



# Summary of the 2007 THP-Plus Institute:

## Effective Practices to Successfully House Former Foster and Probation Youth

The THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project is a partnership between the John Burton Foundation, the Corporation for Supportive Housing and the California Department of Social Services. The goal of the Project is to reduce homelessness among California's former foster care and probation youth by expanding access to the Transitional Housing Placement-Plus (THP-Plus) program, California's only housing program targeting this growing population. THP-Plus provides affordable housing and comprehensive supportive services to help former foster care and probation youth ages 18 to 24 make a successful transition from out-of home placements to independent living.

*Sponsored by the John Burton Foundation,  
Majority Leader Karen Bass, the California  
Department of Social Services, and the  
Corporation for Supportive Housing*

# Monday, July 16, 2007

Center for Healthy Communities  
The California Endowment  
Los Angeles, California

# 2007 THP-Plus Institute

## Table of Contents

<b>I. THP-Plus Institute Overview.....</b>	<b>3</b>
A. Purpose of the Institute.....	3
B. Acknowledgements.....	3
C. Purpose of the Summary Document .....	4
<b>II. Workshop Summaries.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Workshop IA. THP-Plus Supportive Services: What’s Required, What Works and Why?.....	5
Workshop IB. THP-Plus Administration: Getting it Done Right From the Start!.....	8
Workshop 1C. The Host Family Model: Promoting Permanency in THP-Plus .....	11
Workshop 1D. Running a Program Without Trampling Rights: Fair Housing Issues and Property Management.....	15
Workshop 2A. Effective Youth and Adult Partnerships in THP-Plus: From Vision to Reality .....	23
Workshop 2B. Meeting the Needs of Parenting Youth in THP-Plus .....	28
Workshop 2C. Developing Affordable Housing for Youth .....	31
Workshop 3A. The Emotional Impact of Chronic Loss: Why Does It Matter? How Can THP-Plus Help? .....	36
Workshop 3B. Staffing: Building the Dream Team .....	42
Workshop 3C. Addressing the Realities of Substance Use and Abuse: Harm Reduction in Housing.....	44
Workshop 3D. If We Build It, Will They Come?.....	47
<b>III. Faculty Biographies .....</b>	<b>50</b>

# I. THP-Plus Institute Overview

## A. Purpose of the Institute

The 2007 THP-Plus Institute was sponsored by the THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project and the Office of Majority Leader Karen Bass. The Project is a partnership of the John Burton Foundation, the California Department of Social Services, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing. The purpose of the Institute was to share effective practices in providing housing and supportive services through the Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) program. THP-Plus is California's only housing program for former foster and probation youth, and plays a critical role in ensuring that youth have safe, affordable housing and supportive services to make a successful transition to adulthood.

In the 2007-08 fiscal year, 45 California counties plan to implement THP-Plus programs, serving up to 1,200 young adults. Through a series of 11 workshops, a young adult panel, and an opening plenary, 300 participants representing 60 county agencies and 270 community based organizations had the opportunity to learn from experienced practitioners, youth participants, county and state administrators and housing experts. Each workshop focused on one element of THP-Plus, with a particular focus on effective practices. At the conclusion of the Institute, participants were encouraged to bring this information back to their own communities to assist them in developing and strengthening their housing programs for former foster and probation youth.

On July 16, the THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project also released *Effective Practices in THP-Plus: Providing Affordable Housing and Supportive Services to Youth Formerly in the Foster Care and Juvenile Probation Systems*. The technical assistance document is designed to assist community-based organizations and county child welfare agencies in the development of high quality housing for young adults formerly in the foster care and juvenile probation systems. Copies can be downloaded at [http://www.johnburtonfoundation.org/THP-Plus\\_Effective\\_Practices.pdf](http://www.johnburtonfoundation.org/THP-Plus_Effective_Practices.pdf). For a print copy, please contact [michele@johnburtonfoundation.org](mailto:michele@johnburtonfoundation.org).

## B. Acknowledgements

The Institute was based on the collective vision and expertise of a group of dedicated individuals, who participated on the THP-Plus Institute Planning Committee, and was supported by a team of volunteers on the day of the event.

### **THP-Plus Institute Planning Committee**

Michele Byrnes, *John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes*  
Anne Cory, *Corporation for Supportive Housing*  
Cynthia Guilford, *California Department of Social Services*  
Jessica Gunderson, *Office of Majority Leader Karen Bass*  
Arlene Hylton, *San Francisco Independent Living Skills Program*  
Diana Kalcic, *County Welfare Directors Association of California*  
Sara Kimberlin, *John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes*  
Amy Lemley, *John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes*  
Linda Levshin, *Rising Tide Communities, Orangewood Children's Foundation*  
Bob Malmberg, *Orange County Social Services Agency*  
Deanne Pearn, *First Place for Youth*  
Jill Sevaetasi, *California Department of Social Services*  
Garrison Smith, *Los Angeles County Homeless Coordinator*  
Lois Starr, *Los Angeles County Community Development Commission*  
Lyn Stueve, *California Department of Social Services*  
Sara Webber, *John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes*  
Polly Williams, *United Friends of the Children*

### **THP-Plus Institute Volunteers**

Cheryl Alexander, *Orange County Social Services Agency*  
Simonne Ruff, *Corporation for Supportive Housing*  
Ruth Teague, *Corporation for Supportive Housing*  
Grant Sunoo and his team, *Coalition for Responsible Community Development*  
Martha Torres, *Rising Tide Communities, Orangewood Children's Foundation*  
Patty Turcios, *Rising Tide Communities, Orangewood Children's Foundation*

### **C. Purpose of the Summary Document**

The purpose of the summary document is to disseminate the information provided during the THP-Plus Institute workshop trainings. Each session summary includes an overview of the presentation to enable participants and non-participants alike to share in the learning that was provided during the Institute. Copies of the PowerPoint presentations are also provided on our website whenever possible. For additional information or questions about any of the material, please contact Michele Byrnes at [michele@johnburtonfoundation.org](mailto:michele@johnburtonfoundation.org).

## II. Workshop Summaries

### **Workshop IA. THP-Plus Supportive Services: What's Required, What Works and Why?**

**Moderator:** Marybeth McCarthy, Tri-City Homeless Coalition

**Presenters:** Toby Eastman, Larkin Street Youth Services

Peter Busch, Project Independence (Tri-City Homeless Coalition)

Jahmar Hammond, Project Independence participant

**Recorder:** Simonne Ruff, Corporation for Supportive Housing

---

Ms. McCarthy opened the session describing the purpose of the workshop: examining what's required, what works and why when implementing THP-Plus supportive housing services. She reviewed the purpose and services of Project Independence Program, and the areas to be covered in the workshop, including:

- 15 required services of THP-Plus
- 8 additional services (recommended)
- The most important services
- Who provides these services
- How to measure quality and quantity of services

Mr. Hammond described his experience as a participant in Project Independence and related it to the Project Independence Mission Statement. He stressed the importance of empowering youth to achieve self-sufficiency.

Ms. McCarthy reviewed the history of Project Independence, which began in December 2000 and is located in Alameda County. It is one of the first two THP-Plus Certified Housing Providers in the State and its programs match the requirements of the Welfare and Institutions Code (s. 16522 – 16522.6).

Mr. Hammond described the experience of emancipated foster/probation youth who face overwhelming challenges when exiting the foster care system. The challenge posed by the lack of resources for housing for youth and the high cost of housing in Alameda County means that supportive, concrete services delivered in a real-life setting are essential for emancipating youth. Project Independence embraces a strong decision-making model that doesn't stress "rule following." Mr. Hammond highlighted the importance of this model, and indicated that in THP-Plus programs, it isn't effective to tell youth what to do --it is important to support youth in making their own decisions.

### **Project Independence:**

Mr. Busch introduced the 15 required services for the THP-Plus program along with the 8 additional services that are not required but are recommended (THP-Plus Program description

can be found at <http://www.johnburtonfoundation.org/THP-Plus.pdf> -- see page 20).

Components of the Project Independence model include:

**Case management:** 20 to 1 youth to staff ratio, with a minimum of 1.5 hrs/week meeting with youth in community settings

**Utilities Payments:** Set up in the name of one roommate; phone bill set up in the name of the other roommate. These bills are reconciled monthly and allocated between the youth living in the apartment.

**Rent:** Collected monthly via money order only; receipts are given to the youth.

**Job Readiness:** Participants take part in mock interviews, including dressing in appropriate work clothing.

**Relationship with Property Management:** Very important to have a strong relationship between services staff and property management.

**Connections to community colleges:** The strong link to a local community college provides an important option for youth participants. Mr. Hammond emphasized the importance of the strong connection to Las Casitas Community College, and his very positive experience on campus and with the college radio station where he had a radio show.

**Tenant Selection:** Staff initially interview participants. Potential roommates meet together and discuss responsibilities, shared costs, noise levels etc. Then the potential roommates decide if they want to share the apartment.

**Tenant Retention:** Staff review house rules and good tenant behavior (e.g. noise, paying rent on time etc.).

Mr. Hammond described his experiences working with Project Independence and his role advocating for youth and affordable housing. His testimony had an impact on stopping condo conversions next to public transit that were in process and which would have reduced the availability of affordable housing in Alameda County. In addition, the mental health component of the program provides critical supports to youth who may choose to accept mental health services at different points during the program.

Mr. Busch described other critical components of the THP-Plus program.

- 90 % of all Project Independence applications and participants come from ILS referrals. A Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) is completed annually or following a significant change. This important tool is essential for case management and normally takes two meetings to complete.
- Project Independence services are accessible 24 hrs – Project Independence staff are available directly on-call until 8 pm and then youth can access staff by phone through other Tri-City Homeless Coalition services (e.g. their shelter program).
- A \$50/month emancipation fund is very helpful when moving out into their own apartment (either paid to the landlord or to the youth).
- In planning for move out and housing needs after program completion, all youth enroll in Section 8 waiting lists (which may be 2-3 years). Project Independence master leases apartments in the community. The goal is to master lease units that will be affordable for youth once they complete the 24 month program.

- Transportation assistance is in the form of public transit vouchers.

Ms. McCarthy indicated that the most important service in the program is comprehensive case management services, one-on-one (not in groups) with youth while they are participants in the program. It is also important to have a very strong link to Independent Living Services.

Ms. McCarthy described the indicators of success for the program. These include tangible increases in self-reliance (such as demonstrating financial responsibility through balancing a checkbook and setting budgets/paying bills on time), and the setting and achievement of goals (earning a living wage and sustaining themselves in housing).

Ms. Eastman described Larkin Street's program, which includes single site and scattered site housing for youth. The youth pay 30% of their income towards housing which accumulates in an account and is paid back to the youth when they move out.

Mr. Hammond described the importance of recognizing the youth as individuals, such as knowing that he prefers lemon birthday cake to chocolate cake.

**Workshop IB.** THP-Plus Administration: Getting it Done Right From the Start!

**Presenters:** Frank Motta, Santa Clara County Social Services Agency  
Michelle Covert, EHC LifeBuilders, Santa Clara

**Recorder:** Bob Malmberg, Orange County Social Services Agency

---

The presenters started the workshop by indicating that the workshop is designed for counties that are somewhere between the planning and implementation phases. Santa Clara County has now fully implemented THP-Plus.

In Santa Clara County, 135-150 youth emancipate per year. Santa Clara has joined the California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I). Within CC25I, a Local Housing Workgroup was developed and includes FFAs, Social Workers, the Foster Parent Association, the city housing department, and homeless youth providers. The group explored a number of housing models, including scattered site apartments, dorms, and the host family model. Together, stakeholders developed the THP-Plus Project Plan.

### **County THP-Plus Plan**

The THP-Plus administrative process is rooted in the THP-Plus plan. The county THP-Plus Plan must include the following elements:

- projected number of participants served
- housing model(s)
- process for selecting providers
- maximum rate requested from CDSS for each THP-Plus model
- evaluation criteria

Based on the workgroup assessment process, the county THP-Plus plan was designed to serve 80 participants, thereby reaching about 50% of the youth emancipating each year in Santa Clara County. Some of the plan targets the special needs of parenting youth, where the requested rate is higher than that for single youth. In April 2007, the county amended its plan and submitted a letter with the proposed changes to CDSS; the proposed changes were approved. Lynette Stueve from CDSS suggested that in November of each year, amendment letters can be submitted as changes are needed.

### **Housing Models**

Santa Clara's housing models include

- **San Jose State University Dorms:** This housing model is arranged via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the county and SJSU. The county provides staff and services, including \$950 for housing per youth per month and a stipend to the youth. SJSU provides nine individual dorms and cafeteria meals. Participating youth attend SJSU and community college institutions.

- **Host Family THP-Plus:** Forty (40) participants anticipated.
- **Scattered-Site Apartments:** Thirty-one (31) participants anticipated. County distributed Request for Proposals (RFP) to 3000 potential providers. To allow for easier certification, the RFP response requires sufficient information to allow for the certification of the provider.

