



TNOYS' diyYOUTH Arts Program Recognized as Leader in CreateAustin

"Art matters here!" declared the City of Austin when it formed the CreateAustin Leadership Council in 2006. Austin is known nationwide as a community rich with cultural vigor.

Talented, well-educated people relocate here partly to avail themselves of the Austin arts and entertainment scene. When talented people arrive, new businesses and investments follow. Tourism centered around music and arts events, festivals, museum exhibitions, art galleries and heritage is big business in Austin.

Recognizing that supporting its creative industries is key to Austin's continuing to thrive, the City has engaged in a two-year process of cultural assessment, research

and community engagement which has resulted in a Cultural Master Plan for the next 10 years. A plan in which developing youth creativity and arts learning environments utilizing TNOYS' diyYOUTH Arts Program plays an integral role.

TNOYS' staffer, Kim Schenck, represents the organization and youth development on the Leadership Council's Creativity and Learning Taskforce. "Our ultimate goal is for every child in Austin to have access to in-depth, comprehensive cultural learning through programs integrated in schools and available in the community," Kim stated, "Programs like our diyYouth at Akins High School are showing the way." For more information about CreateAustin—www.ci.austin.tx.us/culturalplan/.



diy artist Rex plans to attend UT next fall



1st diy art exhibit at Amy's Ice Cream

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NCFH Report Reveals Child Homelessness in U.S. Worsening Texas Ranked Last in the Nation

On March 10, 2009, the National Center on Family Homelessness issued a new report finding more than 1.5 million children are homeless annually in the United States—one in every 50 American children.

America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness offers the first comprehensive state-by-state data on the status of homeless children and ranks the 50 states from top to bottom. The rank is a composite of several indicators of child well-being, the risk of becoming homeless, and the state's planning and policy efforts.

So how does Texas measure up? Dead last.

The NCFH scorecard places our state 49th in the extent of child homelessness, 44th in overall child well-being, 50th in the risk for child homelessness, and asserts that Texas' state policy and planning is inadequate, making Texas' overall rank 50 out of 50.

The complete report,, a 16-page summary document, and individual state reports can be downloaded at www.homelesschildrenamerica.org

TNOYS & Others Working Together to End Homelessness

The Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless is fine-tuning a comprehensive plan to curb homelessness. The lack of such a plan earned the state an "inadequate" rating in the NCFH report.. (See *NCFH article at left.*) TNOYS Executive Director Theresa Tod serves in an advisory capacity to the council representing the interests of youth such as those in the Preparation for Adult Living Programs (foster youth preparing to leave state care) and those youth who are unaccompanied. Youth transitioning from foster care to *(Homeless Continued on page 2)*

TNOYS Tomorrow

For more information about any of our upcoming events—Email: info@TNOYS.org
Phone: (512) 328-6860

May 2009

May 8—Cultural Competency Workshop—Galveston (Limited to STAR, CYD, & PEI)

May 9—Crisis Intervention Workshop—Sherman (Limited to STAR, CYD, & PEI)

May 15—Experiential Education: Developing Adventures for Youth Workshop—Houston

May 18—Recruiting & Retaining Older Youth in CYD Programs Workshop—Dallas (Limited to STAR, CYD, & PEI)

June 2009

Jun. 8—Preventing Teen Dating Violence—Austin

Jun. 12—TNOYS Board Meeting—Austin

Jun. 12—Cultural Competency Workshop Corpus Christi (Limited to STAR, CYD, & PEI)

Jun. 12—Crisis Intervention—San Antonio (Limited to STAR, CYD, & PEI)

Jun. 25—Self Harming Adolescents—Angleton (Limited to STAR, CYD, & PEI)

Jun. 25-28—PEAKS Camp—Leakey

August 2009

Aug. 18—TNOYS Board Meeting—Austin

Aug. 18—Special Institute: Advancing Solution Focused Practice—Austin

Aug. 19—TNOYS Annual Meeting, Silent Auction, Awards Program—Austin

Aug. 19-21—TNOYS Annual Conference: The Power of Youth. The Strength of Community—Austin

Aug. 20—PEAKS Camp 25th Anniversary Celebration—Austin

Hot Potatoes! Juvenile Justice Reforms Still on the Front Burner

Perhaps no subject in the Texas youth services field has been more hotly debated than the Legislature's proposal to abolish the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC) and Texas Youth Commission (TYC) and create one overarching juvenile justice agency. In response to outspoken opposition by youth advocates across the state including TNOYS, two compromises have been proposed that would increase coordination between the two agencies without fully integrating them.

The Senate proposal creates a 13-member Texas Juvenile Justice Board as a policy-making body responsible for overseeing and coordinating the functions and operations of both agencies. The executive directors of each agency would co-preside over a new Juvenile Justice Improvement Plan Committee charged with creating a five-year plan for improving the Texas juvenile justice system and developing a process for appropriate information sharing among TYC, TJPC, and other state agencies.

