served as the facilitator for these collaborations which were each specifically described.
- *The Exchange*, Winter 1994: article described New Life Youth Services (NLYS) for Cincinnati youth in transitional and independent living programs. NLYS uses a scattered site approach-- in other words, youth are placed in privately owned, single occupancy apartments scattered around the city with the intent of providing personal space and allowing youth to choose their own neighborhood (in contrast to supervised, group homes). NLYS signs contracts with youth regarding their education, work, and a strict set of living rules. The youth are provided with life skills, employment-related assistance, and other supportive services but otherwise are left to experience what life is like on their own.
- *FYSB Update*, October 1995: update talked about a FYSB study on the lives of youth with run-away, throw-away, and homeless experiences. Results indicated a high level of familial substance use, poverty, suicide, victimization, delinquency, and unprotected sexual activity. Study also indicated that 58% of the youth (from the study) currently in shelters and 71% of those living on the street had spent time in at least one of five institutional settings (foster care, group home, mental hospital, juvenile detention, or jail)
- *FYSB Update*, June 1997: update listed factors that have been identified to have an effect on adolescent development as well as ways to promote positive growth among adolescents (this information was gathered through a literature review on adolescent development by leading researchers). According to the research, these factors can be categorized under biophysical influences (temperament, gender, cognitive development), family influences (relationship, control), peer influences, community influences (availability of support and quality of youth-serving organizations, culture), and societal influences (economic and employment conditions, prejudice, educational institutions). Report concluded that positive developmental pathways are fostered when adolescents feel a sense of competence, a connection to others and society, a sense of control over their life, and a stable identity.

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THE EXCHANGE



News from FYSB and the Youth Services Field

Spring/Summer 1997

FYSB TLPs Offer Developmental Approach to Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention

Adolescent pregnancy prevention is near the top of the national agenda today. Resolving the problem of adolescent pregnancy is popularly seen as one of the keys to addressing a range of issues, from welfare dependency to poor health outcomes for children.

Efforts to prevent adolescent pregnancy most often have focused on providing the right combination of rewards and punishments so that youth will make responsible choices. Yet young people's perceptions of their choices are powerfully affected by how they view the future. Youth who see a bleak future limited by poverty, little contact with relatives, or lack of educational or vocational opportunities may consider parenthood one of the few opportunities they will have for self-expression, creativity, and a family. Young people who have been abused or neglected may see sexual activity as an opportunity to feel loved or appreciated. Without support, these youth are not in a position to make the right choices.

Further, while we ask youth to make responsible choices about their sexual behavior, they often receive mixed messages about sexuality from society. On the one hand, the advertising and entertainment industries, media outlets, and some popular "role models" promote a climate of permissiveness in which sex becomes a commodity or a measure of a person's value. On the other hand, adults, and adult institutions, while able to address the mechanics of sexual behavior, seem unsure of how to consistently communicate to young people, from an early age, clear messages about what constitutes healthy sexual development and healthy sexual expression. Is it any wonder that young people are confused and vulnerable to pressures to become sexually active before they have thought through the implications of that choice?

When these factors are considered, debates about the effectiveness of specific approaches to pregnancy prevention take on less importance. In fact, the focus of pregnancy

prevention efforts far too often has been young people rather than communities. Given the realities facing many young people, the challenge is to develop comprehensive strategies that involve entire communities in removing the institutional roadblocks and making the systemic changes required to enable young people to make healthy choices regarding sexual activity. This requires a focus on adolescent sexual development in the context of young people's overall development into healthy, contributing adults.