### **Intake and Certification**

The youth intake process is a collaborative process. The STEP-TILP is used, along with a few additional questions, to allow the youth to declare their preference in housing options. Santa Clara County has found that many youth preferred the host family model. Money management, health and behavioral health, legal record issues, description of current life circumstances and special needs questions are also asked. Proximity to work and school are strong considerations in the selection process. Based on housing preference and these additional considerations, youth are then referred to the appropriate provider. A mutual agreement is established between the provider agencies and the youth participants. Some providers have both congregate and scattered-site apartments for the youth.

A subsidy payment was established to accommodate participants' needs. Youth are the identified tenants on the lease, to provide a foundation for the future. The certified provider and their housing venues must also meet fire authority and health standards, so that the walk-through assessment meets all standards.

A participant can transition between THP-Plus programs within the 24 cumulative month eligibility timeframe, or until his/her 24<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **Special Considerations: Host Family Model**

A number of issues related to the host family model were addressed by a subcommittee of the larger THP-Plus workgroup. Issues/questions included:

- How does the relationship change with the shift from foster care to THP-Plus status?
- What is the rate?
- How do special needs figure in to the rate?
- How does the issue of Community Care Licensing regulations figure if foster youth remain in the home (Title IV-E regulations)?

### **Host Family Model Structure**

The county pays the host families for the housing costs, and an additional stipend goes directly to the youth. Two agreements are created: one between the County and the host family and one between the host family and the youth. The youth participant pays an incremental increase in their portion of the rent over time.

The process includes the following elements:

Host families receive a cover letter describing the process, a fact sheet, and a W-9 form related to tax consequences. They participate in an orientation session, complete a Live Scan, and develop agreements between themselves and the participant, and between themselves and the Social Services Agency. From start to finish, Santa Clara County processed 11 families in two weeks.

The Santa Clara County THP-Plus Rate is \$1800/ month for all models. This rate was established based on rates used by similar Bay Area programs.

Cost breakdown:

- \$500 supportive services
- \$500 rent
- \$375 stipend
- \$50 savings
- \$375 utility, food, other

Santa Clara County uses a simple invoice process. The THP-Plus contracts stipulate that providers meet face-to-face with participants at a minimum of two to four times per month, but often weekly contacts are required. Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are managed through a contract agency.

### **Workshop 1C. The Host Family Model: Promoting Permanency in THP-Plus**

**Presenters:** Nenita Dean, Manager III Stanislaus County Community Services Agency  
Jean Little, Social Worker Supervisor II, Stanislaus County Community Services Agency  
Salvador Perez, Social Worker IV-After Care Social Worker, Stanislaus County Community Services Agency

Jeremy Cutajar, THP-Plus My Home Participant

**Recorder:** Sara Webber, John Burton Foundation

---

Stanislaus County's THP-Plus host family model program, My Home, was implemented in July 2006. It provides transitional housing for former foster youth aged 18-24 for up to 24 cumulative months. The program began with 16 slots which have been increased to 20 for fiscal year 2007-08. This is a caregiver model of transitional housing in which the youth reside in the homes of adults with whom they have committed relationships. Host families receive a monthly stipend while youth are living in their homes. The goal for My Home THP-Plus is to have a slot for every youth coming out of foster care in Stanislaus County who has a lifelong connection and for whom the model is a good fit.

The panel began with a discussion of the philosophy behind My Home THP. It is aligned with the philosophy of Stanislaus County's child welfare system that "Every child lives in a safe, stable, permanent home, nurtured by healthy families and strong communities." My Home THP-Plus continues this philosophy for emancipated foster youth by providing "opportunities for safe and stable transitional housing in the home of a lifelong connection in order to support emancipated foster youth as they transition to self-sufficiency." The presenters stressed that the youth and the lifelong connected adult must have a committed, established relationship before they begin the program.

Core elements of the My Home THP-Plus program:

- Distinct from foster care.
- Provides the greatest amount of freedom possible.
- Helps emancipated youth learn how to make good decisions.
- Is youth-driven; youth identify the lifelong connection.
- Requires that the lifelong connection be an adult who has a "parent-like" connection with the youth. This adult can be a:
  - Former foster parent.
  - Kin.
  - Other youth-identified adult.

To be eligible for My Home THP-Plus, former foster and probation youth must be ILP eligible and able identify a lifelong permanent connection residing within Stanislaus County and/or a 50 mile radius of Stanislaus County. If the lifelong connection resides too far out of the county it becomes difficult to maintain good connections with the social worker and the program.

Modesto serves as an anchor city for the program and youth participants should not be too far away. The youth are expected to work a minimum of 16 hours per week within 30 days of entering the program. They must demonstrate a commitment to and/or follow-through in pursuing their individual Transitional Independent Living Plans. My Home THP-Plus makes extensive use of the STEP-TILP to gauge this. They also use a ranking system for admitting youth to the program. Youth currently without resources or funds are admitted first.

Eligible youth are referred to the My Home THP-Plus program by their child welfare worker, permanency social worker, ILP, or another adult connected to their cases. The program uses social workers to get the word out to youth about My Home THP-Plus. They are currently working to get the word out to probation youth in order to help them establish a relationship with aftercare workers; probation youth are hard to identify. Youth must have checked in with the ILP program and been assigned an ILP case manager. Working with the permanency social worker, youth select their permanent lifelong connection, who then applies to be the host family. The aftercare social worker assesses the youth, the host, and the host's family to determine their level of commitment to their relationship and whether they are a good fit for the program. They also review the guidelines of the program to make sure everyone is on board. They use a 13 page assessment tool that takes 1 ½ to 2 hours to complete and which is very personal and specific. They consider it a red flag about the relationship if the host shows resistance to the assessment. They have not really had a problem with youth identifying hosts who are not appropriate for the program because they stress from the start that the adult must be "parent-like."

The county then conducts a physical inspection of the home, including examining for safety problems and to assure that the youth will have an acceptable amount of privacy. They do not allow the youth to share a room with a minor. This is against licensing rules if the minor is in foster care. If the minor is not in foster care, they feel that this rule will protect the youth participant from any potential legal or emotional problems.

The final phase of the certification consists of fingerprinting and Live Scans for the adult to make certain that there is nothing in the adult's background that could harm the youth. While they use state guidelines and do background checks for all adults over 18 in the household, it is a flexible certification in that they can make certification exemptions for their own program. Each county's individual certification guidelines must be specified in the guidelines of the program. If the lifelong connection is a licensed foster parent, that person does not need to have a background check. If there are foster children living in the host home, as is often the case, the youth must also be fingerprinted. The My Home THP-Plus certification process can take up to two weeks for licensed foster families and longer for a new certification. Concern about the length of time the certification takes, and therefore the length of time before the receipt of the first stipend check, raises another red flag about a host's commitment to the relationship with the youth.

While there has been concern that the My Home THP-Plus program uses up foster care beds, Stanislaus County has developed good relationships with the foster family agencies it works with by stressing their permanency philosophy and working with them on permanency issues for all children and youth in foster care. For example, both agencies participate in permanency planning meetings. The foster family agencies have become good resources for the county.

The final step in the process is for the host and youth to complete Connected for Life and Shared Housing agreements. Both these agreements are personalized for each youth/adult connection pair and the process is facilitated by the aftercare social worker. The essential elements of the agreements about which the parties determine the specifics are:

- Privacy
- Household cleanliness
- Visitors and overnight guests
- House rules about such things as television, pets, household curfew
- Future self-sufficiency
- Minimum number of meetings between youth, lifelong connection, and case manager

A stipend is paid directly to the host family and is meant to cover housing and food. The youth participant makes a graduated monthly rent contribution to the lifelong connection and the amount paid by the program to the host is accordingly decreased. The youth's rent payments begin at the 7<sup>th</sup> month of the program and by the end of the program the youth will be paying rent equal to the entire amount of the stipend.

Case management services are critical, both to the youth and for the youth/lifelong connection relationship. Case management is tailored to each youth and consists mainly of providing support for the relationship and wraparound services for the youth. Mr. Perez, the aftercare social worker, meets with the youth and lifelong connection both in person and by phone a minimum of once a month. The number of meetings is determined separately for each case and can be as often as several times a week. Case management is mobile and takes place in the youth's home and other settings comfortable for the youth and host. The aftercare social worker also provides individual counseling and acts as a mentor to the youth.

The aftercare social worker determines the youth's needs during their meetings and works with the youth to provide services to meet those needs. My Home THP-Plus collaborates with ILP and other in-house programs and county services which are co-located in their offices in Modesto. Stanislaus County avoids classroom-type trainings for life skills. They prefer instead to work one-on-one with the youth in order to individualize the training to the youth's needs. They provide employment services using THP-Plus money and a county-wide employment program. The presenters emphasized that the program does serve youth up to age 24 and they have easily been able to expand programs that serve their youth to age 24. Mr. Perez stressed the importance of helping youth to understand that the benefits and services of the THP-Plus program will stop all of a sudden and that youth need to be self-sufficient by that time.

Because they are part of the California Connected by 25 Initiative, Stanislaus County uses the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) evaluation tool for former foster youth, including those participating in My Home. They are able to tie STEP-TILP into ETO. They track youth participants' employment level, whether or not they are in school, and whether or not they are in stable housing. They like ETO because it has fewer limitations and is easier to use than CMS and is an improvement for evaluating THP-Plus participants.

Some youth are not able to stay in the program, most often because they want to “spread their wings” and try living outside of the parameters of a program. Some leave for another area where there are better jobs. All of these youth have stayed close to their lifelong connections. Stanislaus County has been able to use Section 8 slots for employed foster youth. Other youth have a hard time staying employed. While My Home THP-Plus keeps tabs on available jobs and prods the youth to find jobs and stay employed, some youth continue to find it difficult. They are given a lot of support and warnings when they are not meeting program guidelines. If they are released from the My Home THP-Plus, they will be referred to other programs that may work better for them.

Jeremiah Cutajar, a My Home THP-Plus participant talked about his experience of entering the program. After trying to live with his family after emancipation from foster care, he returned to his former foster parents who agreed to be permanent lifelong connections and enter the program with him. He credits the aftercare social worker and his lifelong connections with really pushing him to begin to plan for his future and not live day-to-day. He is very happy in the My Home THP-Plus program.

The presentation concluded with lessons learned:

- Youth participants need as much or more case management and support as the program progresses.
- Lifelong Connections need continued support to maintain a healthy relationship with the youth participant.
- High-quality case management and sufficient staffing are essential for program success.
- Youth participants continue to seek out case management after exiting the program.
- Monthly discussions with youth on their employment status are important.

## **Workshop 1D. Running a Program Without Trampling Rights: Fair Housing Issues and Property Management**

**Presenters:** Deanne Pearn, Co-Founder and Director of Development and Community Relations, First Place for Youth

Elizabeth Wright, Housing Coordinator, First Place for Youth

Starr, My First Place program participant

**Recorder:** Sara Kimberlin, John Burton Foundation

---

Ms. Pearn began by describing the My First Place program of the organization she co-founded, First Place for Youth, which supports youth in their transition from foster care to successful adulthood in several counties of the San Francisco Bay Area. The My First Place program is a THP-Plus program that uses a scattered-site, permanent housing model. First Place master-leases housing units throughout the community and selects units based on their *ultimate* affordability to youth – in other words, whether the young person will be able to afford to pay the full rent on their own once their participation in the THP-Plus program has ended. First Place leases 1-bedroom apartments for parenting youth living with their children, and 2-bedroom apartments for single youth, with two single young people sharing each apartment. First Place will house 130 youth and 50 children in the 2007-08 fiscal year from Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco and Solano Counties. Because My First Place, like all THP-Plus programs, serves adults, they must follow all federal, state, and local fair housing laws.

Each My First Place participant receives a 24-month graduated rental subsidy in a scattered-site apartment. Move-in assistance includes truck rental and physical labor, as well as a \$200 stipend to purchase household necessities. The supportive services in My First Place are generally provided in the home of the young person, and include a weekly 1-hour meeting with an assigned Youth Advocate, weekly facilitated roommate meetings, weekly 2-hour transition support groups, monthly community building events, and periodic community dinners. Participants also receive monthly \$50 grocery vouchers. First Place maintains a low staff-to-youth ratio of at most 15-to-1, and sometimes as low as 8- or 10-to-1, especially for parenting youth. The regular roommate meetings are particularly important because roommate issues are often challenging. Moreover, living successfully with a roommate is an important developmental skill for young people to learn.

Next Ms. Wright, the First Place Housing Coordinator, discussed the property management practices and fair housing law issues related to the My First Place program. In terms of leases, First Place uses two models: master lease arrangements, where the agency signs a lease with a landlord and then subleases the unit to the young person; and third party agreements, where the young person signs the lease directly with the landlord, and the agency signs a third party agreement with the landlord indicating that the agency will be responsible for rent payment and program provision during the lease period. Third party agreements are used when the housing unit is in an affordable housing development, where tenants must certify their income

in order to be eligible to lease the unit. Most of First Place's units are in market-rate developments, where master leases are used.

