

To The Point



A semi annual publication of Walker's Point Youth & Family Center. Our mission is to meet the needs of runaway, homeless and other troubled youth and their families from Milwaukee's diverse communities by providing services to empower youth, help them resolve personal and family problems, strengthen relationships and support safe and stable homes.

Federal Stimulus Funds Help Walker's Point Prevent Youth Homelessness

Linda spent her days walking around the city and down by the lake, resting on park benches. She wondered where she would lay her head that night. She was eighteen years old, homeless and pregnant. She was hoping for an opening at the Walker's Point Insights Program to give her that place to live. She wanted a chance to get back on her feet and to provide for herself and the new life within her.

Although our Insights Program has provided independent living services since 2003, we annually turn away more than 150 homeless youth from the program because we are often full. Fortunately, Linda was not one of those.

Thanks to the new American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds contracted by the City of Milwaukee to Walker's Point, we will now be able to help more youth like Linda leave homelessness behind.

This new Homeless Prevention grant allows us to almost double the number of youth we serve – from 15 to 27 youth on any one night.



Case Manager Grover Scanlan helps a client fill out an application for the Insights Program.

Through this new grant program we will provide safety and stability to these 12 youth ages 18 to 21 years old who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. They will receive help in finding and paying for housing for up to 18 months and take part in case management services. They will work on their independent living skills and their education, work, and personal growth goals.

A case manager assigned to each youth helps him or her walk the difficult path towards stability and independence, provides support when life is looking tough and guides the youth on the road to success.

Our overall goal is to help youth graduate from the program with the skills and confidence to be self-supporting and live successfully on their own.

And as Linda commented when she completed the program, "I dread leaving, but I am better and more prepared than when I entered."

For more information on how to apply, call the Insights Program at 414-672-5531.



Fall/Winter Edition 2009-10

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Grant Street Transitional Living Program
414-672-1360

Insights Program for Young Adults
414-672-5531

Family Support & Empowerment Program Nurturing Program
414-645-3300

From the Executive Director Andre Olton, Ph.D.

A recent (October 26) *New York Times* article entitled "Recession drives surge in youth runaways" described the desperate plight of runaway and homeless youth and how the number of such youth has increased nationally. Our Walker's Point experience matched the national picture in 2008. This year, we are finding that demand from homeless youth ages 18 to 21 years old continues to rise.

The effect of the recession on our youth population is apparent. For minor youth living with their families, the hurdles to get through life on a day-to-day basis are more difficult than ever. Increasingly, families are dealing with the hardships of poverty; with problems relating to their jobs

and housing, child care and transportation; and with putting food on the table and providing for their children's clothing. These struggles wear down parents; emotional challenges ripple through the family.

For young adult youth, the current lack of jobs strikes at the core of their stability. They are among the most hard hit by the recession's high unemployment rate. The job picture for African-American males is even worse. Recent census data shows that the gap between African-American and white joblessness in Milwaukee is among the worst in the country.

So it is not surprising that the demand for our services by youth who are either homeless or on the brink of homelessness continues to rise. The

new federal Homeless Prevention grant described in this issue of our newsletter will help us almost double our ability to serve such youth. The timing couldn't have been better.

Despite the recession, Walker's Point Youth & Family Center continues to increase government funding to assist local runaway and homeless youth. But all of our grants require some matching of funds from local private sources. Please continue to keep Walker's Point in your thoughts as you consider your charitable giving.

The young people and the families that we serve rely on it.

New Hope for Runaway and Homeless Youth with Children

On October 1, our Walker's Point Runaway and Teen Crisis program re-opened the doors of its emergency shelter to minor-aged runaway and homeless parents. This means we can house one youth with her child at a time for up to two weeks. "We are so glad to be able to offer our services to these youth again," said Program Director Todd Witt. "We know of no other runaway or homeless youth program in the state, let alone Milwaukee, that is able to provide emergency shelter to this population."

Earlier this decade, revisions to group home licensing statutes put in place substantial new training and safety requirements for group homes wanting to serving youth with children.

These changes posed too many new requirements for a group home shelter like Walker's Point that primarily served single youth but also served parenting youth on a limited (one-at-a-time) basis.

"We know of no other runaway and homeless youth program in the state, let alone Milwaukee, that is able to provide emergency shelter to this population."

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A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE AWAITS YOU!

Our Family Support and Empowerment Program is excited to be announcing the 22nd Annual Nurturing Program Group Facilitator Training Institute.