Pregnancy Prevention From the Youth Development Perspective

For more than 20 years, the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) has been at the forefront of supporting local communities in developing communitywide efforts to improve the lives of young people. During that time, the experience of FYSB and its local grantee programs has shown that implementing strategies that

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FYSB UPDATE

The Family and Youth Services Bureau

The FYSB Research and Demonstration Program

December 1995

FYSB Tests Home-Based Services, Promotes Transitional/Independent Living Program Collaborations

In fiscal year (FY) 1991, the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) funded two types of Research and Demonstration (R&D) projects designed to test new strategies for improving services to runaway and homeless youth and preventing runaway episodes. FYSB awarded \$818,200 in discretionary funds to five projects under two priority areas:

- Transitional Living/Independent Living (TL/IL) Collaboration
- Home-Based Services: An Alternative to Out-of-Home Shelter

Project Purposes

TL/IL Projects. FYSB funded two projects under the Transitional Living/Independent Living Collaboration priority area in FY 1991. The purpose of the projects was to develop, test, and evaluate models of

collaboration between Transitional Living Program (TLP) projects funded by FYSB and Independent Living Initiatives Program projects funded by the Children's Bureau, a sister Bureau of FYSB within the Administration on Children, Youth and Families. The TLP prepares older homeless youth, ages 16–21, to lead self-sufficient lives, thereby preventing their dependency on social services. The TLP was authorized under Title III, Part B, of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (JJDP), as Amended (P.L. 102–586). The Independent Living Initiatives Program is designed to assist youth ages 16 and older, currently or formerly in foster care, to make the transition into independent living situations. It was authorized by Title IV, Part E, of the Social Security Act (P.L. 74–271).

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The FYSB Research and Demonstration Program

FYSB has been awarding Research and Demonstration (R&D) grants since 1983 to improve the capacity of local organizations to serve runaway and homeless youth. Since that time, FYSB has funded almost 200 R&D projects, including efforts to improve outreach and program management; to promote collaborations between runaway programs, schools, and law enforcement agencies; to develop strategies for serving youth in rural communities; and to prevent youth exploitation and suicide.

This publication provides an overview of FYSB's FY 1991 R&D grant awards, which focused on (1) creating effective models of collaboration between transitional living programs and independent living programs for older homeless youth and (2) developing home-based services models to prevent youth runaway episodes.

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THE EXCHANGE

News from FYSB and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Field

Winter 1994

Second FYSB Transitional Living Conference Held in Cincinnati

The Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), Administration on Children, Youth and Families, held its Second National Transitional Living Grantees Conference, *Pathways to Adulthood: Transitional Living Services for Non-System and Homeless Youth*, on November 1-3, 1993, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

"We are very excited to be able to host what has become an annual event focused solely on transitional and independent living services for runaway and homeless youth," said Terry R. Lewis, Acting Associate Commissioner of FYSB. "We hope this Conference has helped FYSB's grantees gather the information and expand the support networks they need to more effectively serve vulnerable young people," she added.

The event, which was coordinated by the National Resource Center for Youth Services, drew over 100 local providers of transitional and independent living services from around the country. It offered sixteen workshops on a wide variety of topics, including chemical dependency, group counseling, staff selection and development, and professional peer training.

This edition of *The Exchange* focuses on Transitional Living Program practices and issues addressed at the Conference. It includes highlights of some of the workshop discussions and an interview with five youth professionals on the history of transitional living services for runaway and homeless youth.

TLP Conference Highlights Family Preservation and Support Act

The Family Preservation and Support Act represents a sea change in the way the Federal Government looks at child welfare policy, and runaway and homeless youth programs are uniquely positioned to be at the forefront of that change.

With that statement, Mike Ambrose, Acting Director of the Child Welfare Division, Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, opened the keynote address of the Family and Youth Services Bureau's (FYSB) Second National Transitional Living Grantees Conference.

Ambrose explained that the Act will gradually reverse the current balance of Federal child welfare expenditures and program focus from out-of-home placement to prevention.

The Act provides for a two-pronged approach that includes family preservation services for families of youth already involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, and preventive family support services for families of youth who have not yet entered formal systems of care or intervention. Funding will be allocated among the States based on the Food Stamp formula, and the first year's appropriations, scheduled for award in the Spring of 1994, will support planning activities.

