

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.

“Volunteering ... My Way of Giving Back”

Yolanda Craybrooks is glad to be back at the Walker's Point shelter.

“My stay (as a resident) at Walker's Point was so amazing for me,” she explained. “It helped me turn my life around.”



Yolanda Craybrooks reviews shelter staff notes in the intake room.

Yolanda liked it so much that she is now back again – but this time as a shelter volunteer. Yolanda was one of ten adults who went through the fall training program and now comes regularly to help out.

“I thought of Walker's Point every day of my life since I left,” she said. “It had contributed to such a major change in my life.”

Yolanda had found her home life very restrictive and oppressive and did not feel that her mother listened to her needs or concerns. During her two week stay at Walker's Point she learned that she could express herself in ways that others would listen.

Her therapist listened to her side of things and

encouraged skills for her to compromise with her mother. She became more confident in her own abilities and motivated to succeed, and even developed job-seeking skills while at the shelter.

As a former youth resident, Yolanda understands what it is like to be a runaway and can relate well to the kinds of family issues that shelter residents are dealing with. “I love it now that I am back,” she says, because “I find young people are willing to open up to me.”

Working with the paid shelter staff, Yolanda can now help other youth with

their problems in the same way that she was helped. Her current achievements – she is a sophomore student in political science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee – also offer a visible sign of hope to other youth who are struggling with their issues.

Her example shows them that they, too, can get back on their feet. “Walker's Point was my stepping stone. I am proud of who I am, and Walker's Point is one of the reasons I am who I am today.”

You don't have to be a former resident to help serve in our emergency shelter. Volunteers help in all kinds of ways, answering the hotline, helping prepare meals, interacting with and supervising the youth staying in the shelter.

Our trainings include teens, adults, students looking for practicum or intern experience, and those who simply want to help young people in need.

For more information on volunteering, contact Ke'Andra Hagans at 414-647-8200 or email her at khagans@sbcglobal.net.

Fall/Winter Edition 2010-11

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414-672-5531

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

From the Executive Director Andre Olton, Ph.D.

A recent national study reported that one in five young people run away from home before the age of eighteen, and half of these run away two more times.* This statistic is a shocking reminder of how many young people run away or are homeless in this country.

Youth leave homes for all kinds of reasons, some more traumatic and severe than others. At Walker's Point, we typically work with youth experiencing serious issues which might include physical or sexual abuse, parental abandonment or neglect.

Our hotline (414-647-8200) is available 24 hours a day to young people, parents, and other adults who are looking for help with a runaway or other youth-related crisis.

Last year we served another record number of young people in our programs. It has been an unusually busy year for our street outreach services. As outlined in this newsletter, the Street Beat team reaches out to youth on their own turf, youth who are often reluctant to seek help from the more traditional emergency shelter program that we operate.

Fortunately, too, we were able to expand our supportive housing services to homeless or near-homeless youth. Unfortunately, we were unable to house an unprecedented 184 homeless youth aged 18-21 years old because we were full.

I thank all of you who support our cause as we continue to serve this burgeoning population of homeless young people.

*Michael Pergamit, Urban Institute, "On the Lifetime Prevalence of running away from home." (April 2010)

Walker's Point Nationally Recognized in Youth Supportive Housing Partnership

The National Alliance to End Homelessness has profiled Walker's Point Youth & Family Center as a leader in an exemplary local collaboration in the front-line delivery of youth homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing services.

Using federal stimulus funds, Walker's Point, in partnership with Pathfinders and St. Aemilian-Lakeside, significantly expanded services to different homeless youth populations in the area.

For Walker's Point Youth & Family Center, this collaboration enabled us to add 13 more beds for homeless or near-homeless youth. At any one time we now can provide 36 youth ages 16-21 years old at a time with transitional and supportive housing.

We house young men and women, including pregnant youth and parent-youth with children of their own,

for a period up to eighteen months. While in the program, they participate in case management and group services designed to help them prepare for self-sufficiency. Over 90% of these youth at discharge leave for a safe and stable home, over 80% have developed independent living skills and made progress on either their educational and/or employment goals.

This Milwaukee Partnership expansion of services was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act channeled through the City of Milwaukee.



A UNIQUE NURTURING EXPERIENCE AWAITS YOU!

