



Stepping Up: Youth in Action Taking the Capitol by Storm on Voices for Change Day

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TNOYS Tackles Teen Dating Violence

The Texas Council on Family Violence reports that 75% of young Texans have either experienced dating violence or personally know someone who has. Half of all Texas youth ages 16-24 have themselves experienced abuse in dating relationships. Runaway and homeless youth are at particularly high risk due to the environments they have endured. Now in year two of a three-year grant, TNOYS is actively partnering with SafePlace to reduce these numbers. SafePlace is a Texas domestic and

sexual violence center and a leader in developing training and resources related to dating violence and other issues facing adolescents. The project equips the staff of runaway and homeless youth programs to identify and prevent dating violence among youth.

TNOYS is proud to bring the nationally recognized SafePlace curriculum to our affiliates around the state who work with runaway and homeless youth. Year one accomplishments include conducting five workshops for 36 Texas agencies and de-

veloping a guide specific to runaway and homeless youth programs to accompany the curriculum. The great majority of workshop participants expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the program and willingness to utilize the information and resources in their day-to-day work.

Moreover, TNOYS proactively fosters community-based collaboration between youth shelters and domestic violence programs through awarding mini-grants to three Texas communities this year.

TNOYS Tomorrow

For more information about any of our upcoming events—

Email: info@TNOYS.org

Phone: (512) 328-6860

February 2009

XL Institute: Enhancing Programs through Youth Voice & Choice

Feb. 19—Austin

Time: 9 am-12 pm

Presenter: Marla Miller, LMSW

Location: LifeWorks

Brochure:

www.tnoys.org/professional/calendar.php

XL Institute: Staying Ethical in Your Conversations with Youth

Feb. 23—Laredo

Time: 1-4 pm

Presenter: Jack Nowicki, LCSW

Location: SCAN, Inc.

Brochure:

www.tnoys.org/professional/calendar.php

April 2009

TNOYS Board Meeting

Apr. 17—Austin

Time: 10 am-4 pm

Location: LifeWorks

June 2009

TNOYS Board Meeting

Jun. 12—Austin

Time: 10 am-4 pm

Location: LifeWorks

PEAKS Camp

Jun. 25-28—Leakey

Location: HEB Foundation Camp

August 2009

TNOYS Board Meeting

Aug. 18—Austin

Location: Doubletree North Austin

Special Institute

Aug. 18—Austin

Time: 10 am-4 pm

Presenter: Joel K. Simon, MSW

Location: Doubletree North Austin

TNOYS Annual Conference

Aug. 19-22—Austin

Location: Doubletree North Austin

Texas 81st Regular Legislative Session Priorities Set

Our members have spoken! For each legislative session, TNOYS develops a list of legislative priorities based on input from our membership, as well as other stakeholders and advocacy groups. Our legislative priorities for the 81st Regular Legislative Session are below. We will focus most of our resources on the priorities in bold as the issues most important to our membership and those we believe are realistic for the upcoming session.

PREVENTION

- ✓ **Increase funding for prevention and early intervention services**
- ✓ **Strengthen the research basis for prevention programs**
- ✓ Promote safe learning environments free from bullying and harassment
- ✓ Assure positive, structured activities are available to youth during non-school hours
- ✓ Support programs that reduce teen pregnancy

CHILD WELFARE

- ✓ **Increase the residential child care reimbursement rate for all provider types**
- ✓ **Invest in improved transitional services for youth aging out of foster care**
- ✓ Provide wraparound funding systems and remove barriers to integrated state and local funding
- ✓ Invest in technology that minimizes duplication of services, provides equal access to case information and promotes cooperation and efficiencies among stakeholders

JUVENILE JUSTICE

- ✓ Move towards small, regionalized county and state juvenile facilities
- ✓ Utilize wraparound services and community-based treatments in juvenile justice interventions
- ✓ Decrease public school practices that funnel students into the juvenile justice system
- ✓ Improve funding for quality mental health services and services for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the juvenile justice system

MENTAL HEALTH

- ✓ Increase public funding for children's mental health services

HEALTH

- ✓ Address barriers that prevent eligible children from receiving health coverage and make health insurance available to all children
- ✓ Require daily physical education for K-12 and daily recess in younger grades

CROSS-AGENCY

- ✓ **Establish a Legislative Youth Advisory Council to engage young Texans in the policymaking process**
- ✓ **Require all legislation affecting children and family programs to be accompanied by a Child Impact Statement defining the number of children affected and nature of the impact**
- ✓ Improve coordination and accountability through an interagency strategic plan on children's issues

TNOYS Members on the Cutting Edge— Transition Resource Centers

Youth transitioning from foster care to independence face an array of complex problems—lack of affordable housing leading to homelessness, lack of access to health care and preventive health services, early parenting, substance abuse, incarceration, low educational attainment, inability to access educational or vocational services, periods of unemployment, and lack of employability among others. The Texas Foster Care Transitions Project 2001 report, “*All Grown Up and Nowhere to Go*,” revealed trends indicating that emancipated foster youth generally were not prepared for independent living. Four out of ten had untreated health and mental health problems, while almost 60% had no health insurance—four times the national average. Many had extreme fear and loneliness and lacked emotional support. 40% had been homeless at least once, the second highest population group next to single men at 51%. While 75% had graduated from high school, 60% had a history of unemployment and financial instability.