"The Family Preservation and Support Act represents a new era in youth services," added Pamela A. Johnson, Director of the FYSB Program Operations Division. "The support side of the Act requires participation by the kind of com-

munity-based organizations FYSB has been funding cost-effectively for the last 20 years. We believe FYSB grantees can make a significant contribution to State planning and implementation efforts," said Johnson.

Mustafa Abdul-Salaam, Director, New Haven Family Alliance, shared the keynote dias and discussed strategies for applying the Family Preservation and Support Act's philosophical goals to local agency activities. "A true focus on family support will require that public sector services become as consumer-driven as private sector enterprises," said Salaam.

He suggested, for example, that services be delivered within the client's "comfort zone" or neighborhood, and that program directors encourage staff to expand their thinking regarding the definition of family to more realistically correspond to the lives of the people they serve. Salaam also encouraged all youth and family service agencies within a community to renew efforts to work cooperatively and collaboratively. He urged local agencies to establish processes to enhance the cultural competence of their services, and to work toward the ultimate goal of helping clients develop the economic resources they need to raise healthy, happy families.

"The Family Preservation and Support Act," Mr. Salaam concluded, "represents a real philosophical shift in youth and family policy that cannot be taken lightly. The ruin of a nation," said Salaam, quoting an old African proverb, "begins in the homes of its people."

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FYSB UPDATE

The Family and Youth Services Bureau

A FYSB Research Summary

October 1995

Youth With Runaway, Throwaway, and Homeless Experiences...

Prevalence, Drug Use, and Other At-Risk Behaviors

Professionals who work with runaway, throwaway, and homeless youth have long known that many of these young people leave home to escape abusive and/or destructive family situations or are told to leave by parents or caretakers. Once on the street, young people are at high risk of being physically and/or sexually victimized, of self-medicating with drugs or alcohol to reduce emotional pain, of attempting suicide, and of engaging in delinquent acts or "survival" sex to meet their needs for food, shelter, and clothing.

The study found a strong link between familial substance use and the high-risk behaviors of runaway, throwaway, and homeless youth.

A recently released report on a study funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), a Bureau within the Administration on Children, Youth and

Families (ACYF), confirms many of these observations. The study found a strong link between family circumstances, espe-

cially familial substance use, and the high-risk behaviors of runaway, throwaway, and homeless young people, especially substance abuse and suicide. In turn, substance-abusing runaway, throwaway, and homeless young people were found to be more likely to experience threats to their well-being while on the

About the Family and Youth Services Bureau

The mission of the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) is to provide national leadership on youth issues and to assist individuals and organizations in delivering effective, comprehensive services to youth in at-risk situations and their families. To that end, FYSB, a Bureau within the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF); Administration for Children and Families; Department of Health and Human Services, administers five major grant programs that support locally based youth services. FYSB also contributes resources to support ACYF evaluation studies that look at specific problems facing youth in at-risk circumstances and that assess the effects of FYSB programs.

For more information on FYSB, please call or write the National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth at P.O. Box 13505, Silver Spring, MD 20911-3505; (301) 608-8098.

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FYSB UPDATE

The Family and Youth Services Bureau

A FYSB Research Summary

June 1997

Understanding Youth Development: Promoting Positive Pathways of Growth

For more than two decades, the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) has been promoting the strengths of an approach known as positive youth development. That approach suggests that each community must create a vision of what it wants for all young people. Only then can communities create environments in which young people can achieve their greatest potential, through supports, services, *and* opportunities.

Key to that process is an understanding of adolescence and of what young people need during this life stage. Many of those needs have been identified by the youth service professionals in FYSB's network during the past 20 years; they also have been noted by key researchers in the adolescent development field.

Understanding Adolescence

Adolescence has been the focus of intense interest from social scientists, public policymakers, human service providers, law enforcement officials, the media, and the general public since the early 20th century. In the American culture, adolescence is the period from age 11 to 21: early adolescence is age 11–14, mid-adolescence age 15–17, and late adolescence age 18–21.