Our Family Support and Empowerment Program is excited to be announcing the 23rd Annual Nurturing Program Group Facilitator Training Institute.

January 20 and 21, 2011

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 MaryPat O'Hara or Erin Trad at 414-645-3300 or email either of them at mpoempowerment@sbcglobal.net or erinempowerment@sbcglobal.net

Street Beat Receives Renewed Funding To Serve Homeless Youth

“Before Street Beat, I had lost hope in myself. I was homeless, sleeping in cars and doorways. My mother was selling my disability check.”

The plight of this youth (who we shall call Jonathan) is not unusual among the many seen and served by Street Beat, a Walker’s Point Youth & Family Center program conducted in partnership with Pathfinders.

The federal Department of Health & Human Services recently awarded Walker’s Point a new, three-year cycle of street outreach funding for Street Beat totaling \$300,000.

Working out of a mobile SUV donated by Northwestern Mutual, the three-person Street Beat team

travels to different parts of the city where at-risk youth are known to gather. The team reaches out to those transient and homeless youth who are struggling to survive on Milwaukee’s streets.

Many of these young street people, some of whom may also be pregnant or parenting, live from day to day, uncertain as to where their next meal or night’s bed will be.

Afraid or unable to return home because of physical or emotional abuse or because of dire family poverty, these youth often end up in further difficulties and danger on the streets. Pimps and other predators are willing and ready to take advantage of their vulnerability to exploit them physically and sexually. *(continued on back)*



Street Outreach Worker Darlene Dyson responds to a youth caller .



OUR HOLIDAY WISH LIST

Ways To Support Milwaukee’s Homeless and Runaway Youth

Make a Financial Contribution:

Show your support of our agency by making 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 Card and use the card when you shop. A percentage of your purchases will benefit Walker’s Point.

Make an In-Kind Donation:

Consider donating any of the items listed in the next column. Please contact Todd at 414-647-8200 to make arrangements.

- Milwaukee City Bus Passes
- Event or Museum Tickets
- NEW Blankets and Twin-Size Linens
- NEW Toiletries: Shampoo, Deodorant, Toothpaste & Brushes
- NEW Undergarments and Socks
- Bathrobes and Slippers
- Plain Sweat Pants & Shirts for Men and Women
- NEW School Supplies
- Games, Sporting Goods, Books
- NEW Bathroom & Kitchen Towels and Washcloths
- Baby Diapers, Wipes, Formula, Bottles, Onesies, Blankets
- Laundry Detergent & Cleaning Supplies
- Cooking and Baking Pans and Utensils
- Small Kitchen Appliances
- Non-Perishable Food Items
- Lawn Mower, Garden Tools, Snow Blower
- Furniture (Bunk Beds, Dressers)
- Hats, Gloves, Mittens, Scarves, Coats
- Paper Towels, Toilet Paper, Napkins, Paper Plates
- Disposable Cameras



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of Greater Milwaukee

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Street Beat Renewed Funding

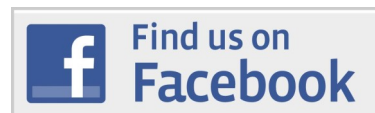
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“The first and most important thing is to develop a trusting relationship with these youth,” explains Street Outreach Worker Darlene Dyson. “Then we can begin to help them in very practical ways.”

In Jonathan’s situation, this involved helping him obtain safe shelter, food, and a place to bathe. But Street Outreach Workers can assist youth in many other ways – for example, with school, medical and employment issues - and help with mental health or alcohol or drug abuse problems.

The primary goals of Street Beat are to reduce the risk of sexual and other exploitation of these transient and homeless youth and to help them find safe and stable homes where they can get back on their feet again. Last year, five out of every six youth who were provided with in-depth Street Beat services made significant changes that enabled them to leave the streets and/or reduce their risk for abuse.

For Jonathan, this included switching the payee of his disability check to someone he could trust and finding a new job. “But the best part (is),” he said, “I can talk to them (Street Beat staff), and they will listen.”



Walker’s Point Youth & Family Center Now on Facebook!

Please visit us there.

We would love your input.

You can visit our Facebook site even if you are not on Facebook yourself.

The address is

www.facebook.com/walkerspoint

We are also on the web at

www.walkerspoint.org

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