The maximum rent that First Place will consider is \$850 for a 1-bedroom apartment (for a single parent with her/his children) and \$1,200 for a 2-bedroom (shared by two young people). They find that it can be challenging to find quality apartments with rents that low, particularly for the 1-bedroom apartments, but feel that the ultimate affordability of the unit is critically important, so that the youth can afford the gradually increasing rental payments and will be capable of taking over the lease at the end of the program. Because recruiting landlords can be challenging, First Place highlights several incentives when talking to new potential landlords: 1) Rent is guaranteed for up to two years whether or not the unit is occupied; 2) Case managers visit the youth weekly and monitor unit maintenance and compliance with rental agreements; 3) The Housing Coordinator is available to address any concerns or issues that might arise; and 4) By leasing a unit to First Place, the landlord is providing a young person with much-needed housing.

The young person signs a regular month-to-month lease with First Place as the master tenant (or with the landlord directly in the case of a third-party agreement). In addition, the young person signs a program participation agreement, outlining participation requirements and behavioral expectations. This agreement is incorporated into the lease as a lease addendum, so that program violations are legally considered lease violations.

Identifying compatible roommates and resolving roommate conflicts are important program issues. All program participants are required to complete an economic literacy course in order to join the waitlist for the My First Place program, and during the course youth begin to identify possible roommates. Weekly team meetings are used to decide on roommate matches, and a formal roommate meeting is required before move-in. Regular ongoing roommate mediation meetings help resolve conflicts.

In terms of the rent structure, First Place pays the full market-rate rent directly to the landlord, and the youth pays their portion of the rent to First Place. The young person's contribution begins at 10% of the market-rate rent, and increases by 10% every three months so that by the end of the 24-month program the young person is paying 100% of the rent. First Place also pays the security deposit directly to the landlord, and loans that amount to the youth; the youth repays the security deposit to First Place in equal installments each month together with the rent over the 24-month period. The youth's portion of the rent is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, and youth are charged a \$20 late fee for rent paid after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. In cases where the youth stops paying rent, First Place works with him or her on an individual basis to resolve the nonpayment problem, through payment plans and case management. If the issue cannot be resolved, nonpayment can result in a pay-or-quit notice as a step towards eviction.

Property maintenance needs are reported by the youth to the Housing Specialist, who then calls in the request to the landlord. The young people view First Step as their landlord for

maintenance purposes, so First Step needs to stay on top of maintenance issues reported by youth. Ongoing maintenance is generally less costly than repairs required after unit turnover, especially because youth who are formally evicted or otherwise exit involuntarily may leave their apartments in poor condition and may abandon many of their belongings when they move out. First Place tries to minimize property maintenance costs and increase young people's housing-related life skills by conducting move-in orientations to inform the youth about tenant responsibilities, proper upkeep, how to get their security deposit back, etc. Youth are held accountable for property damage costs whenever possible.

At a young person's exit from the program, the housing staff have very different roles from the program staff. Program staff work with the young person for an exit plan with respect to income, credit, budgeting, etc. Housing staff work to enable the young person to take over the lease for their THP-Plus apartment, if at all possible, by facilitating the lease transfer process (though the youth still has to go through the standard application process with the landlord). Sometimes, however, the youth cannot take over the lease or doesn't want to, in which case the housing staff help them to find other affordable housing options. First Place also offers three months of aftercare services, which include grocery vouchers and case management.

For a voluntary move-out, First Place issues the 30-day notice required by housing law, and requires a reciprocal 30-day notice confirmation from the young person. They schedule a move-out appointment and walk-through, and arrange for security deposit reimbursements. In the case of an involuntary move-out because of lease violations, including violations of the program participation lease addendum, First Place starts with a warning and works to develop an individual plan with the young person. The situation can escalate to formal notices for lease violations. Legal eviction is the last resort; last year at First Place, they only had to legally evict two youth.

Ms. Pearn noted that there is often a programmatic tension around involuntary move-out. Sometimes program staff feel that a participant would benefit from being forced to move out and seeing the consequences of his or her actions and the reality of a homeless shelter, so that he or she could then come back to the program with more motivation. However, this type of "self-help eviction" is not legal, because fair housing laws and procedures must always be followed.

Ms. Wright continued by describing legal evictions. In going through the legal eviction process, it is very important to respect all of the tenant's legal rights. If you don't "dot every I and cross every T" you may have to start the entire process over again. The required process consists of filing a complaint, called an "Unlawful Detainer," with the court clerk's office, then "serving" (in other words, delivering) the complaint and the summons to appear in court to the tenant, and then filing the "Proof of Service of Summons" with the court clerk's office. You must make every attempt to deliver (or "serve") the papers to the tenant in person; if you are unable to deliver the notice in person, you will have to document all of your efforts to hand-deliver the documents in order to explain why they weren't personally served.

If the tenant responds to the summons by appearing in court, he or she can request a trial date, request a summary judgment, or try to settle out of court. If the tenant does not respond to the summons, the court will issue a "Default Judgment." First Place can then request that the court mail a notice, called an "Entry of Default," to the tenant. First Place can also then get a "Writ of Possession" stamped by the court clerk, which you submit to the sheriff's office. The Writ of Possession authorizes the sheriff to go make the eviction, and within a few days to weeks the sheriff will serve the tenant with a five-day eviction notice.

The legal eviction process can take three to six months, and once First Place has served the young person with the complaint, the relationship with the young person becomes very contentious. Moreover, a legal eviction on a young person's record has long-term consequences, making it very difficult for him or her to rent housing in the future. So it's best to try to avoid eviction if at all possible. A good relationship between the young person and the Youth Advocate / Case Manager is the best way to avoid evictions. This requires keeping the advocacy/case management and property management functions clearly separate. When lease violations occur, the Advocate talks to the youth about the consequences and encourages a problem-solving approach. For example, if the youth wants to leave the program, the Advocate encourages the youth not to violate the lease and wait for eviction but rather to give First Place a 30-day notice and follow through by moving out. That way the young person avoids getting a legal eviction on their record. First Place will even rent a storage unit for the young person for the first 30 days if the youth wants to give notice and find another place to live. It is important to note that a 30-day notice for lease violation does not go on a young person's record; the eviction only becomes legal and enters the young person's record when you go to the courthouse and file an "Unlawful Detainer."

A recommended resource for housing law is the landlord-tenant handbook from Nolo Press, which includes national and state housing laws as well as sample forms; it is available at [www.nolo.com](http://www.nolo.com). THP-Plus providers also need to educate themselves about their local landlord-tenant laws, as many counties and cities have additional specific housing laws. It is also recommended that providers ask a fair housing advocate or housing lawyer to review their lease forms and other legal housing documents.

A legal alternative to the Unlawful Detainer process is the Transitional Housing Misconduct Act. This legislation, passed in 1992, applies to transitional housing programs of 30 days to 24 months in duration. The process is supposed to be quicker than the Unlawful Detainer process, but it still requires filing a petition in court and participating in at least one and sometimes two court hearings, so it can end up being as time-consuming as the standard process. The Transitional Housing Misconduct Act is most suitable for congregate housing programs, and only allows the "eviction" of a participant if there is "clear and convincing evidence of abuse" and "great or irreparable injury" or a violation of a pre-existing injunction or temporary restraining order (TRO). A recommended resource for this process is the booklet "Understanding the Transitional Housing Misconduct Act" published by HomeBase in 1992. Before using this process, providers need to make sure it legally applies to their programs.

In general, First Place strives to keep the housing role very separate from the program role within the agency, in order to comply with THP-Plus regulations and other housing law requirements. Property management staff functions include facilitating maintenance of units, managing leases, maintaining landlord relationships, collecting and tracking rent, and handling landlord/tenant legal matters. Program staff, on the other hand, provide individual case management and social services, educational and employment support, health and wellness and mental health services, and issue food stipends, move-in stipends, and utility assistance when needed and coordinate move-in assistance.

Ms. Pearn described what First Place looks for when hiring housing staff. Desirable qualifications in a THP-Plus Housing Specialist include a bachelor's degree, experience working in affordable and/or transitional housing and/or property management, strong knowledge of the local housing market, knowledge of federal, state, and local housing laws, and strong organizational, interpersonal, communication, and computer skills (particularly Microsoft Word and Excel). It is important that the Housing Specialist not only understands property management and fair housing laws, but also understands where the young people are coming from, what kinds of issues they face, and what the young people's active role can be in a housing program. Ms. Pearn recommended prioritizing hiring someone who understands and is comfortable with young people, as it is often easier to provide more training on property management and housing law through available written resources than it is to train someone on how to work effectively and compassionately with young adults who have recently left the foster care or probation systems.

Starr, a My First Place program participant, described her experience in the THP-Plus program. Her grandmother had raised her since age three, and she had left home at age 18, taking nothing with her but her purse. At the time she was enrolled in college and started moving from house to house, receiving no help from her family. Moving around so much was very stressful, and eventually she stopped going to school, quit her job, and tried to escape from the pain of being alone through alcohol and smoking. She felt like her family didn't love her so she starting looking for support from different men. For 2 ½ years she ended up living with an ex-boyfriend in a dangerous neighborhood. Finally she decided this was not what she needed in her life. She moved into a hotel for a little while, then into a group transitional house for a month with five other girls – but the serious personality conflicts among the girls made it a difficult living situation, so she left that program and started making phone calls to find another place to go. She didn't want to go into a shelter – she had a job, and was able to pay some rent, but needed help finding a place with reduced rent or getting a higher-paying job.

Fortunately, she still had the phone number for First Place in her cell phone from an ILSP meeting. She was worried at first about living with a roommate she didn't know, especially after her previous transitional house experience. However, her roommate situation turned out well. It was rocky at first, because Starr and her roommate didn't have the same standards for cleanliness. After about a month, though, they realized they were both adults and decided they

should be able to sit down and work out their problems. So they had a meeting, worked on better communication, and now they have a great relationship. She also meets with her Youth Advocate weekly; she says he makes her do things, often saying “do it right now!”, but she knows it’s for her own good, to make sure she’s accomplishing her goals. She says, “I’m just thankful because I didn’t have this assistance growing up. I had to learn on my own on the streets, but I don’t have street smarts, so I made a lot of bad decisions. I just hope that other youth who are out there and feel like they don’t have anyone to go to will find this program too.” She plans to work through the program, get all of the help that she can, go back to school, and work on her career.

#### QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION:

*Q: Do you serve probation youth? Is there a different between working with foster care versus probation youth?*

A: First Place does serve some probation youth, and they haven’t seen substantial differences in their service needs. They develop an individual case management plan with each young person. An audience member contributed that it can be more challenging to find employment for probation youth.

*Q: Do you do drug testing of program participants?*

A: First Place doesn’t do any drug testing. They’ve adopted a harm reduction policy – they don’t monitor substance use, but when use affects a young person’s job, housing, or education (which it usually does), First Place addresses those issues.

*Q: What do you do about a situation when you find out a young person is selling drugs, while maintaining a harm reduction model?*

A: First Place departs from a strict harm reduction model in that they strictly prohibit illegal activities, including illegal substance use and related activities like selling drugs, in and around participants’ housing. Their standpoint is that these types of activities are serious lease violations that would lead to an immediate eviction in standard non-supportive housing, so as a housing program First Place cannot allow such activities. Their program participation lease addendum includes very clear blanket rules forbidding illegal activity in or around the home.

*Q: Do you accept youth in the program who have no income?*

A: Yes, in certain circumstances. All youth go through an orientation course which includes employment assistance. To enter the housing program, young people must have pay stubs or a very strong plan for employment. During this pre-entrance period, First Place triages short-term emergency housing for young people waiting to enter the THP-Plus program. They make it clear that they are not an emergency housing provider, and cannot directly provide housing for the 30-90 days it often takes to get into the THP-Plus program. Most young people end up temporarily staying with a family member or friend, in a shelter, or in some other short-term living arrangement.

*Q: How many young people keep their First Place apartment after finishing the THP-Plus program?*

A: About 70% of the youth keep their apartment or move into another stable safe housing unit (typically in order to get an apartment on their own without a roommate).

*Q: How do you reconcile program participation requirements with fair housing requirements?*

A: The program rules are incorporated into the lease so that program violations are lease violations. However, most of the program rules are standard lease components anyway, like not using drugs on the property and not damaging the property. The one component that doesn't connect with standard landlord-tenant law is program non-engagement, though as part of the lease addendum it is legally included as a lease requirement. Still, to avoid potential problems, First Place will generally use the most standard lease violation possible if an eviction becomes necessary. For example, if the program participant is violating the lease because of program non-engagement and nonpayment of rent, First Place will cite nonpayment of rent in the eviction proceedings. In First Place's experience, a standard lease violation almost always accompanies a program-related lease violation.

*Q: Do you have separate bedrooms for each young person?*

A: First Place absolutely insists on a separate bedroom for each participant. Young people have expressed to them very clearly that they have no interest in sharing a bedroom.

*Q: How does First Place work out leases in affordable housing developments?*

A: Any housing that's funded by the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit cannot be master-leased; the young person must sign the lease directly with the landlord because of tenant income verification requirements. Affordable housing developers are allowed to set aside units specifically for homeless transition-age youth; a recent law ensures that this does not violate anti-discrimination laws. One challenge with affordable housing development leases is that you can't use a master lease; with a master lease, First Place can sign an individual lease with each roommate in a unit separately, so that if one young person ends up violating the lease and being evicted, the other roommate is not affected and doesn't get an eviction on their record. With a direct lease, though, the lease with the landlord usually includes both young people together, so there's less protection for an innocent roommate. This is an issue that they're currently working on with affordable housing development landlords. In addition, when there is no master lease, First Place cannot legally evict the young person, but they can issue a notice that the young person will lose their rental subsidy. Sometimes that can actually be a positive outcome to a difficult situation.