Today, many adults seem to hold a negative perception of adolescence. Young people all too often are viewed as the cause of numerous problems, including substance abuse, crime, and violence. In a sense, adolescents have become the scapegoats for America's inability to address the root causes of such problems, including poverty, discrimination, and lack of access and opportunity for some community members.

About the Project

In 1996, the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) commissioned a review of the research literature on adolescent development by some of the leading researchers in that field. The research team then produced a conceptual framework for understanding youth development. That framework is outlined in the FYSB publication entitled *Understanding Youth Development: Promoting Positive Pathways of Growth*.

Understanding Youth Development provides a theoretical framework for implementing a youth development approach to providing services to adolescents. It is a companion piece to FYSB's *Reconnecting Youth & Community: A Youth Development Approach* and will serve as a basis for the development of future FYSB activities on behalf of young people. This research summary provides an overview of *Understanding Youth Development*.

their stay at the TLPs, these youth also develop the attitudes and habits necessary to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. The TLPs' success in helping young people move to independence is due in part to the incredible resiliency of youth, strong staff support, and the intensive reality-based learning environments the programs offer using a developmental framework.

TLPs: The Best Community Resource

During the past decade, FYSB and its TLPs have set new standards for serving young people through that developmental framework. The approach emphasizes providing youth with support in moving toward independence, holding them accountable for their actions within a compassionate context, and offering them opportunities to become contributing members of the larger community. The TLPs have found that as youth gain the opportunities, confidence, and skills to try new ventures or work toward dreams they had not thought attainable, they shift their decisionmaking framework from the short term to the long term. As their thinking becomes future oriented, youth naturally begin making short-range choices that preserve their dreams and goals. Among those are decisions that prevent unintended pregnancies.

Today, there are more young people than ever growing up in circumstances that put them at risk of involvement in potentially harmful behaviors, that offer them few opportunities, and that make them feel hopeless about the future. These youth need the support of caring adults who can equip them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need not just to survive, but to thrive.

Excerpt taken from HHS pamphlet:

*Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy: 25

A Youth Development Approach

FYSB's TLP offers communities a positive option for helping these youth. The program also offers lessons on supporting all young people in learning how to make appropriate life choices. Those choices are critical to efforts to reduce adolescent pregnancy, a phenomenon that unquestionably will lead to greater rates of child abuse and neglect and increasing intergenerational poverty and hopelessness. Moreover, the TLP offers State agencies administering the new Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program an existing adult-supervised placement option for young pregnant or parenting girls.

There is growing awareness that dealing with public health issues such as adolescent pregnancy or drug abuse requires a comprehensive approach that begins at the community level. Lasting positive change will come only when communities begin to create a vision for all of their youngest members that includes strategies for reducing barriers to their success, access to information and opportunities, and most important, hope for the future.

FYSB's TLP offers communities a model for making that vision a reality. Communities interested in reducing adolescent pregnancies, as well as the host of other adolescent behaviors resulting from childhoods characterized by poverty, abuse, or neglect, can draw on the TLP experience to offer young people the range of supports and opportunities they need and deserve.

The TLP Approach

The TLPs provide young people a dynamic learning environment that includes both classroom-based activi-

ties and practical experiences. Most TLPs use a phase system under which young people gradually move from a highly structured environment to one in which they are expected to live more independently. Throughout this time, TLP staff monitor their progress and provide support. This phase system gives TLP youth increasing autonomy as they put new skills into practice.

Upon entering the program, TLP participants might, for example, live with other youth in a group home that is supervised by project staff. As youth demonstrate increased decisionmaking skills, responsibility, and goal orientation, they move into apartments owned or supervised by the agency. Finally, they move into individual scattered-site apartments, which are apartments rented directly by a young person with the sponsorship of the TLP.

In all three settings, young people assume increasing responsibility for household management functions as they progress through the program. These include cooking, cleaning, repair and maintenance, and household budgeting. In addition, in most TLP residential settings, youth also live with at least one other young person. Sharing a room or an apartment requires youth to develop an understanding of the differences between people and to learn and exercise a range of relationship skills. Staff are available to provide advice and support, while young people retain responsibility for implementing agreed-upon courses of action.

