

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.

Finding Shelter from the Storm ...

Lanetta (names are changed to protect confidentiality) was twelve years old and suicidal. She had had difficulties adjusting to her parents divorce and separation, and she was extremely depressed when she came to Walker's Point Youth & Family Center.

Jonathan felt like he could never do anything right. It was not his fault that his mother was dead, he had never known his father, and other relatives he had stayed with were very strict and sometimes abusive. He felt he was constantly being punished at home, where he lived with his aunt, and that she could never see his side of any issue. He felt helpless. After a big argument with her, he ran away and turned to Walker's Point.

Michael's mother had been in and out of prison for much of his life and his father was out of the picture. Now staying with his older sister, he saw how overwhelmed she was caring for her own family as well as for him and his brother. He did not want to continue to be a burden to her and left home.

For young people in crises such as these, Walker's Point's Runaway & Teen Crisis Program is there to provide shelter, safety, and



Intake worker Rietta Singh is one of several staff ready 24 hours a day to help youth enter the Walker's Point Runaway & Teen Crisis Program.

understanding. With our telephone and intake services available 24 hours a day, we have provided crisis intervention and temporary emergency shelter for 34 years. In our shelter, boys and girls ages

"The family session with my mom helped so we could finally sit down and listen to each other and work out the problems."

- Comment from a Teen

11 through 17 years old receive basic essentials, including food, clothing as needed, and attention to other personal care needs. They can stay with us in

our state-licensed home for up to two weeks.

Crisis counseling to youth and parents is an essential part of our shelter program, and is also available to youth not wanting shelter. Staff therapists focus on dealing with the immediate problems and strive for family reunification whenever feasible.

"Talking to my therapist helped relieve my stress," commented one teen. Another told us: "The family session with my mom helped so we could finally sit down and listen to each other and work out the problems."

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Spring/Summer Edition 2010

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Walker's Point Youth & Family Center

Administration
2030 W. National Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53204
414-672-5300
414-672-5340 (fax)

Email: walkersp@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.walkerspoint.org

Runaway & Teen Crisis Program—24 Hour Hotline and Youth Shelter
414-647-8200

Grant Street Transitional Living Program
414-672-1360

Insights Transitional & Supportive Housing Program (Young Adults)
414-672-5531

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

From the Executive Director Andre Olton, Ph.D.

I am sometimes asked what keeps me going when I am faced daily with the ongoing plight of youth who are homeless or abused, who do not have the loving care of a parent to guide and nurture them, or well-meaning parents struggling to provide for the needs of their children. “Doesn’t it get you down?”

In truth, from time to time I have found it discouraging, especially as demand for our services has often increased. Sometimes, in spite of our most caring efforts, I have seen young people whose lives have been destroyed. Two things make the difference for me personally.

Most importantly, I see that we really can turn lives around. Through Nur-

turing Program groups for teens and parents, we do help young people and their parents improve relationships with each other and often prevent crises at home. Through our street outreach, emergency shelter and transitional/supportive housing, runaway and homeless young people can find safety away from the dangers of the streets. Through therapy and case management, they discover new hope and ways to deal with their problems, and our older youth achieve self-sufficiency. We may even help to save a young life that was on course for disaster.

Secondly, I am encouraged by the many ways that our Walker’s Point “community” comes together to make success possible. I am referring to the

dedicated, talented and caring staff, paid and volunteer, who work with our youth and families, and to the committed and hard-working members of our Board of Directors and Advisory Council. The challenges of fundraising, too, are made easier by strong federal, state and city government support, and by the generous response of our caring local donor community of foundations, companies and individuals.

Because of this “unity of community”, I remain positive and encouraged, in spite of the difficulties. I know that what we do at Walker’s Point is absolutely needed and worthwhile.

Building Community Through Unity

This was the theme for our Walker’s Point Youth & Family Center annual volunteer recognition celebration, held this year on April 23 at American Serb Hall. Paid staff and volunteers came together to celebrate how much we can achieve through working together for a united purpose.

Volunteers are invaluable, whether interacting and helping youth in our shelter, transitional living and nurturing programs, or through serving on our Board of Directors and Advisory Council.

This evening of festive fun, food and entertainment included a performance by the McMenamin Irish Dance Academy. Walker’s Point staff Case Manager Grover Scanlan emceed the evening’s program, reminding us with his humorous anecdotes of the trials and tribulations of being a social worker.