In the House proposal, each agency has a governing board. In addition, there would be a Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council comprised of eighteen members. The council would evaluate the operations of both agencies and similar to the Senate proposal, it would develop and implement a Juvenile Justice Improvement Plan.

However, at the time of this writing, there still remains significant variance between the Senate and House proposals for funding Texas juvenile justice programs. The House supports continuing with TYC reform measures initiated by SB 103 passed during the last session. These reforms move the TYC toward smaller, regional facilities allowing youths to be housed closer to their homes and to have access to more specialized treatment providers. Proponents maintain that regionalization will help to deliver a continuum of rehabilitative services to Texas' most troubling youth offenders.

The Senate, on the other hand, would cut TYC's budget dramatically as opposed to continuing to fund an already over-burdened, scandal-rocked system that many believe should be downsized. It would reallocate large portions of the cuts to TJPC to fund two diversion pilot programs in Dallas and Travis Counties. These programs are intended to prevent high-risk youth offenders, including

violent youth, from being committed to TYC facilities and provide access to rehabilitative services in their home counties. Those supporting this proposal hold that prevention is far superior to incarceration, which they assert often leads minor offenders down the pathway to long-term and progressively more violent crime. Supporters maintain that keeping some juvenile offenders near their homes and families and spurring local investments in alternatives to incarceration and youth treatment often are less expensive than state incarceration and can be more effective.

The critical and unenviable task before the joint budget conference committee will be to sort out these and other divergent opinions on how to improve the juvenile justice system in Texas. The committee begins meeting in May.

(Homeless Continued from page 1)

emancipated adulthood face a number of challenges including a high probability of homelessness. Unaccompanied youth are children and youth through age 17 who are living apart from their parents or guardians and young adults ages 18 through 24 who are economically and/or emotionally detached from their families and are experiencing homeless situations.

About the Council

The Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless was created in 1989 to coordinate the State's homeless resources and services. The Council, consisting of representatives from all state agencies that serve the homeless, receives no funding and has no full-time staff. However, clerical and advisory support are provided from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA). The Council occasionally holds public hearings in various parts of the state to gather information useful to its members in administering programs. In addition, the Texas Homeless Network, a non-profit organization, fulfills many of the Council's statutory duties through a contract with TDHCA. More information about the council can be found at www.tich.state.tx.us.



OneStar Foundation staffers Erin and Nicole volunteer with diy artist James to exhibit diy art projects at Austin's EarthFest celebration

Support TNOYS

You may be able to support TNOYS through workplace giving.

Workplace giving is another way you may choose to support the Texas Network of Youth Services. TNOYS participates in employee payroll deduction giving campaigns at the workplace as a member of America's Charities.

For over 25 years, America's Charities has brought many of the best-known and most-loved charities to workplace giving campaigns run by hundreds of employers across the USA.

Please support TNOYS in your workplace campaign. If your employer does not have a payroll deduction campaign or does not offer the choice of giving to TNOYS, ask about bringing America's Charities to your workplace. America's Charities works with employers to develop employee-friendly, cost-effective and productive campaigns.

For more information: 800/458-9505 or visit www.charities.org.



On the Cutting Edge—

TNOYS Members Receive Grants to Address Dating Violence

The Texas Network of Youth Services, together with SafePlace, a Texas domestic and sexual violence center, has awarded three mini-grants of \$5000, renewable for an additional year, to three TNOYS members. Catholic Family Services of Lubbock, LifeWorks in Austin and Roy Maas' Youth Alternatives in San Antonio are the grant recipients. Each of the grantees has developed a plan of action and recruited one or more community partners. The purpose of the grants is to facilitate community partnerships among Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs, domestic violence providers and other community entities in collaboratively addressing dating violence in their community. **Expect Respect**, a comprehensive dating violence prevention curriculum of SafePlace, is the program's cornerstone. This nationally-recognized course is designed to raise awareness of dating violence, teach skills for healthy relationships, develop youth leadership, and increase safety and respect on school campuses.

Catholic Family Services has held four program sessions at the South Plains Children's Shelter with the Boys and Girls Club coming next. One of the Boys and Girls Club's program directors wants to have a "graduation" ceremony for the girls after the last session.

Roy Maas Youth Alternatives plans to develop and implement a modified version of the *Expect Respect Curriculum*. Implementation will be done with the residents of the Roy Maas' Youth Alternatives (RMYA), Bridge Emergency Shelter, Girlsville and Junction

Programs, and TurningPoint Transitional Living Program. RMYA has secured support of the Family Violence Prevention Services as their community partner. They project reaching 400 youth through implementation of their project.