Creating a Sense of the Future

Helping youth establish clear goals, and strategies for achieving those goals, is key to the FYSB TLPs' success

in preparing young people for self-sufficiency. That process begins at intake, a time when staff meet with youth individually to help them set goals for their period of residence in the TLP and for the future.

While the next steps may vary from program to program, most TLPs then help youth incorporate those goals into service plans that are monitored closely by staff, often through a case management approach. Those service plans provide road maps for young people's involvement in TLP activities and services. Together, youth and TLP staff are able to identify young people's strengths and areas in which they will need support, and then develop short- and long-term goals. Agency staff then help youth gain access to services and opportunities through agency programming or the TLPs' strong referral networks of community agencies and institutions.

Staff meet regularly with youth individually to help them assess their progress, to identify areas of difficulty and devise strategies for addressing them, and to celebrate their accomplishments. These weekly or monthly progress meetings also offer youth the chance to discuss evolving interests and how they might best pursue them.

While young people's individual service plans vary, all youth in TLPs are required to participate in academic and/or work activities. Most TLP youth are pursuing a high school diploma or equivalency in preparation for entering college or the work force. To that end, the TLPs have developed strong service linkages with local high schools and other institutions that give youth access to high-quality educational or vocational training opportunities. TLP staff are available to assist youth in staying on track with their coursework and to help

them develop or refine study skills and habits. TLPs also maintain service linkages that can assist them with special needs, such as with community programs that specialize in providing academic instruction for youth with developmental disabilities.

Typically, TLPs also require young people to work at least part-time while in the program. The agencies first assist youth in learning the behaviors and attitudes that they need to succeed in a work setting. These include good appearance and grooming, promptness, listening skills, and the ability to take direction. TLP staff also support young people throughout their work experiences by serving as sources of coaching and advice, and by acting as liaisons to employers, as necessary. In fact, employers often prefer to hire TLP participants since they know that staff will be responsive should issues arise regarding young people's performance.

Support for young people's academic or work accomplishments, or attainment of other goals, is sustained in part through the ongoing life skills training offered by all FYSB TLPs. These classroom- or group-discussion-based sessions complement the practical experiences that young people obtain through other TLP services. Young people generally meet once or twice a week in a forum that enables them to learn critical life skills from staff, outside experts, and each other. Most life skills curricula generally cover the following:

- Basic life skills, such as budgeting, using credit, housekeeping, menu planning and food preparation, and consumer education
- Interpersonal skill building, including establishing positive relationships with peers and adults, making decisions, and managing stress

- Job preparation and attainment, including career counseling, job-seeking skills, development of appropriate workplace behaviors, and guidance on dress and grooming

The combination of life skills training and immediate opportunities to use those new skills helps youth develop discipline, which will serve them well long after they leave the program. Young people generally are required, for example, to establish a personal budget and set aside a specific amount from each paycheck as savings. In most cases, the youth also pay partial rent throughout their TLP stay; the agencies place the money into a savings account and the funds become available to youth participants upon graduation.

During the final stages of youth involvement in TLPs, agencies continue to provide supervision and support. Increasingly, the FYSB TLPs are providing longer term aftercare as well. Whether or not the process is formalized, most TLP staff report that young people return to the agency when they run into difficulties; for many, the TLP staff are the closest thing to family that they know. Other youth participants also form a support network for youth as they move on to independent living. Many agencies use the same apartment complexes to place youth; former graduates who continue to live there help the new young people adapt to their surroundings.

The TLP Approach to Preventing Adolescent Pregnancies

The TLP approach to serving young people is holistic, addressing the full range of needs and concerns experi-

enced by all adolescents and the problems experienced by youth from at-risk circumstances. More important, the TLP programs are based on the notion that all young people have value and potential. The TLPs support young people in identifying and building on their strengths and creating a sense of the future for those who otherwise might lose hope.

