

**NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
COMMISSION ON ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION
APRIL 21, 2008**

Testimony submitted by: Melanie Heitkamp, Director, Youthworks

Chairman Heitkamp, Commission members, thank-you for this opportunity to present Youthwork's intervention program for adolescents at risk of placement (the "Short Term Care and Assessment Center" or "Center") and to ask for the State's help in sustaining this Center.

My name is Melanie Heitkamp and I am the Director of Youthworks. Youthworks is a private, non-profit, comprehensive youth serving agency, founded in 1986 to serve runaway and homeless youth. We have offices in Bismarck and Fargo. Although we do receive dollars from state and local sources, Youthworks is primarily funded with federal and private grants and contracts.

One of Youthworks' primary missions is to prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice and foster care system. To accomplish this goal we provide a number of services in addition to the Center, including a program for runaway and homeless youth and a diversion program through the juvenile courts in Fargo, Bismarck, Jamestown, Valley City and Wahpeton. Youthworks also serves 18-21 year old homeless young adults, many of whom are still in high school and some who are exiting the Youth Correctional Centers, by providing these youth with housing services, mental health counseling and independent living skills counseling. In addition, both the Fargo and Bismarck offices provide out-of-school suspension programs which are funded by the Fargo and Bismarck school systems. Finally, Youthworks operates an after-school program in

Bismarck for youth who are at risk of failing in school and at risk to enter the juvenile justice system.

To assist me in providing this testimony and answering any question you may have, I would like to introduce Diane Larson, from the Police Youth Bureau in Bismarck and Chair of the Out-of-Home Task force in Region VII, and Lauren Bosch, Youthworks, the Center Coordinator. Terry Traynor, from the Association of Counties has also agreed to be available to discuss the role attendant care funding plays in this model and to provide his expertise as it relates to preventing detention.

First, let me explain how we came to be before you today. I serve on the Out-of-Home Task Force of the Regional Children's Coalition whose purpose it is to prevent youth from unnecessarily entering the foster care and the corrections system. This Coalition, which is part of Region VII, was formed out of the old Regional Children's Services Coordinating Committee. Although the Regional Children's Services Coordinating Committee no longer exists, our region believed that the coordination was critical to providing services and consequently we continued as the Children Services Coalition to enable continuing collaboration and coordination among service providers in Region VII.

Every agency represented on this Coalition is committed to working toward the same common goals: strengthening families and maintaining youth in their homes. Recently the Out-of-Home Task Force asked our local legislative representative, Senator Dick Dever, to join our efforts and he graciously

accepted. Sen. Dever has asked us to appear today to explain Youthworks' role in providing services that are designed to prevent youth from entering the foster care and the juvenile justice system.

Youthworks began providing services in our Short Term Care and Assessment Center after Charles Hall Youth Services notified the counties and the State in 2006 that it did not plan to provide shelter care. Charles Hall's decision created a important gap in services to at risk youth. As a result, Region VII's Out-of-Home Task Force named the absence of emergency shelter care as its #1 priority. After some evaluation, Youthworks' determined that it was in the unique position to provide these shelter service given that Youthworks

- was already the attendant care site for the courts.
- had the building and space, along with some federal funding, to offset some of the cost of a coordinator and
- had existing family therapists on staff who were already serving runaway, diversion and suspension clients.

We informed the Out-of-Home Task Force that Youthworks was willing to consider expanding its program to provide shelter services, provided the following:

- the bulk of our revenue would not be based on daily reimbursement.
(Youthworks could not afford to assume the risk of running a facility and paying staff, if placements were not made at a predetermined level.) and

- that the shelter would only house youth that remain in the custody of their parents. (Although there is now some exceptions to this requirement, most youth in the Center remain in the custody of their parents.)

In response, the Children's Services Coalition, through its donor advised funds with Dacotah Foundation, agreed to provide a portion of the start-up funds not yet secured. It was the hope of the Coalition that, if the program was successful in keeping the children out of the system, Youthworks would be able to sustain the program with the help of State funds.

Realizing that Youthworks would not be able to access State funds until July of 2008 or even 2009, given the State legislative year and Department of Human Service budget year, Youthworks applied to the Bush Foundation for interim funding. The Bush Foundation agreed to fund a 24 hour-5 day program for a two year period, with declining support thereafter.