**January 14th and 15th,
2010**

We invite you to join us and experience the power of the Nurturing Program model of family support and education.

For more information or to register for this training, please call Mary Pat O'Hara at 414-645-3300 or email her at mpoempowerment@sbcglobal.net

What Does the Future Hold?

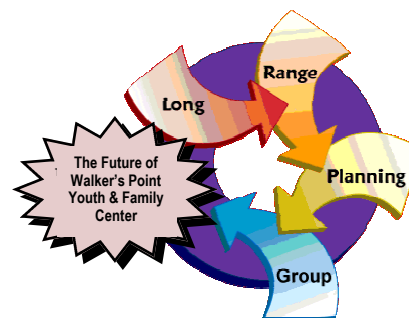
That was exactly the question that brought together 22 members of the Walker's Point board, advisory council and staff on Saturday, October 24. In the country's current economic climate, it is a particularly important question for the youth and families we serve and also for our ability to raise funds.

Every three years, our organization conducts a long-range and strategic planning process to explore how we can meet our agency's mission. The majority of respondents to our fall community survey believed that the

need for runaway and homeless youth services would increase in the next few years. They told us that poverty and economic difficulties, unemployment, family breakdown and poor parenting would continue to be the most pressing issues.

And how should Walker's Point Youth & Family Center respond? Right now there is no emergency shelter geared solely toward youth ages 18 to 25 years old. Our discussions showed that we need such a shelter in the future. We also need to expand our

therapy, educational, job training and placement, and street outreach services. The Center's board of directors will continue to review these and other ideas in the months ahead as they prepare our next three-year plan.



Join Us in Supporting Milwaukee's Homeless and Runaway Youth

IN-KIND DONATIONS CAN INCLUDE:

- ◆ **Make a Financial Contribution.** Use the enclosed reply envelope to show your support or make a secure gift online at www.walkerspoint.org/Donations/donations.html
- ◆ **Shop at Pick'n Save.** Register our charity number, #910960, on your Pick'n Save Advantage Plus Savers Card and use the card when you shop. A percentage of your purchases will benefit Walker's Point.
- ◆ **Volunteer.** There are many ways to offer your time to support those we serve. Consider being a youth worker assistant in our emergency shelter or transitional living group home. Call Ke'Andra at 414-647-8200.
- ◆ **Make an In-Kind Donation.** Please consider donating any of the items in the next two columns. Call Todd at 414-647-8200 to make arrangements.

- Milwaukee Bus Passes
- Event or Museum Tickets
- NEW Blankets
- NEW Twin-Size Linens
- Disposable Cameras
- NEW Undergarments
- NEW Socks for Men and Women
- Bathrobes and Slippers
- Plain Sweat Shirts & Pants for Men and Women
- NEW Basic School Supplies
- Games, Sporting Goods, Books
- NEW Bathroom and Kitchen Towels and Wash Cloths
- Office Supplies
- Baby Supplies: Diapers, Wipes, Formula, Bottles, Onesies, Baby Blankets, etc.
- Laundry Detergent & Cleaning Supplies
- Cooking and Baking Tools
- Dishes and Flatware
- Small Kitchen Appliances
- Non-Perishable Food Items
- Lawn Mower and Yard Tools
- Gift Cards for Pick'n Save, Target and Walmart, etc.
- Furniture (Bunk Beds, Dressers)
- Hats, Gloves, Mittens, Scarves, Coats
- Paper Products for Kitchen and Bathroom
- NEW Toiletries: Shampoo, Deodorant, Toothpaste and Brushes

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Strengthening Youth and Families Since 1976

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New Hope *(continued from page 2)*

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This fall, with the help of a federal Compassion Capital Fund grant administered through United Migrant Opportunity Services, Walker's Point was able to provide the necessary new features to respond to the state licensing revisions.

Once again, Milwaukee-area minor-aged parents can find a sanctuary with their child at Walker's Point. There, they can meet their basic needs and start to work on answers to their problems.

For more information, call our 24-hour available hotline at 414-647-8200.



Roundy's Foundation presents the Walker's Point emergency shelter with a \$5,000 donation at our annual fundraiser held this past June 4th.

Pictured from left to right are Vivian King, Director of Public Affairs of Roundy's Supermarkets Inc.; Andre Olton, Executive Director of Walker's Point Youth & Family Center; and Karla Hill, Walker's Point Board President.

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