*Q: How does First Place promote permanent housing for youth?*

A: First Place promotes permanent housing by letting the young people keep their apartments at the end of the THP-Plus program. They are trying more and more to get units in affordable housing developments because then there's a commitment to permanently affordable rent. Moreover, the First Place maximum allowable rent is below standard market rates because that's what's required to ensure ultimate affordability for young people at the end of the

program. As a result, the units that are not in affordable housing developments are often of lower quality and in less desirable locations.

*Q: How do you manage the tension between the program staff/goals and the property management staff/goals?*

A: There is a constant tension between these two sides of the program. First Place tries to mediate the conflict internally. The case manager's role is to represent the youth's best interests, and sometimes they have to realize that it's appropriate to be harder on them in some situations. First Place's overall goal is to try to institute the value that young people need to understand and feel the real-world consequences of their actions.

*Q: Do you mix genders in housing units?*

A: No – First Place only has same-gender roommates.

*Q: Do you use single-family homes?*

A: No – First Place's "worst nightmare" is a single-family home with multiple bedrooms. They have found that it's too challenging to try to manage four-way roommate disputes and other issues that arrive with more than two young people sharing a housing unit. However, other programs have made this model work – for example Bill Wilson Center in Santa Clara County, although they have a housing monitor living on-site.

*Q: What do you do about overnight visitors?*

A: This is an issue where First Place has had to institute some major barriers in order to protect the young people. In particular, they had a situation where a young person's homeless substance-addicted mother tried to move into the young person's apartment. First Place has instituted a three-month no-visitor policy, so that the young people can put the blame on the program and more comfortably say no to friends and relatives who want to move in with them.

## **Workshop 2A. Effective Youth and Adult Partnerships in THP-Plus: From Vision to Reality**

**Presenters:** Mitchell Findley, Founding Member & Assistant Director, VOICES

Amber McCurdy, PACES Youth Lead & Outreach Team, VOICES

Alissa Gentile, Program Director, VOICES

Tes Salvatore, PLACES THP-Plus Program Director, Progress Foundation

**Recorder:** Sara Kimberlin, John Burton Foundation

---

The session began with introductions of the presenters. Mr. Findley is a former foster youth, one of the youth founding members of VOICES, and the current Assistant Director of VOICES. Ms. McCurdy is also a former foster youth, and serves as the youth lead of the Parent and Child Education and Support (PACES) program at VOICES, as well as a member of the youth outreach team. Ms. Gentile is the VOICES Program Director, and Ms. Salvatore is the Program Director for the PLACES THP-Plus Program, a VOICES program managed through one of their fiscal sponsors, the Progress Foundation. The presenters outlined the objectives of the workshop as sharing the story and programming model of VOICES, and increasing workshop participants' knowledge of what it takes to create effective youth/adult partnerships.

VOICES was founded as a result of a team process whereby leaders from child welfare and probation and young people in Napa County got together to discuss the issue of foster youth aging out of care. The model they developed was a youth-led organization supported by adults. Ten young people with experience in the foster care and probation systems were recruited to be founding members of VOICES – seven were recruited through ILSP, and three through probation officers or word of mouth. On the Move and the Progress Foundation serve as fiscal sponsors for VOICES.

The primary goals of VOICES are to integrate systems and centralize resources for youth transitioning out of the foster care and probation systems; to create an intergenerational learning environment where youth and adults can learn from each other; and to develop empowerment approaches, so that youth have voices to advocate for themselves. The youth founding members of VOICES met over a period of months to develop the program, with the immediate goal of opening a community center for transitioning and emancipated foster youth. The process involved searching for an appropriate property, making community presentations, collecting donations, and planning the grand opening event. Three months after their first meeting, they held the grand opening for the VOICES resource center. Since its founding, VOICES has served over 175 youth, established a staff of 24 through collaboration with numerous local agencies, held multiple community events, shared their model with many organizations and individuals, and built and integrated eight programs for current and former foster youth. A key innovative feature of the VOICES community center is that many local collaborating agencies have agreed to send one or more staff members to provide services at the center on a part-time basis, ranging from two to 30 hours per week.

VOICES begins working with youth at age 16 and continues until after they've aged out of the system. Youth-led programs for 16-17-year-olds include the Independent Living Program, Community Service Project, Smoking Cessation Classes, Communication and Relationship Education and Support (CARES), Parent and Child Education and Support (PACES), a resume and job finding program (SOURCES), family finding services, and social support. Youth-led programs for 18-24-year-olds include CHOICES, an educational scholarship and employment program, and PLACES, the THP-Plus housing program.

The presenters then described the PLACES THP-Plus housing program in more detail. The program has been running for seven months so far. The high housing costs in Napa County have been the greatest challenge in running the program, leading to a need for additional funding. The current funding composition is 80% public and 20% private. PLACES serves 12 youth per year, referred from the child welfare and probation systems. All candidates come through VOICES, are screened by the PLACES life skills coach, and then reviewed by the PLACES Program Director and landlord. Each young person participates in life-plan team meetings, and has a special move-in celebration. Staffing for the program includes an employment counselor, life skills coach, program director, assessment staff, and other co-located staff from other agencies. Ten of the PLACES units are scattered-site permanent units, two are transitional units, and they are hoping soon to implement the host family model as well.

Next the presenters spoke more about how VOICES incorporates youth leadership into their model. Youth leadership is the core of everything VOICES does; youth don't just give input and feedback, but rather are a central part of the decision-making process.

Youth leaders are involved in a variety of activities at VOICES. For life-plan team meetings, youth identify the people who are important in their lives, and are in charge of evaluating and changing the plan as needed. VOICES also completes a relationship map with each young person, which is updated every 30 days. Youth also serve as subject matter experts (SMEs) in a variety of areas, and lead some ILP workshops. The Founding Members of VOICES were youth, which was important for achieving successful youth participant recruitment and developing youth-friendly policies. The presenters noted that many former foster youth have had a lot of adults telling them what they need to do, so it's important to have peer-to-peer and family member support to get buy-in from potential participants. The original plan in Napa County was for an adult-run resource center, but they switched to a youth-led model because they realized it would be more effective. VOICES also changed all of the language in the program to be more youth-friendly; for example, instead of "clients" they have "members," and instead of "case managers" they have "performance coaches."

Systems change is a major focus of VOICES. Being located in Napa County, a small county where many agencies already have long-standing connections and collaborations, has been an advantage in achieving systems changes.

One of the most important aspects of VOICES is its intergenerational nature. The inner circle of the organization is youth, who are supported by a variety of adults. Co-located staff are a key part of the program. These staff work for and are paid by outside agencies, such as the County mental health department or local community-based agencies, but they come to provide services at the VOICES community center for a few to several hours each week. The co-located staff work hand-in-hand with youth and greatly expand the resources that VOICES is able to offer to current and former foster youth. Co-located services include a drop-in law clinic, smoking cessation classes, mental health counseling, employment counseling, disability navigation, vocational counseling, youth support groups, ILP services, tutoring, and secondary and post-secondary education counseling.

Having all of the services located in one central location is important for several reasons. Napa County doesn't have extensive public transportation, so it's difficult for young people to move around the area to access services. Even young people who have their own cars don't necessarily know where to go for services, or who to talk to when they find a service provider. By co-locating multiple service providers in one location, access for young people is improved, and service providers are able to reach youth they wouldn't otherwise see and to serve them in a youth-friendly environment.

In managing an intergenerational learning community, one of the first steps was learning how to compromise. Having a diverse staff in terms of age has been an asset, in that peers build confidence and connections, and adults bring their expertise as well. A VOICES youth presenter explained, "There's nothing wrong with working with an older service provider, but there are some things that you can't get from working with an older person that you can get from a peer." VOICES programs include modules where both youth and adults talk about the same subject, which "levels the playing field" and provides opportunities for youth and adults to learn from each other.

Community-building projects at VOICES have included collaborating with local religious congregations for life-skills training and donations of furniture and other items, and working with local businesses to connect to jobs for youth, transportation for move-in to THP-Plus apartments, and support for special events. Relationship-building with community-based housing programs has helped with getting priority on waitlists and improved access to services. Future community projects include developing a new larger resource center and renovating the transitional housing units.

#### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

*Q: Do the co-located staff just work on VOICES programs?*

A: No, all of them work on other programs at their primary agencies. The agencies loan their staff members to the VOICES resource center on a part-time basis, with the number of hours each week depending on the resources of the co-locating agency and the needs of the youth

who come to the center. For example, Planned Parenthood provides staff for a weekly 2-hour drop-in clinic, while the mental health provider offers eight hours per week of mental health services. None of the co-located staff have full-time offices at VOICES, but some are there as many as 20 hours per week, and others as few as two hours per week.

*Q: Who are the members of the VOICES Steering Committee?*

A: The Steering Committee includes representatives from funders, child welfare, the County Office of Education, probation, and mental health. Funders that are on the Steering Committee support VOICES financially, other community members on the Committee donate their staff time for co-located services and sometimes collaborate to write grants. Initial seed money for VOICES was raised from local foundations. Members of the Steering Committee haven't signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding or other written agreement to assist or collaborate with VOICES, but because Napa is a small and very cooperative county, most of the Committee members have known each other and been working together for years.

*Q: Were the youth Founding Members of VOICES paid?*

A: Yes, they were all paid for their work in founding VOICES. Mr. Findley, who was a Founding Member, commented, "I don't know what youth would have done it for free. They also fed us a lot of food, which was good." All Founding Members were offered jobs at VOICES after the start-up phase, and six of them took staffing positions. Now, two years later, Mr. Findley is the only one still working there, and one other is coming back. The wages paid were \$8.75/hour for the start-up phase, which began as 10 hours/week but ended up increasing to nearly full-time during the intensive late start-up period. As staff members, they were initially paid \$10.50/hour for 25 hours/week. The funding came from start-up grant proposals to local foundations for youth staff positions.

*Q: How do you deal with confidentiality issues in recruitment?*

A: VOICES does not have access to the list of contact information for current and former foster youth, because they are a private nonprofit, not a government agency. ILP staff and probation officers will suggest to youth that they should come to VOICES, and VOICES has a peer outreach team that contacts youth at local youth gathering places. Many young people find out about VOICES through ILP.

*Q: What about confidentiality issues in providing services?*

A: Any time a youth receives services from VOICES or a co-located agency, they have to sign a formal release of information agreement. One important piece of input from youth was "we don't want to do any more paperwork!" VOICES usually doesn't ask youth to fill out any paperwork until about the third visit. After they've been oriented to VOICES, and become familiar with the services available, then they may decide that they want to work with one or more of the service providers, at which point they start the necessary paperwork. VOICES strives to be very clear about the paperwork requirements – for example, explaining that they have to wait for approval from the judge, which may cause a significant delay in receiving

services. Paperwork requirements can really impede the ability of young people to receive services, but the processes are also there to protect their confidentiality and rights.

*Q: Can you describe the PLACES THP-Plus model in more detail?*

A: PLACES mostly uses the scattered-site permanent model, where at the end of the program, the lease for the housing unit is transferred from VOICES to the young adult. Their THP-Plus rate is \$2400-\$2600 per youth per month. 10% of the individuals they serve (in other words, 1 youth currently) are parenting youth. All young people must have some type of income (which can be SSI or other government benefits) to be able to pay their portion of the rent. Participants are required to exit the program if they commit certain program or lease violations, including violence, unwillingness to participate with the life skills coach or attend training modules, or substance abuse that results in decompensation to the extent of being unable to maintain housing or needing to go into residential treatment. Young people who enter jail or prison also must terminate their program participation. All young people are eligible for 24 months of housing with services, which does not have to be consecutive – they can exit the program and come back after a leave of absence.

## **Workshop 2B. Meeting the Needs of Parenting Youth in THP-Plus**

**Presenters:** Janice Kanellis, Vice President of Program's St. Anne's, Los Angeles

Marybeth McCarthy, Director of Supportive Housing Services, Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont

Peter Busch, Manager, Project Independence, Fremont

**Recorder:** Sara Webber, John Burton Foundation

---

St. Anne's has been serving pregnant and parenting young women in Los Angeles for 100 years. For the last two years they have begun serving transitioning young women. They spent four years planning for this change in their program. They are a single site program with services such as childcare, child development classes, medical and mental health care onsite and 24-hour staffing. In addition, being a single site model allows the parenting young women in their program to interact with each other. One of the challenges of a single site model is that it can feel similar to foster care.

Project Independence is a scattered site program in Fremont (Alameda County). They house their parenting youth in one bedroom apartments (instead of two bedroom apartments with a roommate, which is standard for non-parenting youth in their program) because parenting youth face more challenges. It is also good for case management if the youth lives alone with her child, but the travel time for accessing offsite services can be burdensome. There are always some other youth in the program nearby for them to connect with.

