

# ODMH Kids News: Building Ohio's Future

## Special Edition



Monthly E-Newsletter

May/June 2007

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### MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

### HOMELESSNESS AND TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH

Youth homelessness is disturbingly common. Although the prevalence of youth homelessness is difficult to measure, **researchers estimate that about 5 to 7.7 percent of youth experience homelessness.** With at least one million youth on the streets and in shelter—and thousands more leaving juvenile justice, mental health facilities, and leaving foster care systems—the problem of youth homelessness continues to grow.

**Everyone finds transitioning to adulthood difficult, but homeless adolescents have even greater obstacles to overcome.** Stable housing linked with services is critical to helping homeless youth transition to adulthood.

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/policy/focusareas/youth>

A house is the basis for a home. It's the structure inside which our lives unfold; where we nurture our children, face our challenges and celebrate our milestones. For a house to become a home it must be safe, decent, affordable - and available. In Ohio, more affordable housing is badly needed. Last year, approximately 150,000 Ohioans were homeless. Nearly one in four Ohioans could not afford the fair-

market rent of a two-bedroom unit; and foreclosures continue to crush the dream of home ownership in Ohio at a rate that is three times higher than the national average.

At Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) they believe that everybody should have a home, so they advocate on behalf of those who do not. COHHIO supports a range of housing assistance services in Ohio, including homeless prevention, emergency shelters, transitional housing and permanent affordable housing with linkages to supportive services, as needed. Helping hundreds of housing organizations and homeless service providers pursue their missions, COHHIO provides public policy advocacy, training and technical assistance, research and public education.

Since 1994, COHHIO has worked on behalf of every Ohioan in need of a house, in hopes that someday these simple physical structures can become lasting homes filled with life's possibilities.

<http://www.cohhio.org/>

All information that has been obtained for use in this article has attached references/links from borrowed resources; see links for additional cited work, where applicable.

Not all young people who experience homelessness are living in families. Unaccompanied homeless youth between the ages of 16 and 24 have been estimated to make up as much as 12 percent of the homeless population.

#### Causes of Youth Homelessness

Numerous studies of homeless youth have found experiences of physical and sexual abuse, parental drug or alcohol use, childhood homelessness, foster care, and juvenile detention.

Neglect and lack of emotional and financial support from their families can also cause youth homelessness.

- It is estimated that between 500,000 and 1.3 million youth who run away or are thrown out become homeless.
- A study of youth in shelters indicated that nearly half of youth reported intense conflict or physical harm by a family member as a major contributing factor to their homelessness.

In the same study 62 percent of youth indicated that a member of their family or household let them know they were not longer wanted.

- Within 2-4 years of exiting foster care, 25 percent of foster children had experienced homeless.
- In a study of homeless youth in Minnesota, 34 percent of homeless youth surveyed indicated they had been in a correctional facility for more than a week.

### HOMELESSNESS AND YOUTH

The effects of homelessness are especially devastating to youth living in shelters and on the street. Youth are at an increased risk of being physically and sexually abused while on the streets, especially in adult homeless shelters. Local and regional studies report rates of sexual assault of homeless youth ranging from 15-20 percent.

- More than half of youth report being "beaten up" while on the streets.
- Additionally, youth reported being robbed, stabbed, and shot at while on the streets.

The complicated lives of homeless youth make the transition to adulthood exceptionally difficult. Abuse, neglect, lack of role models, and family instability affects a youth's ability to establish and maintain support networks that can be vital in a successful transition to adulthood.

### ENDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Mainstream homeless programs fail to meet the unique needs of homeless youth. Ending youth homelessness requires a coordinated effort involving a variety of services including support for youth discharged from foster care and the juvenile justice system, access to education for youth at risk of becoming homeless, and additional research to help advocates better understand the needs of homeless youth.

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/general/detail/1059>

## **National Partnership to End Youth Homelessness**

### THE TEN ESSENTIALS

#### **What Your Community Needs To Do To End Youth Homelessness**

The National Partnership to End Youth Homelessness has developed the following checklist as a guide to help communities identify the minimum requirements for an effective permanent solution to prevent and end youth homelessness.

The essentials are based on the National Alliance to End Homelessness's Ten Essentials for Ending Homelessness in Your Community and the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, which draws from over twenty years of research and experience with communities around the country. For the purposes of this Toolkit, we have slightly modified the essentials to respond to the unique housing and service needs of homeless youth.

No essential is more important than another. All require participation from every sector of the community.

#### **PLAN**

Your community has a set of strategies focused on ending youth homelessness. A wide range of players (government programs, elected officials, homeless providers, etc.) has made funding and implementation commitments to these strategies.

#### **DATA**

Your community has a homelessness management information system that can be analyzed to assess how long youth are homeless, what their needs are, what the causes of homelessness are, how people interact with mainstream systems of care, the effectiveness of interventions, and the number of homeless youth.

#### **EMERGENCY PREVENTION**

Your community has in place an emergency homelessness prevention program that includes crisis counseling, family reunification services, rent assistance, and landlord intervention.

