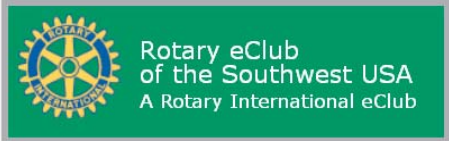


Huckleberry Youth Programs

San Francisco, California

www.huckleberryyouth.org



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A Place to Sleep. A Chance to Dream.

To the Rotary eClub of the Southwest USA:

It is my pleasure to introduce you to Huckleberry Youth Programs, a remarkable youth agency in San Francisco, California.

The importance of Huckleberry Youth Programs (HYP) can be through the stories of its youth. One such young person is **Esperanza**¹, a thirteen-year-old so desperate to escape her father's house that she threatened to take her life. After a history of domestic violence, Esperanza's parents divorced in 1999. For a long time, Esperanza and her sister alternated living with their mom and dad each month. Yet, after allegations of abuse between her sister and father in September of 2008, Esperanza and her sister were split up. Esperanza went to live with her father and her sister moved in with her mother. Esperanza missed living with her mom. Her father's house was unbearable with military-like rules and incidents of physical and emotional abuse.



¹ Name has been changed to protect privacy.

Luckily, Huckleberry House, Huckleberry Youth Programs' crisis shelter, was there for Esperanza. When she threatened to commit suicide if forced to return to her father's home, the San Francisco Human Service Agency intervened **and brought Esperanza to Huckleberry House**. Both Esperanza and her father needed a break from each other. During Esperanza's stay at Huckleberry House, she participated in individual and family therapy sessions. Esperanza went to the Huckleberry Cole Street Clinic for reproductive health services.

Through several family counseling sessions provided at HYP, her father identified that his rigidity and frustration with Esperanza and her sister were rooted in his fears for their well-being, that he cared deeply about them, and that he was willing to change his behavior to have them in his life. He agreed to work with the HYP case manager and to enroll in parenting and anger management groups, and to continue in family counseling through HYP. Future family counseling goals included monitoring Esperanza's safety at home and her father's participation in groups, addressing the impact that the abuse has had on Esperanza's development, supporting the father in becoming less controlling, and allowing Esperanza to make age-appropriate decisions about her life.

Mission

Huckleberry Youth Programs' mission is to deliver a continuum of services to at-risk adolescents and their families in San Francisco and Marin counties. Our Huckleberry House Shelter, where Esperanza found refuge, is the primary adolescent abuse and neglect prevention and treatment program in San Francisco. Currently, Huckleberry House staff report more cases of suspected adolescent abuse and neglect than any other agency in San Francisco.

History

Huckleberry Youth Programs' flagship program, Huckleberry House, was **founded 42 years ago** in San Francisco. The shelter was created when runaways from across the United States traveled to San

Francisco for the “**Summer of Love**” in 1967. Many of the youth who came to San Francisco dreamed of a better life, a care free existence, and liberation from traditional values; yet, once they arrived, youth often found themselves on the streets and vulnerable to exploitation and violence. These youth needed a safe place to stay and help reconnecting with their families. Huckleberry House was created to meet these needs.

Crisis Shelter

The Summer of Love is long over, but **Huckleberry House continues to be a safe haven**. The program serves local runaway, homeless, abused, and other high-needs youth in conjunction with individual and family therapy provided by Huckleberry Counseling Services.

Counseling Services

A dedicated therapist at the youth shelter provides family reunification services to all clients. Interventions are designed to address stabilization of runaway behavior, substance abuse, parental/adolescent conflict, physical/emotional abuse, depression, and suicide. Youth and their families often engage with a therapist during the shelter stay and elect to continue with short-term aftercare services or longer-term counseling through our Counseling Program. Our therapist focuses on resolving immediate family crises and works to develop a comprehensive plan of care that will address longer-term strategies for the family. Our diverse team of

Achievements

Huckleberry House

- The first **adolescent shelter in the U.S.**, Huckleberry House has been replicated throughout the country as a **national model**.
- Recognized by US DHHS as model of **Services Integration**

Huckleberry's Clinics

- Huckleberry Clinics have been identified by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Marin Community Foundation, and the San Francisco Foundation as **model public/private partnership clinics**
- The US Centers for Disease Control recognizes our **Peer Health Education program as a national model**

Huckleberry's CARC

- CARC has been presented as a model violence prevention program to the **California Assembly Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice**.
- The **Annie Casey Foundation highlighted CARC** in their 2006 report, “Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment.”
- The Vera Institute recognizes CARC as a **model alternative program**

professionals can deliver **culturally and linguistically competent services**.