All staff members have Bachelor's or Master's degrees and several years of experience. They attend trainings on a regular basis to receive specialized parent education and public benefits information. The same staff member works with the same youth throughout the entire program. Staff also share their hands-on experience with other staff members and clients. Staff receive crisis intervention training which teaches staff to ask questions instead of offering advice.

Youth wishing to enter the programs are typically referred by social services agencies, social and probation workers, group home case managers, and themselves. They must be ILP eligible. They attend an orientation where they learn about program expectations and guidelines. An assessment is made as to whether the youth is likely to succeed in the program. Will this be too much independence? Are they really ready for the challenge of working to meet their program goals? Youth have to be willing to be in school and/or working while they are in the program. St. Anne's may take in a few especially needy youth.

Despite some differences, both programs face similar challenges and successes and provide specialized services to their parenting participants. Case management requires a lower staff ratio (St. Anne's has a 1:8 ratio) and more time for parenting youth in order to provide additional supports, on site and in the larger community. Parenting youth require more one-

on-one case management time in order to adjust to their independent living situation. The young women also struggle to accomplish their goals in the two-year timeframe of the program, in part because of the additional challenge they face of raising their children while working and/or going to school. Most parenting youth lose time in the program when they take several months off from school and/or work for post-partum recovery and to spend time bonding with their babies. Additionally, they can find it difficult to return to work and/or school when they have concerns about childcare. St. Anne's encourages the young women to think about mid-step careers and getting training toward their ultimate career goal while they are in the program. Often these are tech-type jobs.

Case managers need to be creative to help parenting participants stay focused on their goals. They find they need to revisit the young woman's goals after her first few months with the baby. Childcare is a key piece in helping them achieve their goals. The programs also provide weekly life skills classes which help parenting youth learn how to effectively manage other aspects of their lives so they are better able to cope with the challenges of being a single parent. Participants also struggle with mental health and self-esteem issues and, sometime, learning disabilities. Some participants would definitely benefit from more time in the program.

Case management takes 4-6 hours a week when youth first enter the program because of the specialized benefits coordination that is required and because case managers assist youth with grocery shopping and other food-related activities. Case management also includes parenting skills training, both one-on-one in the home and in a classroom. In-home training is important because the youth work and the children are in childcare and in the scattered site model, transportation becomes an issue. It is also important for the case manager to see the youth interacting with their children, especially during typically difficult times, such as mornings, mealtimes, and bedtime. They work with youth on such issues as creating structure, crying, health, and bedtimes. Case workers develop their own relationships with the children, as well as with the youth. Both programs are working to incorporate alumni of the program to provide more support for the parenting youth.

Both programs use blended funding to provide specialized trainings for their participants. For example, St. Anne's uses First 5 funding for onsite family literacy activities which includes "Mommy and Me" classes which help the mother and child bond through activities. The Child Development Institute works with mothers and children together in a therapeutic environment to help build their relationship and to help in the child's development. Project Independence uses funding from Every Child Counts, First 5, and the United Way for some of their programs. Both programs use a "parents as teacher" curriculum.

Both programs encourage participants to have relationships with their children's fathers and support fathers who are interested in maintaining a positive and safe relationship with the mother and child. St. Anne's provides Family Literacy activities onsite and field trips offsite. Fathers are allowed to visit onsite during daytime hours. Visitation can be a safety problem, so they are very strict about this rule from the start. They are thinking about starting a fathers'

group. Supporting a young family is an example of the importance of offering a continuum of services.

Unfortunately, both programs have had to deal with domestic violence, usually with the children's fathers. This complicates the situation because participants feel connected to these young men. Case managers are given special training on these issues and work with youth to create plans to keep them and their children safe. The programs also work with the youth to educate them about the cycle of violence and how this can transfer to their children. In addition, they train youth about what a healthy family relationship looks like.

If an incidence of domestic violence occurs, staff need to move quickly to enact the safety plan. The programs will help youth get restraining orders and move, if necessary. Often participants find it hard to separate themselves from the perpetrator of the violence. This is usually a matter of the young women's low self-esteem, which case managers work to help the young women improve. They also refer the young women to domestic violence counselors.

Transitioning from the program can be more challenging for parenting youth. They need to find housing near appropriate childcare and schooling for their children and near their place of employment. They may also want to live near their child's father. Parenting youth have more income restraints due to having fewer work hours available and to higher living costs. This leaves them with fewer housing options. Parenting youth continue to need a lot of life-skills and parenting-skills support after they leave the program. Having a network of extended family and a healthy relationship with their child's father can provide some support after they transition from the program.

Youth may be asked to leave the program if they do not adhere to the guidelines of their agreement, especially with the time guidelines. Case managers work with youth intensively to prevent this from happening and by providing services. Mental health issues are often what cause a youth not to do well in the program. They will always look for another, perhaps more structured, program for youth who must leave the program. They do not ever discharge a participant into homelessness.

## **Workshop 2C. Developing Affordable Housing for Youth**

**Presenters:** Russ Schmunk, Assistant Deputy Director for Program Policy, California Department of Housing and Community Development

Anne Cory, Associate Director of the Northern California Office, Corporation for Supportive Housing

**Recorder:** Patty Turcios, Orangewood Children's Foundation, Rising Tide

---

### **Handouts:**

- State of California Department of Housing and Community Development (Homeless Youth Housing Under Proposition 1C)
- California Capital Funding Sources for Permanent Supportive Housing

Russ Schmunk opened the session by talking about Proposition 1C. He noted that the \$2.1 billion dollar affordable housing bond could be used to build or buy and renovate buildings, not for services or operating the housing. In terms of the projects that had been funded using this money there are common themes among them; the commonality being that the money has been used to build and renovate buildings and most of programs are designed for housing vouchers. Most programs are also designed for experienced housing developers working with service providers. Mr. Schmunk then went on to outline the three different programs available for Homeless Youth. They are the Multifamily Housing Program (MHP), which includes \$50 million allocated for Homeless Youth specifically, Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP-CD; \$195 million available), and the Transit Oriented Development Housing Program (\$300 million).

Mr. Schmunk went on to clarify that transit money is available for areas close to rail stations and that \$50 million dollars for youth programs can be used for loans to buy and renovate housing developments, mostly larger buildings. The money is also restricted to transitional housing, housing that has a maximum time limit of 24 months, or if permissible under housing guidelines, for housing that allows youth to stay until the age of 25. If the program for youth is in a mixed residential property the units have to be designated accordingly.

### Multifamily Housing Program (MHP) – Homeless Youth

In terms of the specifics for the Multifamily Housing Program (MHP) money, there is a large amount of money, \$50 million to be exact, for buying or redeveloping permanent housing for homeless youth. The money tends to be awarded to programs with some level of experience with housing projects and so it is highly suggested that service providers partner with developers. It is attractive to developers since the money can be used for programs that are for a targeted population and also units open to the general public. He did mention that it is a reasonably competitive process because of the high demand and the MHP money is designed for experienced housing developers.

### Emergency Housing Assistance Program – Capital Development

This program is probably the easiest to access, has been running for a long time, and there is \$195 million available to build or buy and renovate buildings. The program provides funding for beds operated as transitional housing or emergency shelters. Service providers can get up to \$1 million dollars and since this a less intense process, this funding pool does not require the extensive housing development experience.

#### Transit Oriented Development Housing Program

This program is still being worked on (guidelines are still being set) and it will be available for apartment projects located near transit stations and ideally located for people who do not have cars. There is \$300 million available under these specific funds and more than likely service providers will have to partner with an experienced developer (as in the MHP funds).

#### **Role Service Providers can play in affordable housing**

Anne Cory presented on the importance of service providers' roles in helping supply affordable housing. Developers have the experience in building and renovating buildings but they lack the knowledge of providing social services for those that need affordable housing. The baseline purpose of social services is to help people retain their houses and the lack of stable housing makes it difficult to tackle other issues within this population of clients. In addition to providing and coordinating services, a service provider identifies the needs of the projected target population and develops a solid plan to work from but maintains flexibility within the plan to deal with issues that rise.

Ms. Cory then went to cover how programs can be impacted by the design of the building since the living space arrangement interacts with the function of the program. In terms of community building service providers need to ask to what degree space can be created for community building (space for meals, to celebrate successes, picnics, to create tenant councils, etc.)

The success of the housing itself and the success of tenants is directly related to living spaces. Also, the interaction between service providers and property managers needs to be clearly defined to the clients. It is important to separate property management's role from the role of the youth advocate or person that provides services. Even though there needs to be some degree of separation there also needs to be a way for them to work together.

#### **Specific projects that have been funded**

Next, Mr. Schmunk talked about specific projects that have been funded through Prop 1C money.

#### Madison and 14<sup>th</sup> Apartments

This particular project received \$6.2 million dollars in 2004 from the State Department of Housing to build a new family apartment building in Oakland. It is still under construction but is expected to be opened this year.

The money was awarded for this project because the application was submitted by the developer of the housing project, Affordable Housing Associates (AHA). AHA specializes in housing developments for special needs populations.

The Madison and 14<sup>th</sup> Apartment complex has 79 units. There are six 3-bedroom apartments, with the remainder divided between Studio, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments. Most of the units are studios. 20 units are set aside for homeless former foster youth.

Russ noted that First Place for Youth is the service provider that received this funding. Their approach is to mix former foster youth and other tenants in their housing programs.

This project used THP-Plus funds for rental subsidy and services. THP Plus money is used to cover the difference between what tenants pay and the total rental costs. The total funding for this project was \$30.2 million with \$4 million coming from a private loan, \$6.2 million from MHP money, \$7.1 million from the City of Oakland, \$0.8 million from FHLB AHP, \$11.7 million from Tax Credit Equity fund and \$0.4 million from other sources.

Youth participants start out paying a small percentage of the rent, and pay an increasing portion over time. The program is meant to be a model of permanent housing. After the 24 month THP-Plus program is complete, youth can choose to stay in this apartment complex, which has a permanently restricted rent.

Mr. Schmunk mentioned that First Place for Youth considered going solo with the project but then decided to partner with a developer. He suggested that service providers should look for a nonprofit developer because they only do affordable housing projects, they can negotiate land, and they are used to working with service providers and part of their mission is to do housing of this nature. He did stress that developers do not have to be a nonprofit organization in order to qualify for funding and mentioned that there are good for-profit developers that have experience working with service providers.

Ruth Nunez from the Corporation for Supportive Housing informed the audience that they could call her office for a list of development consultants and a list of development organizations and provided the following contact information:

Corporation for Supportive Housing, LA office  
(213) 623-4342  
San Diego Associate Director's Office  
(619) 234-4102  
[www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org)  
Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing  
[www.scanph.org](http://www.scanph.org)

An audience member asked about recommendations for choosing a developer to partner with. Ms. Cory provided the following information:

Service partners should ask developers (for-profit or nonprofit) to talk about their mission and goals (special needs housing, etc.), their values and philosophy (to see if they can work through the challenges), the organizational culture (how they handle conflict, what their expectations are, how they make decisions), and the organization's vision for collaboration (do they really value the kind of collaboration you will need to have with them). They should also inquire about the developer's experience with similar projects (don't want to be the first they work with) and about what kinds of experience they have working in partnerships. Also important is the organization's expectation for tenant behavior since it helps establish the service plan. Most important of all, make sure that after visiting each other's sites and offices and conducting a series of meetings, a formal agreement is created.

Mr. Schmunk then suggested that people talk to other service providers about how to locate developers. The developers do not necessarily have to be working with the same population but it helps find out about establishing partnerships. He also suggested providers tap into the developers that create housing for people with mental disabilities.

In terms of partnering with a developer versus establishing a program without one, there are various levels of detail that a developer would be knowledgeable in. There are things such as the architectural design that needs to be taken into consideration and unless the service provider has architects within their organization they will need the expertise of a developer. In terms of the funding available, mixed projects require a very experienced developer while other types of projects require just some affordable housing development experience.

The topic of resources came up again from an audience member and the following organizations were mentioned: John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes, Local Initiative Support Corporation (offices in Los Angeles and Northern California; works with nonprofit developers), and *Not a Solo Act*, a publication that outlines how service providers work with housing developers. This publication is available at <http://www.csh.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageID=3266>.

Using the Madison project as an example of a service provider-developer collaboration that worked, Russ mentioned that it was a long process of getting to know each other and seeing if they could work together. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was created and once the project was built it was decided who was doing what. In summary, that partnership was forged through a lot of hard work and effort.

The following case that was presented was Lutheran Social Services (Mi Casa Youth Group Home) in the San Francisco area. This project had converted a building that was used as office space into a housing development. After the conversion the service provider requested funding under the emergency housing program and was awarded \$1 million. They also got money

from the City of Concord and now they have six beds for homeless youth in a 24 month program. Rent is set at 30% of actual income and the program is using THP-Plus funds to cover the difference between the 30% they charge the program participants and the cost to run the program.

As of now, there is \$50 million in Prop 1C funds available for homeless youth and only one application from a Los Angeles project has been submitted.

In terms of counties that have already had their THP Plus funds committed, Ms. Cory referred to the handout on capital sources funding for resources. She talked about sources for funding from the draft mental health handout and said tax credits are a good source but that they are complicated to navigate.