TNOYS member agencies, *LifeWorks* (Austin), *Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults* (Houston), *Central Texas Youth Services* (Belton), and *Baptist Child & Family Services* (San Antonio) are providing an oasis for these vulnerable young adults through Transition Resource Centers. These innovative programs offer a variety of services including among others:

- ◆ Education (GED completion and special skills training)
- ◆ Job readiness training and employment services
- ◆ Independent living skills training
- ◆ Transportation assistance
- ◆ Computer labs, internet access, and mailbox services
- ◆ Case management
- ◆ Counseling, information and referral

Youth who rely on Transition Resource Centers for support are vocal about the importance of assuring that all foster youth have access to these services. As one of our top legislative priorities (see page 2), TNOYS is your vocal advocate for a state-based investment in improved transitional services for youth aging out of foster care.

Thanks to Our Contributors

The TNOYS mission is to promote excellence in youth service organizations through support, training and advocacy.

YOUR support of our mission is crucial to our continued success and the well-being of children throughout Texas. We know you have a choice when you give and we are grateful for your confidence in us.

Thank you to the following who have supported TNOYS during the last quarter.

- Charlotte Bell
- Travis Heights Art Trail
- Andrew Shapter
- Jim & Rose Berry
- Blue Moon Glassworks
- Steve and Amy Simmons
- Tammy Spracklen
- Amy’s Ice Cream
- LifeWorks
- Raymond Sinatra

Thank you also to these companies and their employees for contributions made through Employee Giving and Corporate Match Programs.

- City of Dallas Employees Campaign
- Hewlett-Packard Company
- UnitedHealth Group
- Texas State Employee Charitable Campaign

Support TNOYS

Please consider making a gift to TNOYS today so that we may continue our vital work benefiting Texas youth.

Please complete and mail with your gift to:
Texas Network of Youth Services
2525 Wallingford Drive, Ste 1503
Austin, Texas 78746-6923

- My gift is enclosed.
- I wish to remain anonymous.
- Please contact me. I wish to discuss making a gift.

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Day Telephone

Email

Please make checks payable to: TNOYS

Credit card users, please also complete below.

- VISA MC AMEX Discover

Credit Card #

Exp. Date 3-digit sec. code on
back of card

Name (exactly as on card)

Address (if different than above)

City/State/Zip

Signature

Credit card users may fax: (512) 328-6863

If you prefer, you may make a secure contribution online at www.tnoys.org.

PLEASE REMEMBER TNOYS IN YOUR WILL AND/OR LIFE INSURANCE.

For more information about legacy giving, please contact Helen Ross Petty, Director of Organizational Development, at (512) 328-6860 or email hpetty@tnoys.org.

The Executive Word

As we enter another legislative session, I am daily reminded of the challenges our state faces, as it tries to balance the many needs of vulnerable children and youth against diminished funds and so many competing priorities.



Theresa Tod,
Executive Director

But listening to the enthusiasm of the youth attending TNOYS' *Youth In Action* rally at the Capitol this week, reinforced both my resolve, and my faith in the amazing resilience of young people! (see front page photos)

A record crowd of 300, including youth and their adult sponsors from 26 different youth programs from all over Texas, participated in *Voices for Change Day* - the culminating event of TNOYS' biennial *Youth In Action* program. Young people in groups as small as two and as large as forty came from all over the state to share their views on youth issues. In the morning they practiced by giving presentations on their top concerns and recommendations; in the afternoon they met with their legislators.

The themes were varied. Current and former foster care youth, whose stories were eye-opening to legislators as well as to other youth present, were vocal about their ideas to make the system better for future children in care. Who could resist wanting to find a way to help the youth who were working so hard to clean up their community? As one young man summed up, *"In order to prepare for our future, we need to invest in our youth now!"* Eloquence, it seems to me, comes easy when the message is heartfelt, as it clearly was for these young people!

The *Youth In Action* rally took place concurrently with a gathering of other (adult) advocates from around the state, all gathered to emphasize the importance of policy priorities that *"Put Kids First"*.

We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Texans Care for Children, Children at Risk, and our member agencies and other constituencies around the state who helped to make *Voices for Change Day* a success.

TNOYS Wish List

And, you can help...

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

- ◆ 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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