Health Care

Located on Cole Street (at Haight) in San Francisco, the **Huckleberry Cole Street Clinic** opened in SF's Haight Ashbury District in 1992, and is a collaborative effort involving Huckleberry Youth Programs, the San Francisco Department of Public Health, and the University of California at San Francisco's Division of Adolescent Medicine. The Clinic offers comprehensive, age-appropriate, culturally-sensitive adolescent **health services** to high-risk teens, with **peer-education** including **HIV prevention** education, peer-counseling, **violence prevention/leadership groups**, and community outreach serving as major components of the Clinic's programs. Huckleberry's Cole Street Clinic has become recognized as a national model of adolescent health services, because it effectively addresses the primary health care issues of at-risk adolescents, while simultaneously attending to their complex psychosocial and health promotion needs.

In 1995, we followed suit in Marin County, creating the **Huckleberry Teen Health Program**. Today, our clinics are primary providers of health care and health education in both counties.

Health Education



The Huckleberry Cole Street Clinic in San Francisco and Huckleberry Teen Health Program in Marin provide **Health Education workshops** to young people throughout middle schools and high schools and at various community-based organizations. Our curriculum has been approved by the San Francisco Unified School District and our workshops are offered free of charge to public schools

and organizations serving public school students. In fiscal year 2008/2009, Huckleberry's Health Education Team conducted workshops reaching **4,139 youth** in San Francisco and Marin County.

Workshop topics include: Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs; Anti-Homophobia Workshops; HIV/AIDS Prevention Education; Body Image; Communication About Sex and Drug Use; Contraception and Pregnancy Prevention; Diversity; Eating Disorders; Family Dynamics; Healthy Relationships; Sexual Decision-Making; Oppression Issues; Puberty; Rape and Abusive Relationships; Reproductive Anatomy; STI Prevention Education; Self-Esteem; Suicide Prevention; and Violence Prevention.

Academic Support and Health Career Training

Our newly created **Huckleberry Wellness Academies**, located at each clinic, are intensive three-year health career pipeline programs that foster interest



and engagement in **health-related professions**. The Academies recruit high school freshmen and sophomores identified by their schools as high-potential underachievers. All students will be the **first in their families to graduate from college**.

Program components include training in health education, **internship placements** in health care settings, **academic preparation** and tutoring, peer group support, exposure to health professions, case management, and **assistance with college applications**. Youth will continue in the program during their senior year and throughout their first year of post-secondary education.

Delinquency Prevention

In 1999, Huckleberry began managing the **Huckleberry Community Assessment and Referral Center (CARC)** in partnership with the city and county of San Francisco.

The CARC serves young people ages 11-17 arrested for a variety of offenses, including both felonies and misdemeanors. Youth are brought to the CARC in police custody. Once at the CARC, the youth meets with a probation officer for intake, a licensed psychology technician to identify any physical or mental health crisis, and a case manager, who conducts a voluntary assessment. The CARC staff develops a case plan. **Youth and their families leave CARC with a new sense of support, opportunity and hope.**

The CARC case managers have successfully worked with youth to reintegrate them into the schools, arrange for special educational services, obtain mental health services, complete community service and probation requirements, and engage the youth in positive social, arts, athletic, and youth development programs. CARC has become the largest juvenile justice diversion program in the city, helping **20% of arrested San Francisco youth** stay out of detention and avoid recidivism.

Planning for the Future

To date, Huckleberry Youth Programs has served more than **160,000 youth in San Francisco and Marin**, including over 8,500 young people last year. Huckleberry employs 50 staff members, and operates on a \$3.7 million annual budget. In Fiscal Year 2009-2010 we are **moving forward on** several of the initiatives outlined in our **strategic plan**, including the expansion of our Huckleberry Wellness Academies, the relocation and innovation of CARC, and the establishment of Multi-Service Centers in San Francisco and Marin. All of the initiatives are poised to become national model programs.

How YOU Can Help!

Currently one of the major challenges facing Huckleberry Youth Programs is our inability to provide short-term volunteering projects. In the San Francisco Bay Area, many citizens are involved in the community and want an opportunity to get to know and give back to Huckleberry. Therefore, we are **trying hard to think of short-term volunteering opportunities for members of the community.** We

believe that chances for the community to become involved with Huckleberry would increase knowledge and support for our organization, and many approaching the agency requesting volunteering opportunities are seeking a one-time commitment.

However, as a youth agency, we face some challenging restrictions. Most of our programs are under strict confidentiality rules. Adults who work one-on-one with youth need to be fingerprinted, a process unappealing to volunteers seeking a short-term commitment. Finally, our youth request that volunteers remain committed for long periods of time, rather than the one-time opportunities that our volunteers request.

If the members or guests of the Rotary eClub of the Southwest USA are or know anyone with experience with volunteering at youth organizations or with ideas about short-term volunteer projects, these thoughts would be greatly appreciated! Please feel free to contact us at hyp@huckleberryyouth.org or visit our website at www.huckleberryyouth.org to get to know us better or for any questions or comments.

Warmly,

Lauren Uyeshiro
Chief of Staff to the Executive Director
Huckleberry Youth Programs