### **Workshop 3A. The Emotional Impact of Chronic Loss: Why Does It Matter? How Can THP-Plus Help?**

**Presenter:** Dr. Toni Heineman, Founder & Executive Director, A Home Within

**Recorder:** Sara Kimberlin, John Burton Foundation

-----

Dr. Heineman began the session by presenting some background information about the mental health of youth in foster care. There are over 81,600 children in foster care in California; 54,000 of them have been in care for more than one year, and 21,000 have been in care for more than five years. At least half of young people emancipating from foster care suffer from moderate to severe emotional problems, have chronic health conditions, report substance abuse problems, and/or have not graduated from high school. Within 12 to 18 months after leaving foster care, 50% of the young women will give birth, 25% of the young men will report fathering a child, and 25% of the young people will become involved with the criminal justice system.

Most youth in foster care have experienced *trauma*, defined as an event that threatens the psychological or physical integrity of the self or another person – an overwhelming event that is more than an individual can manage. Many youth in foster care have experienced *complex trauma*, defined as exposure to multiple traumatic events occurring within the care-giving system, where initial traumatic experiences often lead to subsequent traumas.

Dr. Heineman illustrated the difference between trauma and complex trauma through an example: If a 5-year-old child is walking down the street with his mother and gets attacked by a dog, he will be traumatized. Usually, the adult with him will then scoop him up and soothe him, because he isn't able to soothe himself at his young developmental stage. Subsequently he may be afraid of dogs for a while, but over time he will probably be able to overcome this fear and even perhaps learn to like dogs someday. In contrast, if a 5-year-old child is walking down the street with his mother and his *mother* gets attacked by a dog, he may experience complex trauma. He will be traumatized as before, but in this situation the adult won't be able to soothe him because she has been hurt herself. As before, the child won't be able to soothe himself because he doesn't have that capacity at his current developmental stage. As a result, he will be left alone, without the resources needed to deal with his trauma. Studies show that this type of situation is more traumatizing than the first type of situation.

How people deal with trauma varies by their developmental stages. Babies, for example, have almost no capacity to soothe themselves, while older children have increased self-soothing capabilities. Furthermore, different individuals are able to soothe themselves to different degrees depending on their individual resources and capabilities. Children learn how to soothe themselves by being soothed by someone else who has greater self-soothing resources, such as an adult – they learn through modeling by others.

Next Dr. Heineman described the service model used by her nonprofit organization, A Home Within. Their model is summarized as “one child; one therapist; for as long as it takes.”

Individual therapists in private practice volunteer their time to work with one child in foster care for as long as that child needs help. The organization has chapters in several counties in California and is open to forming new chapters as well – more information can be found on their website at [www.ahomewithin.org](http://www.ahomewithin.org). They have seen a tremendous need for their services. In San Francisco, the average age of entry to foster care is 5 years old, but the average age for referral to mental health services is 11 years old, after experiencing three different foster care placements, by which point they often have developed serious mental health issues.

One of the main reasons children don't receive therapy is that they don't want to participate. A Home Within began working with young children, but in the last few years they have been getting a lot of self-referrals from young people who have recently aged out of foster care. Many of these youth spent years saying they didn't want to talk to a therapist, but now, when they know they have a choice and the services will be confidential, they can see that maybe they do have some issues and maybe they do need to talk to someone.

Dr. Heineman then spoke about the goals of therapy. The relationship with the therapist is not an end in itself; rather, it provides both a secure base and a stepping stone to other healthy relationships. A variety of modalities can be used for therapy, including play, talk, physical contact, interpretations that link present and past or conscious and unconscious, consultation with important adults, emotional support, referral for appropriate services, and/or advocacy. Successful treatment results in several concrete outcomes. Namely clients will be able to:

- Establish the capacity for affect regulation.
- Substitute adaptive, self-caring behavior for mal-adaptive, self-injurious behavior patterns.
- Develop a coherent story that places traumatic events in perspective and integrates dissociated memories.
- Bring development into line with expected norms.
- Create the foundation for age-appropriate learning.
- Promote a reliable self-concept and self-esteem.

Emotional regulation is especially important. It is important for therapists to help their clients learn not only affect regulation with respect to anger and sadness, but also to learn to regulate joy, happiness, and satisfaction. In particular, it is important that individuals learn how to enjoy and appreciate small everyday successes; otherwise they may spend too much time at a baseline of unhappiness or seeking an extreme happiness "high" through drugs or other means.

Another special challenge for foster children relates to developing a coherent personal story. In the process of growing up, an individual's personal narrative is usually begun by the parent and later handed off to the child. In addition, the parent is usually the person who first conceptualizes the future hopes and dreams for a child, until the child develops his or her own dreams for the future. For a child in foster care, usually there is no single adult who holds his or her past story and future dreams.

The single most important factor influencing a positive outcome for foster children and youth is a lasting relationship with a caring adult. In other words, “somebody has to be crazy about that kid.” One cannot overestimate the importance of this type of relationship, or the important consequences of its lack. Many foster children not only do not have a lasting relationship with a caring adult, but have in fact lost more than one relationship with important adults in their lives. This type of chronic loss can be very traumatic, and can be insidious because it may have serious emotional consequences yet can remain unnoticed.

The workshop attendees next broke into three groups for small discussions. Each group read a fictional vignette about a young person who had been in foster care, and worked together to answer the following questions: Do you have enough information to define the mental health problem? What additional information do you need? Where would you get it? What resources would be helpful? What three action items would you take? Which require immediate attention? What is the issue that would be facing the THP-Plus provider? The vignettes and group comments follow:

#### ANGIE

This young woman had been in foster care since age 5, and prior to foster care lived with maternal relatives. Her father was killed in a drive-by shooting and her mother’s whereabouts are unknown. Her foster care history included two emergency foster care placements, then four foster homes, then two group homes, then a period in residential mental health treatment, then three group homes. She was diagnosed with depression at age 15, though her diagnosis was later changed to bipolar disorder during residential treatment, and she alternates between periods of withdrawal and belligerence. She complains that the medication prescribed to her doesn’t help and makes her feel “weird.” She says she just wants to be left alone and find a job, but hasn’t made efforts to do so. She used to have good grades, but barely finished high school. She’s frequently late to appointments and seldom follows through on suggestions from adults. She has never had a psychological evaluation and has refused to attend therapy. Her only serious romantic relationship took place when she was 15 years old with a boy who was also in foster care, but it ended when he moved too far away to visit. She says that the relationship wasn’t that important and that all boys and men she’s met since then have only been interested in sex. She sometimes wonders if she’s gay but hasn’t had a romantic or sexual relationship with a woman.

#### *Comments from the group:*

How can Angie be diagnosed with bipolar disorder and given medication if she hasn’t seen a psychiatrist/psychologist for a formal evaluation? She has a diagnosis, but there’s not enough information to say she actually has bipolar disorder. She might have gotten the diagnosis in the emergency room – sometimes serious diagnoses are required for hospital insurance reimbursement. Moreover, sometimes clinicians make serious diagnoses in an attempt to be “helpful” because serious diagnoses make the youth eligible to receive services, avoiding the problem of a youth wanting to talk to someone but being denied services because his or her problems aren’t “bad enough” to merit a referral. Another question is what were the causes of

Angie's depression – perhaps a connection to the loss of her boyfriend, movement between foster homes, sexual abuse, or questioning her sexual orientation? Resources that would be helpful in this case include family finding – one group participant reported that she has seen that sometimes when children are reconnected to their families of origin, the children's behavior and emotional states improve (though not always and not in all areas of functioning). A mentor would be a good resource – as an 18-year-old, Angie isn't eligible for a CASA, but AmeriCorps or another mentoring resource could be identified. Angie probably has experienced chronic loss – over the course of her childhood she lost her father, mother, other maternal relative caretakers, first boyfriend, and foster parents and other individuals she came into contact with in her 12 different foster care placements. A key theme in this case is that information about all areas of Angie's history is missing; for example, detailed mental health history, child welfare records, names and relationships to foster parents, reasons for placement changes, etc. Tracking down records from different counties and different service systems can be challenging. One group member presented an alternative interpretation of Angie's case, suggesting that perhaps Angie just wanted to be left alone, as she had stated, and the problem was that no one would follow her wishes and allow her to lead her own life.

JJ

Therapist Dr. Smith has worked with foster youth for many years, has a good reputation in the child welfare field, and is currently spearheading an effort with THP-Plus providers, ILSP administrators, and other agencies to develop a mental health program targeting youth aging out of foster care. He wants to talk to you about JJ, a young man with whom he's worked for some time, and whom he feels would be a great match for your THP-Plus program. JJ was doing well in a transitional housing program until three months ago, when his arts teacher, from a program that is the highlight of his week, announced that she would be moving across the country at the end of the semester. At that point JJ started missing class and being late to work, and went AWOL from his housing program. Previously, Dr. Smith had a good relationship with the arts teacher and case manager, but their working relationship had fallen apart over the last month – he felt that the arts teacher was being insensitive to the effect on JJ of her planned departure, and that the case manager had become overly angry and punitive because he had heard rumors that JJ was dealing drugs and prostituting himself. The case manager now insists that JJ would have to “earn his way” back into the transitional housing program. JJ has recently gotten back in contact with Dr. Smith after a month-long disappearance. JJ confirmed dealing drugs and prostituting “a couple of times.” He wants to get back on track but is afraid to return to the housing program because he knows the case manager is angry. JJ had been couch-surfing, but ran out of places to stay, so Dr. Smith has been allowing JJ to sleep on the couch in his waiting room for the last few weeks.

*Comments from the group:*

One of the central issues in this case is that we don't know very much about JJ. There's no information about his mental health problem, so it's impossible to know if the impending loss of the arts teacher is what caused his recent problems, or if the cause is actually depression, PTSD, or some other issue. We need more information about his history – family, mental

health, foster placement, medication, behavior. We also need more information from the other people involved in this case – Dr. Smith, the case manager, the arts teacher, County social workers, and especially from JJ himself. In terms of action items, the first thing the group would do is talk to JJ to find out what the real issue is and what he wants to see happen. Next they would plan an interdisciplinary meeting, if JJ agreed, with all individuals involved plus a neutral mediator to prevent unconstructive conflict between the angry case manager and JJ. Thirdly, the group would recommend a health screening to identify any possible issues resulting from JJ's recent prostitution and episode of homelessness. The most important issue facing the THP-Plus provider is soliciting information from all involved parties in order to identify JJ's needs and see if the THP-Plus program is the best fit.

A separate issue raised in this case concerns Dr. Smith – the fact that he has allowed JJ to sleep on the couch in his waiting room for several weeks raises a possible red flag. This could indicate that Dr. Smith has not set appropriate boundaries in his relationship with JJ, raising questions about his agenda in developing a mental health program for former foster youth, or it could simply indicate that Dr. Smith has an appropriate close and caring relationship with JJ. More information is needed. Dr. Heineman highlighted the importance of not drawing conclusions based on insufficient information.

#### REGINA & MARIA

Regina was in foster care from age 14 to 18. She is now 22 years old and has three biological children. Regina's oldest 6-year-old son lives with her maternal aunt 25 miles away; her 4-year-old daughter lives with Regina's sister 40 miles away; and two-month old Maria still lives with Regina at Regina's transitional housing program. Previously Regina had a substance use problem, but she has now been clean and sober for a year and wants to make a better life for herself. She is determined not to lose Maria to foster care and to get her other two children back. Regina has tried to complete her required parenting classes through her drug treatment program, but she hasn't been able to because there has always been a waiting list. Prior to Maria's birth, Regina was taking community college classes while working as a receptionist. Her maternity leave from her job will be ending soon, but she has been unable to find daycare despite many referrals – none of the programs have met Regina's standards so far. She is now thinking of quitting her job to care for Maria full-time. She thinks she could live with her sister, though she and her sister have a history of a poor relationship. In the meantime, Regina seems to be paying less attention to Maria, who is becoming listless and less responsive to her mother. Regina went with Maria to an infant-parent psychotherapy program once, but she refuses to go back because the therapist told her she was a bad parent and the therapist would take her baby away if she didn't start doing better.

#### *Comments from the group:*

Regina might suffer from depression, and possibly an attachment disorder. We need more history, and a timeline might be helpful to clarify the attachment issues. We also need to find out what other types of support she has – such as the baby's father, or other relatives. Resources that could be helpful in this case include parenting classes, individual therapy, day

care, substance abuse classes, a parent resource center, and/or group therapy with other young mothers. The group proposed three action items: 1) Helping Regina develop parenting skills through modeling or therapy; 2) Finding child care; and 3) Finding THP-Plus housing for Regina that is located near her job and day care.

### **Workshop 3B. Staffing: Building the Dream Team**

**Presenters:** Va Lecia Adams, Ph.D., Pathways to Independence (United Friends of the Children)  
Roena Tapscott, Pathways Alumna

**Recorder:** Simonne Ruff, Corporation for Supportive Housing

---

Dr. Va Lecia Adams introduced the United Friends of the Children Pathways to Independence Transitional Living Program, which is an 18 month, 60 bed program. The target population is former foster youth. There are three program areas:

- Housing and independent living
- Life path (career, college, vocational training)
- Interpersonal skills and mental health

Relational theory informs Pathways' work, with a fundamental theoretical framework that youth heal themselves through relationships. The service model flows from this framework. Dr. Adams discussed the criteria they use for assessing applicants for staff positions with the program: level of education, professional experience, and diversity. Other key considerations when hiring staff include ensuring that their interest and motivations match well with the position (e.g. people who like to be in the office may not be appropriate for client work). It is also important to have youth weigh in on hiring decisions.