Youthworks agreed to take on this program and seek private funding because the people at Youthworks are experts in working with adolescents, young adults, and their families. Keeping youth in their own homes and out of the juvenile justice system is our mission and our passion.

The Center has been very successful in preserving families and helping youth through very difficult times. Mr. Bosch will elaborate on the Center's outcomes but I would like to draw your attention to the two letters in your packets from parents served by the program. I believe these letters are very representative of the effect this program has on our families.

Unfortunately this success is being jeopardized by the realities of funding. We are very fortunate to have received Bush funding, but that funding is temporary. In addition we have been able to only fund the shelter for 5 days a week when 7 days is the optimum. Attached is a budget for operating the shelter 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The total dollars needed to sustain this program is \$94,288/year.

Although \$94,288, is a great deal of money, the cost to place one child at Charles Hall Youth Services is \$57,487/year (\$157.50/day). The cost for a child at the YCC is \$66,740/year -detention (\$182.85/day). The cost to place a child at Dakota Boys Ranch Safe Home is \$7,853/month (\$261.77/day). Mr. Bosch will give you statistics that show we were successful at keeping 106 (94% of 113) youth in their own home. I would suggest that if two of the 106 youth did not return home and went into the foster care system it would have cost "the system" close to amount we need to run the program. This does not include savings in the costs of court hearings, judges, attorneys, child support enforcement personnel, county social workers, school district payments etc.

Most importantly, there really is no way to measure the savings to the lives of the parents and kids who found hope and reconciliation as a family in trouble with nowhere to turn. As a state, our only answer should not be court hearings and custody transfers when dealing with difficult adolescents and their families. We are a state that values our families and won't abandon them when they face one of the most difficult times, raising adolescent children. I urge you to consider this model and provide the \$94,288 in funds to continue this program.

SHORT TERM CARE AND ASSESSMENT CENTER - BISMARCK

Organization Name: Youthworks

Date Prepared: April 2008

Proposed (24-7)

One Time Funding

SUPPORT

Bush Foundation	60000
"Ongoing Commitments"	
Burleigh County	21325
Morton County	8676
Burleigh County Soc Ser	6000
Morton County Soc Ser	3000
West Central Human Services	14000
Juvenile Justice-Title II (Attendant Care)	31053
TOTAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT	\$ 144,054

Personnel & Fringe

Administrative and Clerical	13468.00
Social Workers & Counselors (Assessment, Family Reunification, Crisis Intervention)	7618.00
Child Care Staff (includes fringe)	87000.00
Short-Term Care Coordinator ⁽¹⁾	24266.00
Fringe Benefits	11933.00

Operating Expenses

EXPENSES

Travel	1000.00
Office Supplies & Postage	1977.00
Food & Shelter Supplies	3625.00
Flex, EAP & Retirement Fees	80.00
Liability Insurance	437.00
Training Stipends	2500.00
Office Furniture & Equip Lease	424.00
Occupancy (Rent, Utilities, Insurance)	20247.00
Accounting/Audit/Acc' Software	1237.00
Laundry	350.00
Licensure & Background Checks	180.00