Because of this holistic adolescent development approach, the FYSB TLPs serve as one of the best models of adolescent pregnancy prevention. Many TLP agencies also integrate targeted adolescent pregnancy prevention activities into their core TLP programming. Moreover, a number of FYSB TLP programs began focusing on the need to provide services to adolescent parents, and to prevent unintended second adolescent pregnancies, as far back as 1990. They subsequently adapted the TLP model to enable them to serve adolescent mothers, a population that require different types of supports and services than do youth without children.

Promise House (Dallas, Texas), for example, which provides services to pregnant adolescents and other homeless young people through its Shelter and Lifestyles Transitional Living Program, recently explored options for expanding its programming for homeless parenting adolescents. Through a community assessment, Promise House learned that there were no group homes for this population in Dallas.

Beginning in 1993, Promise House carried out two pilot projects that placed young women and their children in subsidized apartments and/or public housing. Case management services to these families were provided by the Shelter and Lifestyles TLP. As a result of the projects, Promise House convinced the community

of the value of investing in parenting adolescents, both to support them and their children and to prevent future pregnancies. In June 1997, Promise House opened the first long-term shelter and transitional living program for adolescent parents in North Central Texas, with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and matching funding from the United Methodist Men of North Central Texas.

The following sections highlight how the FYSB TLPs operate specialized adolescent pregnancy prevention and parenting services within a youth development framework that supports young people in achieving a sense of competence, a sense of usefulness, a sense of belonging, and a sense of power, all key ingredients in preventing adolescent pregnancy.

A Sense of Competence

Young people learn to feel competent through academic and workplace achievement, as well as by setting and meeting goals, key components of all FYSB TLPs. The TLPs promote a sense of competence through their phased living systems, academic and employment training, and reality-based exercises that help youth understand those areas in which they still need to develop.

For years, the FYSB TLPs have offered job-readiness training and employment placement services. Today, some TLPs have expanded those efforts to include entrepreneurial projects through which youth develop both employment and management skills by starting businesses of their own. Using funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

*Chapter 3: Pregnancy Prevention
From the Youth Development Perspective*

(HUD), the El Paso Center for Children (El Paso, Texas), for example, recently launched a hydroponic greenhouse project that will be operated by the adolescent mothers served by the agency's FYSB-funded TLP. The young mothers, with staff supervision, will raise specialized vegetables that the center plans to sell to local businesses and restaurants. The agency and the adolescent mothers will share in the profits. Through the greenhouse business, the youth participants will learn technical, production, marketing, and customer relations skills. Even if participants do not stay in the greenhouse business, they will retain skills, plus attitudes and values regarding work, that are important in any position.

Young people also develop competence through reality-based training that helps them understand what they know, what they are able to handle at this stage in their lives, and what areas they need to learn more about. FYSB's TLP program staff have long known that young people learn best when instruction is combined with practical experience. The TLPs, therefore, use a variety of service models, projects, and activities to provide nonparenting TLP participants a realistic picture of adolescent parenthood.

Many of the TLPs, for example, intentionally house nonparenting and parenting youth in the same facilities. These living arrangements not only avoid stigmatizing parenting youth by separating them from other young people, but give nonparenting youth the opportunity to experience, firsthand, the realities of caring for infants and children.

Similarly, the Youth Shelters and Family Services TLP, Casa Libertad (Santa Fe, New Mexico), offers nonparenting youth a sense of what parenting means by facili-

tating group discussions about adolescent parenting that are led by young mothers as part of the program's life skills trainings. Through this arrangement, the adolescent mothers develop group facilitation and training skills, in keeping with the agency's desire to draw on the strengths and expertise of program-involved youth. At the same time, the nonparenting youth are exposed to the real-life issues faced by their parenting counterparts.