Salaries are an important consideration. Compensation for higher levels of experience and training do pay off in the program – “you get what you pay for.” Comparison salary survey data is available from the Center for Non-Profit Management for both Northern and Southern California.

Dr. Adams stressed the importance of leading by example in supporting and motivating staff. Managers should demonstrate commitment to the program; interact with staff and youth; and balance workload between staff. Staff reviews and feedback should be given on an ongoing basis and should include feedback on strengths as well as weaknesses.

Dr. Adams shared the United Friends of the Children Performance Evaluation form and process, which includes general expectations, job specific expectations, key accomplishments, primary goals and position development areas of assessment. Staff must be clear about what is required of them in all of these areas, particularly job expectations, so they have clear benchmarks for feedback on performance. It is also important to be clear about the link between performance and raises or bonuses (and that sometimes raises or bonuses aren't possible within budgets).

Training is an important resource for staff and often is forgotten in the “busy-ness” of working in the program. Training is particularly important in preventing staff burn-out. Investing in staff retention really pays off. It is important to be creative and allow staff to be creative in determining what will enable them to be productive and effective employees.

Pathways to Independence has high expectations of staff – including having high expectations of the youth they work with. Staff should have experience working with youth and should approach youth as partners, believing in them and their abilities, while holding them accountable. Staff must be able to “speak to the youth’s heart and their lives,” join with them going forward while being consistent and dependable. This is particularly important in a relational framework.

Outcomes for Pathways youth are very strong. The average hourly wage for graduating youth is \$9.21/hr. All graduating youth in this year’s program are moving into permanent housing. In addition, youth have the opportunity to participate in an Alumni program once they graduate. Pathways is still in touch with 62% of all youth who have been through their program. Of those 62%, 91% are in permanent housing and 64% are currently employed.

Weaknesses that will impact transitional age youth programs are current/prospective staff who:

- Personalize the youth’s behavior/failures
- Have boundary issues
- Are inflexible
- Have low expectations of youth
- Have limited self-awareness and personal insight
- Lack experience

It’s important to assess staffing to avoid these weaknesses that will negatively impact programs.

Roena Tapscott, Pathways alumna, described her experience in Pathways and indicated that staff respect and believe in the youth and encourage them to achieve their goals. Staff are available to the youth and listen to the youth, which is very helpful. Staff with these qualities will have a critical impact on youth in the program and will be remembered for the rest of their lives. Staff can’t know exactly “what it’s like” for the youth – the most important thing is to listen and to be open to hearing the youth, or perhaps refer the youth to someone who can hear their experiences. Staff also need to know that they can’t help everyone; it is important to do their part and the youth have to do their own part. Roena described the music component of the program along with retreats. Pathways now offers retreats for alumni as well as program participants. This is part of the ongoing support provided to youth once they graduate from the program and helps to maintain ties with alumni and staff.

Dr. Adams discussed the challenge of determining when youth are hitting rock bottom and when they are testing to see if they can get themselves kicked out of the program. The Pathways program has a mechanism to stay connected even if they are asked to leave the program. It is important that youth know that they can reconnect with the program if they aren’t able to complete it the first time.

### **Workshop 3C. Addressing the Realities of Substance Use and Abuse: Harm Reduction in Housing**

**Presenter:** Toby Eastman, Director of Clinical and Community Services, Larkin Street Youth Services

**Co-Presenters:** Tyrone Botelho, Participant  
Drusilla Hebert, Participant

**Recorder:** Ruth Teague, Corporation for Supportive Housing

---

The workshop began with an overview of Larkin Street Youth Services programs and services. The following are some highlights of that discussion:

- ◆ Larkin Street served 2,000 youth last year
- ◆ **Under-age youth shelter**  
After 4-5 days (trust & relationship-building) then Larkin must contact parents  
Maximum stay at under-age youth shelter = 120 days
- ◆ HIV outreach & prevention & education services, mobile testing & testing at clinics in community
- ◆ **Mental Health**  
2 consulting psychiatrists do psychiatric assessments and mental health service recommendations  
1 MFT therapist, several hours a week  
Contracting & partnerships
- ◆ **ROOTS PROGRAM**  
Mental health program funded by the Mental Health Services Act
- ◆ **Substance Abuse**  
Weekly groups and individual counseling
- ◆ **Employment and Education Programs**  
Day Labor Program  
Job Readiness Class (interviewing skills, etc.)  
Institute for Higher Learning (structured paid and unpaid internship placements; relationships with business forged largely through Larkin Street Board members)

A discussion of demographics of youth population served was presented in pie charts. It was noted that the demographic is not reflective of the larger San Francisco population, i.e., very few Asian American youth as compared with the population in the city.

44% of youth served have had an out of home placement  
23% emancipated from foster care.

- ◆ **L.E.A.S.E. PROGRAM**

The L.E.A.S.E. program is a THP-Plus program that was launched in November, 2003 to serve former foster care youth initially housed in Larkin's shelter facilities. The current program has more than doubled in size since its inception. Most tenants referred through County ILSP program. Participants pay 30% of their income in rent, which is built into a saving program. If a young person leaves before the end of their savings incentive program term, the tenant still has access to the savings accumulated. However, if the young person is not leaving the community to move into a stable environment, Larkin offers to hold the money for safekeeping until such time occurs.

Larkin tenant, Tyrone Botelho shared his individual experiences as a program participant. He was referred to Larkin by a college counselor. Mr. Botelho had moved there from another TAY housing program where roommates were selling drugs. Move-in happened within a week after the first interview. The free health clinic on site has been invaluable. Mr. Botelho is also a Chafee scholarship recipient. Mr. Botelho announced that surplus scholarship funds are currently available for emancipated foster youth and are underutilized. This program does not require proof of immigration status.

Another participant of Larkin Street, Ms. Hebert, shared some of her life experience with being homeless for several years, running away from group homes and higher level facilities. "Larkin staff are so supportive and there are so many services available, it's amazing!" Ms. Hebert noted.

◆ **LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES: APPROACH TO HARM REDUCTION.**

Panelists noted that when you tell young people what to do, they're likely to do the opposite. Larkin Street's service philosophy is about supporting youth and educating youth about their decisions. Abstinence is absolutely one of the goals of harm reduction, but they recognize that "it's a process getting there."

Starting where the client is, Larkin Street staff assess the extent and meaning of drug use for that person and share expertise with the client in this assessment process.

In response to questions regarding HUD rules regarding substance use, Toby explained that Larkin is not a 24-hour program and surprise room inspections are not routinely conducted; instead, tenants are treated with dignity and respect. The goal is the tenants' learning the life-skills to make choices about substance use and its impact as opposed to learning fear of the threat of eviction. If the substance use is getting in the way of goals, staff help clients devise plans to change behavior, decrease use, etc.

One participant shared a personal experience with her roommate. If a roommate is clean and sober and another roommate is using, Larkin will step in, particularly the case manager. However roommates are encouraged to deal with each other one-on-one, on their own terms. Substance counseling, not substance treatment is provided. Clients can walk in the door high and still get access to services.

In response to questions about surprise visits, moderator and panelists agreed that the success of harm reduction is that trust is built by respecting independence. The tenant-landlord relationship is a collaborative, not a power relationship

◆ **RISK FACTORS FOR FOSTER YOUTH**

Larkin Street has experienced the challenge of parents coming to live with youth participants, especially when a parent is struggling with substance use. Substance use is a result of trauma, such as abuse, removal from family, and the trauma that happens within foster care, the trauma of emancipation, trauma of homelessness; substance abuse is a coping strategy. But counselors work with clients to identify how this strategy is affecting success and also to determine whether the substance use is a self-medicating response to mental illness.

Educating clients about consequences to rule breaking; going through a process of making decisions about that.

◆ **HARM REDUCTION STRATEGIES**

- Substance use is an open conversation – it in and of itself will not affect housing status
- Focus on youth readiness in terms of desire to change risk behavior
- Staff members work with youth to minimize the harmful effects of behaviors
- Youth is the expert on addiction and consequences of addiction

**Additional information on this presentation is available in the form of a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Larkin Street’s Director of Clinical and Community Services, Toby Eastman**

### **Workshop 3D. If We Build It, Will They Come?**

**Presenters:** Linda Levshin, Rising Tide Communities, Orangewood Children's Foundation  
Patty Turcios, Orangewood Children's Foundation

Lynn Morison, Bill Wilson Center, Santa Clara County

**Recorder:** Bob Malmberg, Orange County Social Services Agency

---

The workshop was designed to provide practical strategies for finding and retaining youth in transitional housing programs. Specific questions that were addressed include: How are youth part of the outreach, recruitment and selection process? How do youth measure their progress in the program? How are expectations for the program set?

#### Rising Tide Communities, Orange County: Program Overview

Rising Tide Communities is an affordable housing program for former foster youth in Orange County. The program is a partnership between Orangewood Children's Foundation (OCF) and a group of concerned business leaders. Rising Tide has two facilities of 80 apartments each, with 10% of the apartments dedicated to emancipated youth. Bond financing allows for tiered rates for the apartments.

Rising Tide discovered early on that youth entering the program lacked connections and linkages to support them. The program has live-in staff at each of the two apartment complexes, who provide case management and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the participating youth.

Ms. Turcios is a former Rising Tide participant and is currently the assistant to the program's case managers. She assists youth with budgeting and managing their personal financial obligations. The program provides incentives for timely rent submission, as well as a matched savings account. The savings account is held in trust until participants leave the program, or for true emergencies. Rising Tide also holds the code for an ING Debit card for participants who are struggling with controlling their own finances. Participants participate in financial literacy classes, which helps them to understand, among other things, that all expenditures must be included in their budgeting process.

#### Bill Wilson Center, Santa Clara County: Program Overview

Bill Wilson Center is a THP-Plus provider that serves emancipating youth, as well as homeless and runaway youth 18 – 24 years old. They also receive federal funding and homeless youth funding for their programs. They offer six sites, each of which houses five young adults. A monitor lives on-site, and receives free rent in exchange for mediation. A case manager provides services to youth participants at their housing site.

Bill Wilson Center staff support youth seeking work, who are responsible for making the initial calls to employers and setting up interviews. Program emphasis is placed on the intensive case management; housing is considered one mechanism to support the program interventions.

Because of the high level of oversight, the program does not replicate the expectations placed on youth by the general population. The best monitors have been young adults in their early 20's with very good boundaries, who can model these boundaries for the participating youth. An Independent Living Program as well as child care support are provided to participants. To successfully retain participants, the program remains open to the individual needs of the youth.

If the youth can come in at least for an application session, they will make more informed choices.

### **Bill Wilson Center Application Process**

- Applicant engages in initial interview
- Staff conducts follow-up with applicants when there are vacancies
- Once the applicant is selected, he/she begins receiving job search assistance
- Participant begins paying a portion of the program fees (rent)
- The case manager and participant develop contracting increments for each week; participants receive a stipend of \$15 per week for participating in contracting sessions
- Participants also receive stipends for good grades, for educational advancements and for graduation
- Participants can be suspended for 24 – 48 hours for violations, or terminated from the program. Participants can re-apply after 30 days.

### **Rising Tide Application Process**

Going from foster care directly into an emancipated youth housing process is a challenge for the provider as well as for the youth participants. Rising Tide is very honest with the youth about the challenges of complying with program expectations. Increased success would be found if there were an interim resource between the foster care placement and housing for former foster youth. Better referrals are made when program staff meet with county staff and youth participants to discuss the process, so there are no surprises upon entry in the program. A high school diploma is essential to entry, because the youth need to move forward to post-secondary education resources. Youth have the only key to their apartment, and must be responsible for their housekeeping and compliance with the laws.

Providers in both Orange and Santa Clara Counties can provide exiting youth with credit references for future housing opportunities. The program assists youth to become prepared to live within their means, so sharing an apartment may be something that they have to get used to, in spite of their expectations for freedom upon emancipation from foster care.

Funding at Bill Wilson Center is from Federal HUD slots, as well as Health and Human Services grants. A regional application process is required of all participants. Mentoring programs with scholarships can also be arranged.

Rising Tide is not currently funded with THP-Plus dollars, and is funded from donations and from rents from the other 90% of the apartments in the complexes. Youth are 18-24, and the program is 18 months duration. Average length of stay is 7-12 months.

One effective practice is utilizing a co-lease, which is signed by the provider in conjunction with the youth, providing an improved foundation for youth completing the process.

It was noted that THP-Plus is for youth residing in the approved county, originating from any California Juvenile Court jurisdiction.

THP-Plus in Orange County is at maximum capacity. The county will be seeking additional funding from CDSS to serve a greater number of youth.

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services suggested both single site and scattered site models should be considered for the THP-Plus youth.