TOTAL EXPENSES

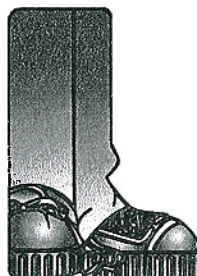
176342.00

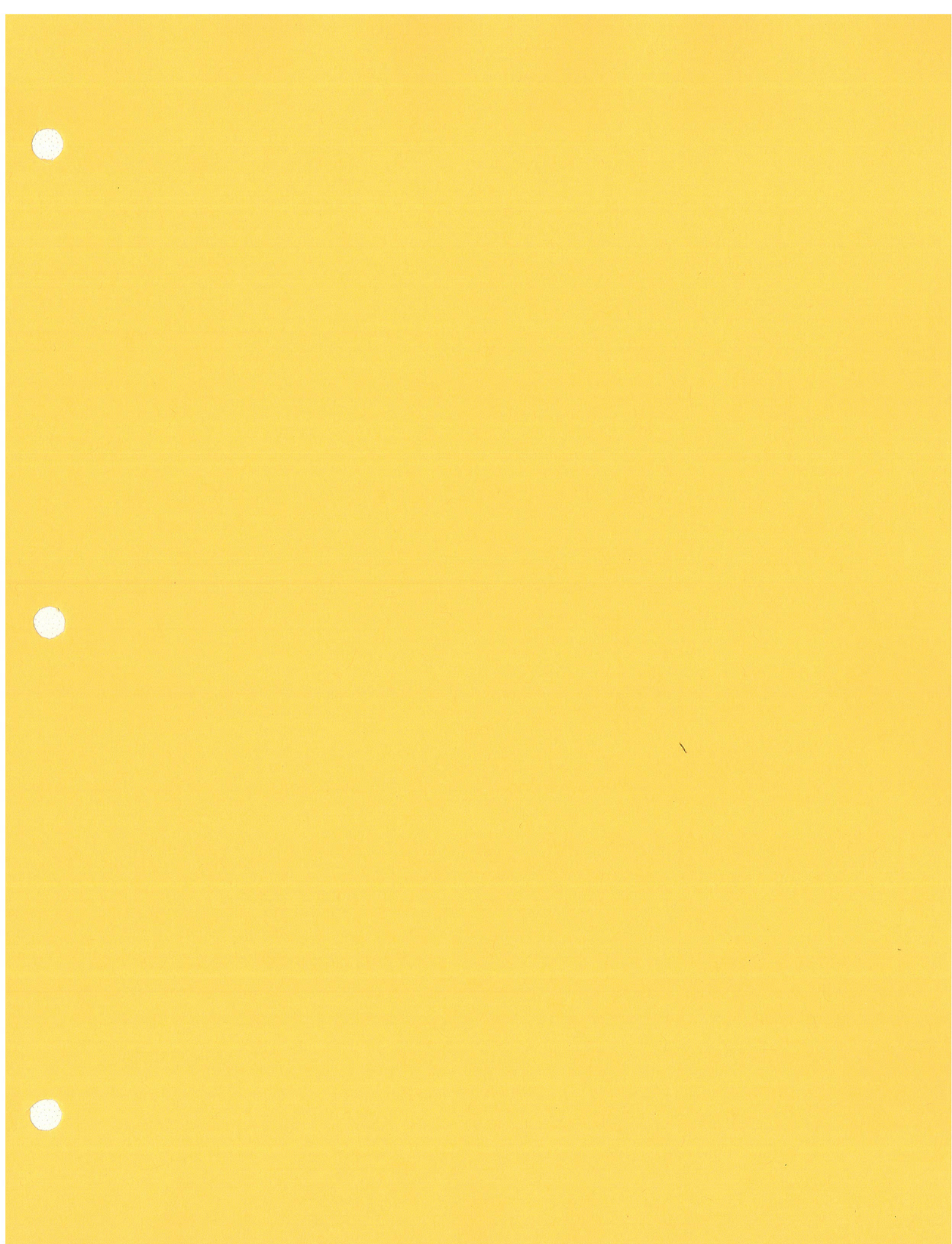
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY)

Current Budget Shortfall for 24-7 program with Bush Foundation	\$ (32,288.00)
Budget Shortfall for 24-7 program for 2008-09	\$ (92,288.00)

(1) Runaway Youth Funding also used for the Coordinator & Counseling positions but accounted for separately

Youthworks
221 West Rosser
Bismarck, ND 58503
(701)255-7229





Youthworks

From:

Sent: Friday, April 18, 2008 2:40 PM

To: youthworks@btinet.net

Subject: attn:

To Whom it May Concern:

We are writing today to let you know how very much we appreciated having the Youthworks center as an option when we were having some trouble with our 15 year old son recently. He was having some out-of-control behaviors and had to be removed from our home by our local Sheriff's deputy. He was taken to Youthworks and spent a few days there giving us time to sort out our options. He received wonderful counseling and was able to spend time thinking about his behavior and what he could do differently to avoid a similar situation. The staff assisted us with explaining our options and how the different options worked. After a few days we made the decision to bring him home and he has been able to see how he can make better decisions about his attitude and behavior. I don't know what we would have done if this center hadn't been available to us. Based on his having been in foster care several times in his early life before we adopted him and his sisters when he was 12 we hated to think of having to turn over his custody to Social Services in order to get help with the situation. Having the Youthworks center gave us the few days of breathing room we needed to explore all of our options. This center truly provides a needed and necessary service for our community and our youth. Please feel free to contact us if we can offer any further thoughts on our experience with the Youthworks center.

Very truly yours,

Need a new ride? Check out the largest site for U.S. used car listings at [AOL Autos](#).