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### SYSTEMS PREVENTION

- I. Mainstream programs (child welfare, juvenile corrections, mental health, etc.) that provide care and services to youth consistently assess and respond to their housing needs.
- II. There is placement in stable housing for all people being released from public institutions.

### OUTREACH

Your community has an outreach and engagement system designed to reduce barriers and encourage homeless youth so that they enter appropriate housing linked with appropriate services.

### YOUTH HOUSING CONTINUUM

The youth shelter and transitional housing system in your community is organized to reduce or minimize the length of time youth remain homeless, and the number of times they become homeless. Outcome measures will be key to this effort.

Your community has skilled housing search and housing placement services available for homeless youth and young adults who cannot be reunified with their families.

### SERVICES

When youth are housed, they have rapid access to funded services, and mainstream programs provide the bulk of these services.

- A) Health, Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder
- B) Parenting classes, Life Skills, etc.

### YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

To better serve youth, agencies and providers should engage youth in meaningful ways, shifting their role as a recipient of service to that of a leader and decision-maker in program development, delivery, and evaluation, organizational management, and advocacy.

### PERMANENT HOUSING

- I. Your community has a sufficient supply of permanent supportive housing to meet the needs of all chronically homeless youth.

- II. Your community is implementing a plan to fully address the permanent housing needs of extremely low-income people.

### INCOME

When it is necessary in order to obtain housing, your community assists homeless youth to secure enough income to afford rent, by rapidly linking them with employment and/or benefits. It also connects them to opportunities for increasing their incomes through educational and vocational programs.

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/1056>

### THE TEN YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

#### COMMUNITY PLAN

The development of local ten years plans began in 2000 when the National Alliance to End Homelessness announced *A Plan, Not A Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years*. The Alliance's Ten Year Plan focuses on using data to plan for outcomes, closing the front door to homelessness through prevention programs, and opening the back door out of homeless by rapidly re-housing individuals and families. Finally, it calls for building an infrastructure by increasing incomes, expanding affordable housing, and helping individuals and families access needed services. Since the National Alliance to End Homelessness' announcement in 2000, the concept of local planning to end homelessness has taken root and hundreds of communities have committed to ending homelessness by dramatically transforming their homeless assistance systems. Each community commitment starts with a plan that outlines a framework to guide community-wide efforts. These plans are a critical component of efforts to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness nationwide.

#### COLUMBUS AND FRANKLIN COUNTY

Columbus and Franklin County's "10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness" was developed by the Columbus and Franklin County Continuum of Care Steering Committee during the period of April to June 2002. The four themes of the plan are closing the front door by preventing homelessness, opening the back door out of homelessness, building the infrastructure, and managing for results. Outlined in the plan are goals, action steps, responsible organizations, target dates, and mainstream resources for each of the four themes

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/664>

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### WHAT "U" CAN DO?...

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/action/actnow>

#### EDUCATE

Talk to your family, friends, colleagues, and community about the causes and solutions to homelessness.

#### ENGAGE IN ADVOCACY

Advocate for policies and programs that effectively serve homeless people on the local, state, and federal levels. Support plans that will create more affordable housing. Share your concerns with public officials and the media — tell them that ending homelessness is important to you. The following resources are specially designed to aid in this effort:

[Learn about our advocacy activities.](#)

#### ASK

When you wish to donate goods and services, find out what homeless people and service providers could really use. Consider giving clothing that individuals could wear to a job interview, home furnishings that could help a family transition into permanent housing, age-appropriate learning materials for children entering their local school system. Call permanent housing organizations and other homeless service agencies for their respective wish lists, and encourage your family and community to help make those wishes come true.

#### VOLUNTEER

Your time is invaluable. Dedicate your time and ideas to programs within your community and neighboring areas. We recommend:

- Training homeless individuals for employment
- Working at a nearby housing organization
- Registering homeless people to vote
- Organizing or participating in fundraising drives for local service agencies
- Incorporating your skills to aid in efforts of housing first programs or supportive housing programs
- Recruiting others to join your efforts
- Your skills and enthusiasm are welcome! If you have specific questions about homelessness and how you can help, contact them at: [http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/aboutus/contact\\_us](http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/aboutus/contact_us)

### VIDEO — Do you have 5 minutes?



“Resiliency is the capacity that, when facilitated, **EMPOWERS** children, youth, and families to successfully meet life’s challenges with a sense of self determination, mastery, and hope.”



#### The Ohio Resiliency Ring

For the third year, the Ohio Federation for Children’s Mental Health will be joined by child and family advocacy groups and individuals to celebrate in lifting up of our children and youth. The celebration will take place at the **West Plaza of the Ohio**

**State House from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday May 8, 2007.**

### **KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION FOR YOUTH SUCCESS: OHIO'S SHARED VISION FOR YOUTH**

In 2004, the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services created the Shared Vision for Youth. This Shared Vision focuses on interagency collaboration to prioritize resources and improve services to the youth most at risk for not making a successful transition to adulthood.

In the context of several federally identified priority investments (e.g. youth in or aging out of foster care; children of incarcerated parents; court involved youth; migrant youth; youth with disabilities; Native America youth, homeless and runaway youth; out of school youth; and high school drop-outs), Ohio has strategically chosen to focus on the emerging youth workforce with the expectation that all youth will have opportunities to become economically self-sufficient as they transition to adulthood.