Finally, nonparenting young people in the Youth and Shelter Services (YSS), Inc., TLP (Ames, Iowa) participate in the Baby Think It Over pregnancy prevention program. Through the program, youth carry a lifelike baby doll for at least 24 hours. The doll is programmed to cry at various intervals, requiring attention from the adolescent caregiver. Young people learn the skills and endurance necessary to care for an infant; the result often is a shift in attitude about their own readiness for parenthood.

As young people begin to develop new competencies, and to draw on their existing talents and skills, they start to develop a sense of purpose within the TLP and the broader community. They begin to understand their own value and to participate in program and community activities through which they can enhance their sense of usefulness.

A Sense of Usefulness

Involving young people in the community creates situations in which youth are contributing to the greater good. Through those experiences, they gain a sense of usefulness and learn new skills or information that can

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positively shape their future. The TLPs start with the simple premise that being a good community member begins with being a good neighbor. Prior to entering the TLP, many youth did not have an adult role model setting an example of the "responsible neighbor." TLP staff, therefore, require participants to get to know their neighbors, contribute to community activities such as neighborhood cleanups, respect neighbors' privacy, and adhere to neighborhood norms regarding issues such as noise and property upkeep.

Many of the TLPs also help participants become active, contributing community members by encouraging or requiring them to participate in community service activities. In some instances, those volunteer opportunities also provide young people with experiences that reinforce the messages being learned through the TLP. The Three Rivers Youth Transitional Living Program (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), for example, involves 16-21-year-old homeless females in activities such as the March of Dimes walks to raise funds to prevent birth defects or the Pittsburgh AIDS walks that promote safe sex. At the Centre County Youth Service Bureau Stepping Stone Transitional Living Program (State College, Pennsylvania), when young women express an interest in having a baby, the agency involves them in community service at a local day care center. Stepping Stone staff report that through that experience, youth learn firsthand what it takes to care for infants and children.

More important, through their involvement in these and other community activities, young people learn about how contributing to the greater good enables them to confirm their place in society. They develop an understanding of how reaching out to others results in new relationships and a stronger sense of belonging.

A Sense of Belonging

Every young person is trying to find their place in the world. Often the TLPs are the first place in which they can feel comfortable and safe, and establish relationships with trusted adults. The TLPs provide youth with a homelike atmosphere in which they can form strong relationship networks that they can rely upon following their period of TLP residence.

The El Paso Center for Children, for example, arranged for the local TANF agency to provide one caseworker for all the young mothers participating in the TLP. The caseworker now visits the TLP when a new youth is admitted. That linkage reduces the need for staff to transport participants to client support offices located in various parts of El Paso. Through this arrangement, the caseworker also develops an understanding of TLP goals, particularly as they support the new TANF system.

The TLPs also have strong peer and adult mentoring programs that allow participants to form relationships with other young people who can serve as role models and with adults who can offer support and guidance. The Centre County Youth Service Bureau's Baby Connections Program, for example, pairs community volunteers with pregnant or parenting adolescents. The volunteers, who have children of their own, help the adolescents understand the process of doctor visits and the importance of good nutrition. They also provide general support during the young person's pregnancy. Typically the volunteers continue their support through the first year of the baby's life.

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In addition, many TLPs allow youth to remain in their scattered-site apartments upon graduating. Our Town Family Center's TLP (Tucson, Arizona), which serves parenting and nonparenting youth, has maintained scattered-site apartments in many of the same complexes through the years. Present and former TLP participants, therefore, are able to live in the same complexes, which provides both groups a sense of continuity. That arrangement also allows TLP staff to maintain contact with former TLP participants since they regularly visit current participants.

Further, some TLPs provide venues for young men and women to share their perspectives on a range of issues with one another. Such discussions can help establish communication among participants, thereby enhancing young people's sense of comfort in the group, program, and larger community. The Valley Youth House TLP (Allentown, Pennsylvania), for example, holds weekly meetings that allow youth participants to discuss a range of issues related to the program. Staff sometimes use these forums to discuss the dynamics of communication between and among the genders regarding sexuality issues, including maintaining healthy relationships, identifying and responding to sexual harassment, and working effectively with supervisors of the opposite sex. Young people, including those who are pregnant and parenting, also are able to discuss what it feels like to be the target of unwanted sexual advances, or talk about the social pressure they feel to make sexual choices that do not fit in with their goals for themselves.