April 16, 2008

To whom it may concern:

My daughter was a happy, normal child. She loved to play piano, basketball and volleyball, sing, and dance. She was very popular in grade school and had many friends. She has two loving parents, one brother and two sisters.

During her 9th grade, she started having social problems and began to "cut", when she could not control situations that were out of her control. I didn't know what to do. On the advice from a friend, I contacted Youthworks. We began counseling with them. We took her to a psychiatrist and psychologist who both diagnosed her with being oppositional defiant, depressive and had eating disorder tendencies. We were given an option at that time to have her committed to the psych ward; which we were not willing to do. They then advised us to continue with her counseling with Youthworks.

Our daughter is now 17 years old. In the past year, we have taken her in to see a psychologist and have more testing done; she was struggling with school work. She was diagnosed with borderline ADHD, oppositional defiance, and anxiety/ stress disorder. Upon recommendation, we put her on medication. This medication only increased her anxiety, and made her more depressive.

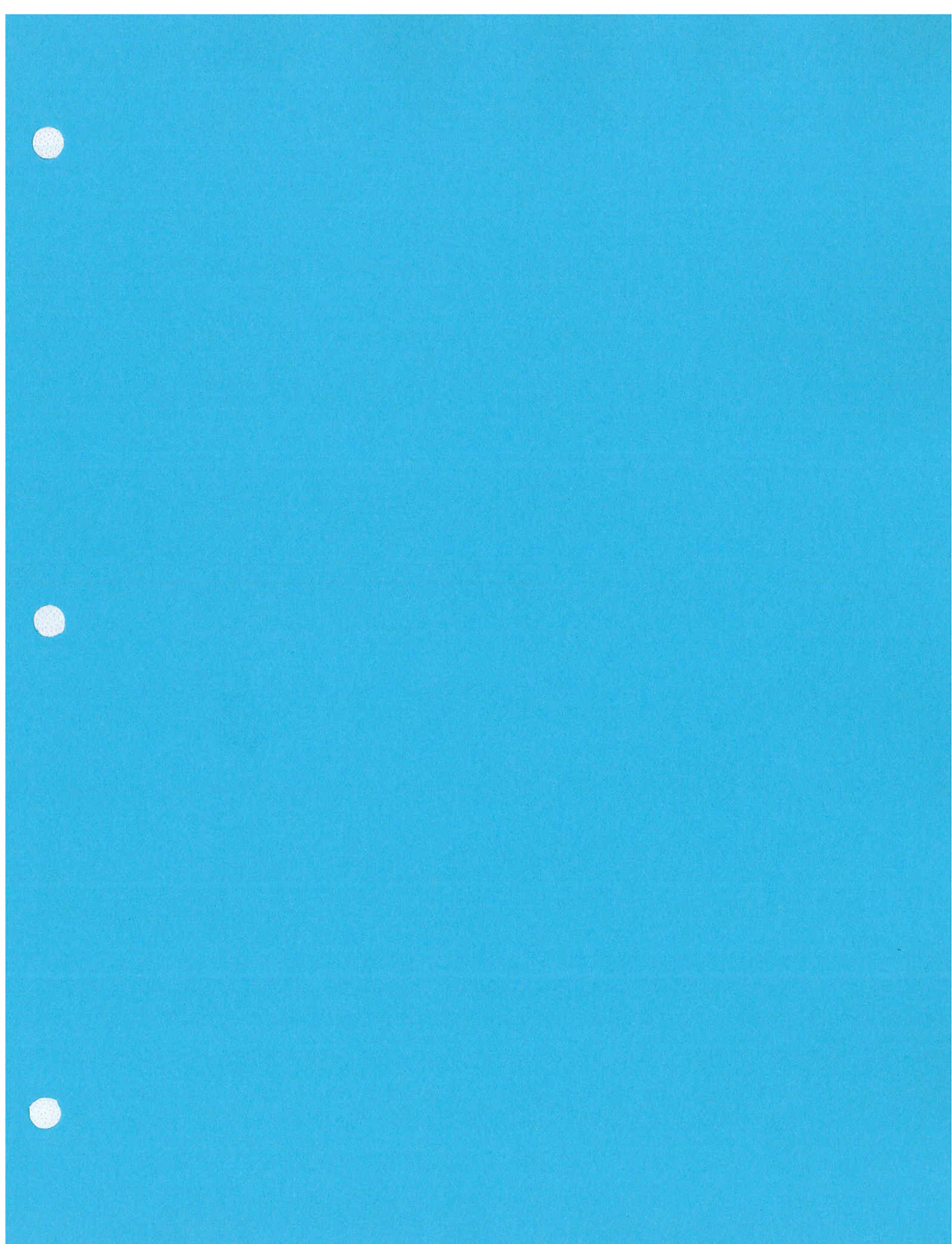
Youthworks, (her counselor and staff) have always been there for me and my family. Through the years they have given me much emotional support, my daughter's counseling and a place to do her homework with help.