Out-of-school youth are a critical segment of the incumbent and emerging workforce. They often lack the skills needed to obtain high-demand jobs and to fulfill employers' need for a highly-skilled workforce. **No other state initiative targets youth who have already become disconnected from education and work.** This initiative fills a gap that is critical to securing Ohio's economic future.

#### **Out-of-school youth are a significant portion of the supply pipeline for Ohio's emerging workforce.**

- High-growth industries demand higher-level skills, and youth who lack basic skills will be left behind as Ohio's economy changes.
- Of the 100 highest paying jobs in Ohio, 92 require at least post-secondary training.
- Over 40 percent of the fastest growing occupations in Ohio require at least a bachelor's degree.
- More than one in six of Ohio occupations with the most annual openings require training after high school; those that do not are low-wage (\$7.00-\$10.00/hour) occupations.

Youth who do not have a diploma or G.E.D. or who have only a high school education will not be able to compete for jobs that pay a living wage. Nor will they be able to fill employers' needs for higher-skilled workers.

#### **Out-of-school youth often face multiple barriers to employment.**

They often

- Are deficient in basic academic skills
- Have numerous supportive service needs such as housing, day care, medical, or mental health needs.

In 2004, the White House Task Force on Disadvantaged Youth published its final report, and identified out-of-school youth as one of the most vulnerable populations nationally. The Task Force noted that **in order for youth to "grow up ready for work, college and military service...no one system can take responsibility" for their needs.** "The interventions for these youth require a coordinated effort on the part of youth servicing organizations and agencies, including child welfare, mental health, juvenile justice and education."

#### **Moving Forward**

**As a result of the initial work of the state team, Ohio was selected by the Federal Youth Partnership to be one of 16 states to attend a federal Advanced Level Forum on implementing the shared youth vision.** The strategic team identified four critical areas which will continue to guide implementation of the initiative. In order to help out of school youth reconnect to education and work, Ohio must

- Maximize a focus on youth, including out-of-school youth, within the larger workforce development system
- Assist out-of-school youth in overcoming the barriers that prevent them from entering high-growth, high-demand occupations
- Capture and share data across various systems to evaluate the outcomes of programs and policies designed to help youth enter high-demand occupations
- Formalize an intra- and inter-agency approach to youth workforce development that is both visible and effective

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**The state partnership will provide expertise and guidance regarding implementation strategies for the next Administration.** Once the transition is complete, the focus will expand to building upon regional and local infrastructure in order to create a comprehensive youth system. Dialogue will continue among youth-serving agencies to identify current successes and determine additional strategic investments of state and federal funds.

GERRY CAIN at [CAING@odjfs.state.oh.us](mailto:CAING@odjfs.state.oh.us)

WORKSHOPS \* TRAININGS \* EVENTS \* RESOURCES

### 2007 Spring Symposium:

**May 17th and 18th, 2007**

Embassy Suites, Blue Ash, Cincinnati, Ohio

Integrating Mental and Physical Health  
for the Care of Children and Families

Sponsored by:

Ohio School Based Health Care Association (OSBHCA)  
Ohio Mental Health Network for School Success (OMHNSS)  
Kentucky School Based Health Care Coalition (KSBHCC)  
[www.omhnss.org](http://www.omhnss.org)

### 2007 Summer Institute

**June 24-27, 2007**

#### Commitment to Learning: Bridging the gap to Academic Success

**Location:** Columbus Marriott North, 6500 Doubletree Avenue,  
Columbus, OH 43229. **For more information:** Contact Staci Kelts at  
(614) 247-6728 or [kelts.1@osu.edu](mailto:kelts.1@osu.edu)

OPEG Program Evaluation's Group  
2007 Spring Evaluators' Exchange

**Friday, May 18, 2007**

The Fawcett Center  
The Ohio State University  
<http://www.OPEG.org>

## Resources

[http://www.clasp.org/publications/pssf\\_ga.htm](http://www.clasp.org/publications/pssf_ga.htm)

[http://www.financeproject.org/publications/DLR\\_PM.pdf](http://www.financeproject.org/publications/DLR_PM.pdf)

[http://www.financeproject.org/publications/Thinkingbroadly\\_PM.pdf](http://www.financeproject.org/publications/Thinkingbroadly_PM.pdf)

<http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtconference/handouts/default.cfm>

<http://www.connectMeOhio.org>

## What's happening – Across the State

<http://dmhext01.mh.state.oh.us/dmh/events/Listing.nsf/HomePage?OpenAgent>

## Ohio Family and Children First

<http://www.ohiofcf.org/>

## Kids: Quick Links

### Archived and Recent Editions of this newsletter (also link to subscribe)

<http://www.mh.state.oh.us/kids/kidsnewsletter/kidsnews.html>

## Mental Health and School Success

<http://www.mh.state.oh.us/kids/schoolsuccess/mh.school.html>

## Suicide Prevention

<http://www.mh.state.oh.us/kids/suicideprev/suicide.prevention.html>

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*This edition submitted by: Deborah Mosley*

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