Those goals begin to appear attainable as youth move through the TLP process, developing a sense of competence, usefulness, and belonging. All of these factors

foster a growing feeling among youth that they can and will achieve their goals for the future.

A Sense of Power

At the core of anyone's sense of power is the feeling of having control over one's fate and having opportunities to contribute to decisions about one's life. Helping young people achieve that control and decisionmaking authority in a safe environment is central to the TLP philosophy. The TLPs typically offer young people chances to plan their own futures *and* to participate in enhancing program operations that will improve conditions for other participants and the broader community. Through those opportunities, young people tap unexplored talents and learn about the responsibilities and pressures that accompany leadership.

Right from the start, the TLPs introduce the notion of planning for the future and taking responsibility for one's life. Through the intake assessment and planning process, TLP staff help youth focus on their future, including deciding on a pregnancy prevention plan. For many young people, this is the first chance they have had to consider their own sexual development within the context of their plans for the future.

In helping youth develop pregnancy prevention plans, staff provide an open atmosphere in which youth can ask questions and share their experiences about sexual activity. They also can examine whether they wish to continue current sexual behaviors. This approach to goal setting means that staff do not, for example, automatically assume that young people who are sexually active will choose to continue that pattern. Rather, staff

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assist these youth in analyzing how remaining sexually active might affect their future.

Since information is power, most TLPs integrate sexual education activities throughout TLP services in a range of forms. These include lectures, role-plays, and small-group discussions, many of which are facilitated by peer trainers or outside speakers. The Residential Youth Services TLP, the LIFT Project (Alexandria, Virginia), which serves parenting and nonparenting youth, uses a yearlong curriculum to offer educational workshops to TLP participants on a range of life skill issues, including parenting skills. Speakers from other agencies, such as Planned Parenthood and the local health department, are invited to discuss topics such as family planning and sexually transmitted diseases. In addition, speakers from a local alcohol and drug services agency and the local Community Services Board speak with young people about substance abuse and its effect on decisionmaking abilities.

The focus of these activities typically is to help adolescents understand their sexual development as it relates to their overall development. With that knowledge as a foundation, staff then can discuss the implications of a range of options regarding sexual expression on young people's development in the physical, social, psychological, and emotional areas. Staff also guide youth through practical exercises that help them develop the refusal, assertiveness, and negotiation skills they will need to manage situations that could put them at risk of future pregnancy.

Many TLPs incorporate youth leadership roles into the TLP residential programming. Staff of Arbor House, a TLP for pregnant and parenting girls operated by Friends of Youth (Bothell, Washington), for example,

select a resident each month, on the basis of seniority and performance, to serve as residential advisor. In that role, youth act as a liaison between residents and staff, plan and facilitate monthly house meetings, coordinate a recreational outing, and assist the staff in other tasks as needed.

The LIFT Project involves young people in decision-making in several ways. One participant serves as the youth representative and participates in staff meetings, program development discussions, and interviews of prospective staff. The LIFT Project also encourages routine input from youth about how program rules and operation affect them. The youth meet alone monthly to discuss issues that warrant staff attention. If the youth question a rule or program structure, they are given the opportunity to develop an alternative solution. In fact, input from young people was key to the agency's decision to move the TLP to a more culturally diverse neighborhood.

By involving youth in real leadership experiences, the TLPs reinforce young people's need to continue to grow in other areas, including developing skills and a sense of competence, building a sense of usefulness by taking advantage of academic or employment opportunities, and strengthening their relationships with others to enhance their sense of belonging. Growth in each of those areas is critical to their ability to make decisions, accept responsibility for those decisions, and become thoughtful, contributing, and contented members of society.

More important, the TLP youth development approach works for all young people. These include youth from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds; youth who were abused, neglected, or exploited; and youth who find