The celebration also provided the opportunity for paid staff to thank all our volunteers and to recognize a few of these for their exemplary contributions. They are pictured on the bottom of page 3.

We thank all of our volunteers for joining with us as a diverse and rich community to assist the youth and families in need. For more information on our volunteer programs, please call (414) 672-5300 or visit our web site at www.walkerspoint.org.



Walker’s Point volunteers, paid staff and friends eat together before the start of the awards program.

Finding shelter *(continued from page 1)*

Parents also experience changes for the better. "It was a good respite for me and my son, and counseling helped my son," stated one parent. Another said: "my son is better able to control his anger, and I can communicate better without fussing."

And where do young people go when they leave Walker's Point? Over 92% of youth either go home or to a safe alternative home. In most cases they leave better prepared for their future.

Lanetta moved from her father's home to live with her mother. She recovered from her depression and stopped thinking about killing herself. Her mother truly believed the therapy saved her daughter's life.

While in counseling, Jonathan improved his communication skills with his aunt and learned how to better manage his anger. He and his aunt worked out several issues that had caused major friction, and he

returned home.

Her mother truly believed the therapy saved her daughter's life.

Michael blossomed during his stay with us. He began to feel better about himself, acquired new conflict-resolution skills, and even found a job. He was also able to resolve problem issues with his sister, and leave the shelter for a safe and stable home.

TeenSelf Nurturing Program Expands

The Family Support and Empowerment Program offers groups for adolescents and their parents. By better understanding and communicating personal needs within the family, teens and parents can develop more positive and less conflictual relationships.

Although most of these groups are for families and involve the Nurturing Program for parents and adolescents model, we also offer groups just for teens. In the past year we have expanded the number of these teen

groups, offering them in both school and community settings.

These TeenSelf Nurturing groups help young people ages 11-17 years old to feel more confident in themselves, develop problem-solving and communication skills, and learn how to better manage stress and anger, both their own and that of others. "This is a great class because it teaches people who are having problems at home or with life how to figure them out," noted one of the group participants: "It can help people cope with other

people and help (us) blow off a lot of steam." Another enthusiastic participant stated: "I've realized I'm not the only one with problems, whether with friends or family. I've learned to communicate more with people, and really listen and understand others when they are speaking."

This June we will be offering a free six week series of the TeenSelf Nurturing group experience in collaboration with Children's Outing Association. For more information, please call Marissa at 414-645-3300.

Building Community Through Unity Awardees



From left to right are: **Kau Yang**, House Manager Assistant in the Transitional Living Program; **Daniel Wichman** and **Philip Hazen**, Youth & Family Specialist Assistants in the Runaway & Teen Crisis Program; **Franc Pauc** and **Larry Levy**, both recognized for their years of service in, respectively, the Family Support & Empowerment Program and Runaway Program; **Deb Robinson**, Nurturing Program Facilitator in the Family Support & Empowerment Program; **Allen Hentz**, Advisory Council Member of the Year; and **Don McKinnon**, Board Member of the Year. Not pictured is **Jamarío Davis-Peavey**, who received the Peer Counselor award.

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Fax: 414-672-5340

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Website: www.walkerspoint.org

Strengthening Youth and Families Since 1976

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Announcing ...

Walker's Point Youth & Family Center's 2010 Annual Benefit

PLANTING SEEDS OF HOPE

Thursday, June 3, 2010

Italian Community Center
631 E. Chicago Street—Milwaukee, WI 53202
5:15 pm—8:00 pm

Master of Ceremonies

BOB MOORE

Weather & News Anchor Reporter
WITI-TV6

Guest Keynote Speaker

LARRY HISLE

Manager of Youth Outreach
Milwaukee Brewers

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

- 5:15pm** Registration, Cash Bar, Silent Auction
- 5:30pm** Pasta Buffet Opens
- 6:45pm** Silent Auction Tables Close, Program Begins
- 7:45pm** Closing Remarks

UP FOR AUCTION:

Round Trip Tickets for Two on Southwest Airlines
One Day Disney Hopper Pass for Four
Apple iPad ... And Much More!

TICKETS:
\$40 per person
Casual Attire

To reserve a ticket or
for more information
call 414-672-5300
or visit our website at
www.walkerspoint.org