Conflict management skills training is central to the Bill Wilson Center and the Rising Tide programs. Presentations, role play, and application of skills are provided. Teachable moments and allowing the relationships to build over time are among the best opportunities to reinforce skills in conflict management.

### III. Faculty Biographies

**DR. VA LECIA ADAMS**, Ph.D., has served as Director of Transitional Living at United Friends of Children since December, 2001. Dr. Adams completed her doctoral studies in counseling psychology at Stanford University and is responsible for program design, implementation, administration, and staffing. Prior to joining UFC, Dr. Adams served as the Vice President of Counseling Services for College Bound, a college counseling program for at-risk youth. Dr. Adams was also the Executive Director of Stanford Medical Youth Science, an outreach program for low-income youth interested in the field of medicine.

**MR. PETER BUSCH** is Manager at Project Independence, overseeing staff and the everyday operations of the program. Mr. Busch has been with Tri-City Homeless Coalition for seven years. He has 15 years of social work experience with the youth street population and chronically ill homeless and three years working with HIV/AIDS patients.

**MS. ANNE CORY** is with the Corporation for Supportive Housing, where she holds the post of Associate Director, Northern California. She manages the provision of training and technical assistance to developers and service providers, bringing CSH's expertise and financial assistance to projects throughout the region.

**MS. MICHELLE COVERT** heads EHC LifeBuilders' programs for homeless, runaway and throwaway youth. Since joining EHC LifeBuilders in 1992, Ms. Covert has engaged the community in helping homeless youth through community outreach and affiliations. In 2003, she received the Leslie David Burgess Lifetime Achievement Award for the County of Santa Clara for her outstanding commitment to and efforts in the area of HIV prevention in the county. Ms. Covert is co-chair of Santa Clara County's California Connected by 25 Housing Committee and she served as co-chair of a host family working group, which led to the successful implementation of this component of the project.

**MR. JEREMIAH CUTAJAH**, 21 years old, is a THP-Plus MY Home Program participant in Stanislaus County. He is a former foster youth and is currently enrolled in the Modesto Junior College EMT program. His goal is to complete his education and become a full-fledged EMT. He is also working and actively involved in providing training on foster youth issues at the County's foster-pride training.

**MS. TOBY EASTMAN**, MSW, is Director of Clinical and Community Services at Larkin Street Youth Services. Ms. Eastman manages and directs community-based housing services, outreach services, as well as providing oversight to mental health and substance abuse services throughout the agency. She has over 15 years experience in social services including program management of mental health and case management programs; supervision of clinicians, case managers, and administrative staff; and direct service experience as a case manager, counselor, therapist and clinical consultant. The bulk of her experience has been focused on child and

youth issues, including work with homeless youth, LGBTQ youth and youth in the foster care system.

**MS. NENITA EBALLA-DEAN**, MSW, MAT, Manager III, manages the Child Welfare programs for the Community Services Agency of the Stanislaus County Child and Family Services Division. She has more than 30 years of experience serving children and families as an educator, eligibility worker, social worker, social worker supervisor and manager. She completed her MSW at San Jose State University and her Masters in Teaching (MAT) at the University of the Philippines. She currently manages the Independent Living Program, Transitional Housing Program, Permanent Placement, Adoption, Licensing, and Foster Parent Training and Recruitment in Stanislaus County. She has many years of experience in the area of permanency, independent living, transitional housing programs, prevention programs, and integrated services. She has worked in the Philippines and Nigeria West Africa as an educator, counselor, social worker, and administrator.

**MR. MITCHELL FINDLEY** is a founding member and Assistant Director of V.O.I.C.E.S. He has been with V.O.I.C.E.S. since June of 2005. He is 19 years old, and a student at Napa Valley College. He is a former foster youth and has two younger sisters, one of which is still in care.

At V.O.I.C.E.S., Mr. Findley is responsible for many things. The thing that he does most frequently is public speaking at presentations, trainings and conferences. He is also on the newly developed Tech Squad, which means he helps to address all of the technology needs at the center. In addition, he has developed and coordinated all data collection and entry for the youth members at V.O.I.C.E.S. Mr. Findley also coordinates all logistics for the PLACES move-in rituals that happen for participants. And last, but not least, he is a member of the Participatory Evaluation Research (PER) team for the Cricket Island Foundation Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) at V.O.I.C.E.S.

**MS. ALISSA GENTILE** has been with V.O.I.C.E.S. since June 2005. She started out working with the 10 founding youth who created V.O.I.C.E.S. and now is the Program Director. Ms. Gentile provides overall leadership to V.O.I.C.E.S. and its programs by creating an intergenerational community center that employs youth development approaches to support the successful transition of foster youth to healthy, safe, and productive adulthood. She brings a strong background in youth development practices for at-risk populations, previously working for YTEC (Youth Treatment and Education Court) and San Francisco State University. She has presented about V.O.I.C.E.S. to over 500 service providers at a range of conferences and events at the local, regional and national level.

**MR. JAHMAR HAMMOND** was the 10<sup>th</sup> participant in the Project Independence Program. He attends Las Positas Community College where he had his own radio show last semester interviewing people who are making a difference in their communities. He has done several public speaking events and just recently was a speaker at the "Every One Home" kick-off for Alameda County. He was on stage with Scott Haggerty, and the Mayors of Oakland and

Berkeley. He applied for and was just selected for a 2-month Internship at the Mayor's office in Berkeley. He is also going to be a speaker at an upcoming youth conference in San Diego.

**DR. TONI HEINEMAN** is the Founder and Executive Director of A Home Within, which is currently the only national organization focused exclusively on meeting the emotional needs of current and former foster children. Through A Home Within, clinicians in private practice offer weekly pro bono psychotherapy “for as long as it takes.” Clinicians in A Home Within work from the premise that all children need at least one stable relationship with a caring adult to thrive—the therapeutic relationship helps children build other relationships that support and sustain them. Dr. Heineman is the author of *The Abused Child: Psychodynamic Understanding and Treatment* and the co-editor of *Building A Home Within: Meeting the Emotional Needs of Children and Youth in Foster Care*. She has presented numerous workshops to social workers, psychologists, foster parents and youth. She recently presented a paper, *Disrupted Care and Disruptive Moods: Pediatric Bipolar Disorder in Foster Care Children*, at the annual Childhood and Society Symposium.

**MS. LINDA LEVSHIN** is the Executive Director of Rising Tide Communities. She is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with 20 years experience working with foster children. She was the director of the David & Margaret Foster Family Agency where she recruited and trained foster parents and matched children in their homes. She has been with the Orangewood Children’s Foundation for almost three years as the Executive Director of Rising Tide Communities, Orangewood’s transitional housing program.

**MS. JEAN LITTLE, MSW**, is a Social Worker Supervisor II for the Stanislaus County Community Services Agency Child and Family Services Division. She is currently supervising the Independent Living Program, Transitional Housing Program, After Care and Permanent Placement. She received her BS Degree in Sociology from CSUS in 2000 and her MSW with distinction from CSUS in 2002. She has worked as a Social Worker IV in Family Reunification/Permanent Placement for three years and was promoted to her current position in August 2006. Ms. Little is married and has one daughter.

**MS. MARYBETH MCCARTHY** has worked in the social services field for 17 years. Ms. McCarthy began with Tri-City Homeless Coalition in 2000 where she developed the Project Independence Program. The Project Independence THP-Plus Program provides affordable housing and comprehensive supportive services to help former foster care and probation youth ages 18 to 24 make a successful transition from out-of-home placements to independent living. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Services & Sociology from California State University East Bay. In addition to Directing Project Independence, Ms. McCarthy has responsibility for directing the supportive housing services at four affordable housing complexes the Tri-City Homeless Coalition has developed. Ms. McCarthy says that she is working for Tri-City Homeless Coalition "because we not only work with families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness, but we are working to prevent and end homelessness."

**MS. AMBER MCCURDY** is 20 years old. She is currently the single mom of a beautiful 2 year-old boy. She has been in and out of her home from the age of five to eighteen. She started attending Napa Valley College in Fall '06 to begin working toward a BA in Social Work with the long term goal of attaining an MSW. She has successfully completed the Certified Nursing Program and attained a CNA degree.

Ms. McCurdy has been working at V.O.I.C.E.S since February of 2006. She is the youth lead of the Parent and Child Education and Support (P.A.C.E.S.) program for pregnant and parenting foster youth at V.O.I.C.E.S. She is a part of the youth outreach team that goes out into the community to spread the word to Emancipated Foster Youth (EFY) about V.O.I.C.E.S. and the services they offer. She also works one-on-one with youth in the PLACES program to do assessments and support them in their life planning. In addition, she is a member of the Participatory Evaluation Research (PER) team for the Cricket Island Foundation Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) at V.O.I.C.E.S.

**MS. LYNN MORISON** is the Program Director for the Transitional Housing and Independent Living Programs at Bill Wilson Center in Santa Clara. She has been involved in the development and implementation of the agency's transitional housing programs for the last twelve years.

**MR. FRANK MOTTA** has worked for the Santa Clara County Social Services Agency for over five years and is currently Project Manager for the Policy, Legislation, and Resource Development unit within the Government Relations and Planning division. Since joining the Agency, his work on housing issues has included conducting an Agency-wide housing needs assessment, representing the Agency on the Board of Supervisors' Homeless Task Force, and representing the County Welfare Directors' Association on the State Policy Group for Homeless Families. Mr. Motta is co-chair of Santa Clara County's California Connected by 25 Housing Committee and served as co-chair of a host family working group, which led to the successful implementation of this component of the project.

**MS. DEANNE PEARN** is Co-Founder and Director of Development and Community Relations for First Place for Youth, an innovative organization founded in 1998 dedicated to ending poverty and homelessness among youth aging out of the foster care system. First Place operates three distinct programs serving over 400 youth between the ages of 16-24 each year, including the My First Place Program which provides housing and intensive support services to at least 130 single and parenting youth per year. Through partnerships with Alameda, San Francisco, and Contra Costa Counties, First Place was the first THP-Plus provider in the state and has been utilizing THP-plus funds to support the program since 2002.

**MR. SAL PEREZ**, MSW, is a Social Worker IV for the Stanislaus County Community Services Agency Child and Family Services Division. He is the After Care social worker responsible for the case management of THP-Plus participants and emancipated youth involved in CC25I transition programs such as the Bridge and IDA programs. He has three years of experience in

Emergency Response and ten years as a hospital social worker. He attended Modesto Junior College to get a degree in nursing, but later transferred to CSUS to major in Sociology. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from CSUS in 2000 and his MSW in 2002.

**MS. TES SALVATORE** began working with the at-risk youth population for the Seattle School District and for non-profit agencies in several locations. As a social worker, she set up prevention programs in alternative schools and provided support services for homeless, runaway, and street-involved youth. Ms. Salvatore moved to Napa and joined Aldea Treatment Foster Care as a clinical social worker in November 2005. She became a member of the co-located staff team at V.O.I.C.E.S. shortly thereafter. At V.O.I.C.E.S she was a member of the primary development team, setting up V.O.I.C.E.S. member files and the performance coaching system. Ms. Salvatore took on the position of Program Director for the PLACES THP-Plus housing program at the Progress Foundation in August 2006. In her position at Progress Foundation she remains a part of V.O.I.C.E.S. co-located staff and collaborates with youth to develop, recruit, advise, assess, and move-in PLACES tenants. Ms. Salvatore is committed to integrating the 'youth voice' into the PLACES THP-Plus program.

**MR. RUSS SCHMUNK** is Assistant Deputy Director for Program Policy at the California Department of Housing and Community Development, which administers most of the Proposition 1C programs. He played a lead role in developing the Multifamily Housing Program, including its Supportive Housing and Homeless Youth components.

**MS. PATTY TURCIOS** works as a Rising Tide Communities assistant. She is a former foster youth who emancipated from the foster care system upon high school graduation in 1998. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from University of California, Irvine in 2002 and is also a graduate of the Rising Tide program. Ms. Turcios has been working with current and former foster youth since 2000 and has been working with the Rising Tide program since March of 2005.

**MR. DANIEL WEEMS** is a graduate of Bill Wilson Center's Transitional Housing Program. He is currently employed as an Outreach Worker in the agency's Drop-In Center working with homeless youth and young adults.

**MS. POLLY WILLIAMS** was named President of United Friends of the Children in January, 2001. Since that time, she has overseen the completion of two strategic plans, a restructuring of staff roles and responsibilities, significant organizational growth, and the implementation of two new programs at UFC. Ms. Williams' professional background encompasses both nonprofit management and corporate experience. Prior to joining United Friends, she was the Director of Development (responsible for project and construction management) for Catellus Development Corporation in Los Angeles. She has also held a number of executive director and senior management positions with the Music Center of Los Angeles County, the World Cup 1994 Organizing Committee, and the Getty House Restoration Foundation.

**MS. ELIZABETH WRIGHT**, Housing Coordinator at First Place for Youth, is responsible for all aspects of identifying and master leasing affordable rental properties in the East Bay for First Place participants. Before coming to First Place for Youth, Elizabeth's worked as affordable housing advocate, both at the Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness and the Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing. She attended Cal Polytechnic University in Pomona, where she received a BS in Urban and Regional Planning with a minor in Regenerative Studies.