LifeWorks' plans include presenting selected teen dating violence prevention materials to LifeWorks RHY-funded Basic Center staff, Transitional Living, Maternity Group Home and Street Outreach. Furthermore, they will use feedback from staff, in consultation with TNOYS and SafePlace, to provide a workshop for clients of RHY Funded Programs.

Dating Violence Policies Earn Texas a "B" Grade

According to Break the Cycle, a national organization dedicated to ending teen dating violence, one out of three teens will experience some form of abuse in a dating relationship. In fact, young women between the ages of 16 and 24 have higher rates of domestic or dating abuse than any other age group. Teens suffering from abusive relationships are more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as substance abuse and early sexual activity and are at greater risk for eating disorders, suicidality, and school violence. Concerned that teens face significant barriers to getting help, Break the Cycle released the *2009 State-by-State Teen Dating Violence Report Card* grading each state's laws on how well they protect teen victims of dating violence. Almost half the states failed to make a passing grade and only five states received A's. Texas received a "B".

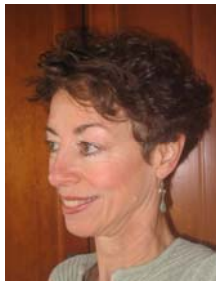
Your Will... *Or the State's?*

When a person dies without a will, Texas law determines who are your heirs and disposes of your property in a manner prescribed by law and which may or may not be the way you would want. If you do not have a will and want one, please contact the Texas State Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Service at 1-800-252-9680 for a referral to an attorney who can help you.

Please remember the Texas Network of Youth Services in your will or life insurance. For more information about making a gift to TNOYS, please contact Helen Ross Petty, Director of Organizational Development at 512-328-6860 or email hpetty@tnoys.org.

The Executive Word

TNOYS has been a vocal advocate for prevention, focusing our efforts primarily on early intervention to prevent child abuse and juvenile delinquency. Each legislative session, funding for prevention must compete for attention with programs that serve the most vulnerable children and youth. Children's lives being put at risk through gaps in fundamental child welfare programs, for example, understandably garners the limelight. Progress is being made on many fronts as a result, such as adding caseworkers and programs to reunify families effectively, and that is to be celebrated!



*Theresa Tod,
Executive Director*

This legislative session has also sought to reform a "broken" system for handling adjudicated delinquents. Advocates have reason to hope that legislative and administrative changes currently underway will make that system more effective as well; such as more community-based treatment rather than jail-like lock-ups for juveniles with mental health problems. Yet in neither of these debates, has there been much more than lip-service paid to addressing child abuse or delinquency at the front end. As one advocate said so well, we are too busy pulling drowning children from the river, to think about going upstream to stop them from falling in at all. The immediate fix is politically expedient, perhaps; it requires real commitment to take the long view and to insist as well on real investments that will pay off down the road.

Prevent Child Abuse America's (PCAA) landmark study established the national cost of child abuse at \$104 billion, or around \$35,000 per abused child per year.¹ Each teen prevented from becoming a career criminal could save between \$1.7 and \$2.3 million per youth served.² By contrast, TNOYS supports prevention programs that cost between \$344 and \$620 per youth served.

Now and then, a champion policy maker comes along with sufficient stature and political will to push past the competing priorities. Even a few million new dollars devoted to prevention goes such a long way! TNOYS will keep looking for those champions, and for our community partners who can help us connect with them.

¹ 81st Leg. Session: Child Abuse Prevention Investment, www.texprotects.org, 2009

² Transforming Juvenile Justice in Texas: A Framework for Action, Blue Ribbon Task Force Report, 2007

TNOYS Wish List *And, you can help...*

We are looking for contributions of time, talent, and/or product.

- ◆ Web cams and microphones
- ◆ In-kind support for TNOYS branding efforts:
 - * Consultation with staff and board to create guidelines for common look, feel, taglines, etc. to unify website and printed materials
 - * Design services to update brochures, program literature, letterhead, business cards, newsletters, etc. based on guidelines
 - * Design services to create templates for other promotional literature
 - * Production services for TNOYS promotional video
- ◆ Printing services for promotional and program literature, conference brochures, newsletters, etc.
- ◆ Volunteers to research and data enter media contacts
- ◆ Training Room with parking to accommodate 40 or more people
- ◆ Ten new or near new laptop computers for the diy Youth Art Program and PEAKS Camp (Prefer Mac, but PC OK, too.)
- ◆ Graphics software (InDesign, PhotoShop, etc.)
- ◆ Art supplies
- ◆ Artists willing to contribute time/talent to the diy Youth Art Program
- ◆ Exhibit/gallery space and other venues to host youth art exhibits
- ◆ Digital camera
- ◆ Video camera
- ◆ Studio space
- ◆ New passenger or cargo van
- ◆ Campsite for PEAKS Camp

Contact: Faith Gordon at info@tnoys.org or call (512) 328-6860.



It's About Youth!

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