A few months ago, my daughter had broken up with her boyfriend. She was determined to go see him to work things out. We had said "no."

She was distraught and thinking irrationally. She would not listen to us. At that point, I called Youthworks "hotline", they gave me a few choices. I could have her admitted to the hospital (if we feared she would hurt herself), or call the police, have her cited and brought over to the Attended Care Shelter. I chose the Attended Care. I knew this was the best for her. I didn't want her institutionalized but I did need her somewhere safe and a place to "cool off". The next day she was released after we had family counseling.

The one thing I like about Youthworks is the diversity of their programs, they are reaching out for all the needs of our youth in our community. They have a professional and well-trained staff that cares for our troubled teens. Without this program, where would my daughter be- Youth Correctional Center. She's not hard-core, just a mixed up teenager who needs a lot of love and guidance- and that guidance is Youthworks.

Sincerely,



Youthworks Short-Term Care and Assessment Center Program Description

- ✓ The Short-Term Care and Assessment Center is a non-secure facility that is attached to Youthworks' main office building in Bismarck.
- ✓ The facility was started at the urging of local human service providers to address the need for short-term placement options for vulnerable children.
- ✓ The establishment of the Center was a collaborative effort of the referring agencies and key stakeholders including: Bismarck Police Youth Bureau, Mandan Police – Youth Services Division, the South Central Juvenile Court, Burleigh/Morton County Social Services, the North Dakota Association of Counties, West Central Human Service Center, Division of Juvenile Services, Charles Hall Youth Services, Federation of Families and Indian Health Services in Ft. Yates.
- ✓ The Center can serve up to 5 youth at a time and includes 4 bedrooms, a living room/dining room, kitchen and bathroom.
- ✓ The facility is staffed by an adult, awake staff member whenever a client is present. Regularly scheduled workers staff the facility 5 days of the week. On-call staff are utilized the other two days a week.
- ✓ The Center accepts youth between the ages of 10-17 who are in need of immediate short-term shelter.
- ✓ Clients are referred to the agency by parents, community agencies or the clients themselves through a 24-hour crisis line staffed by professionals from Youthworks.
- ✓ The clients served have all experienced some form of crisis prior to placement. This may include: behavior that has resulted in the issuance of a juvenile citation (mainly following an episode of significant parent-child conflict), an incidence of abuse by an adult or a mental health crisis.
- ✓ In many cases, the clients served are at-risk of moving further into the system if an intervention is not made. For this reason, the referring agency or a parent often requests that Youthworks provide case assessment and reunification services.
- ✓ The ultimate goal of the Center is to prevent long-term out-of-home placement (when appropriate) for the youth served. This focus on family preservation matches the overall mission of the agency. The youth and families served are able to take advantage of Youthworks' extensive experience working with at-risk youth and families.

- ✓ Referred clients are served through one or both of the following programs:

Attendant Care

The agency has operated an Attendant Care program since 1987.

Funding for the program comes Federal Juvenile Justice dollars (Title II) that are passed through to the North Dakota Association of Counties.

Eligible youth have been cited for a status offense or minor delinquent offense or have committed a "citable" offense and are in need of being held over – "in lieu of jailing."

Attendant Care services in North Dakota were established in the mid-1980's to comply with federal mandates to ensure that youth that have committed status offenses or minor delinquent offenses and cannot return home, are not detained in a correctional facility.

Referrals to Attendant Care are typically made by law enforcement and generally last less than 24 hours.

Short-Term Care/Shelter Care

Youthworks has provided shelter care services since the Center was opened in December of 2006.

Funding for the program comes from state and county Shelter Care dollars.

Eligible youth are experiencing extreme parent/child conflict and the parent, youth or crisis worker determines the risk factors are too great to allow the child to remain in the home.

Law enforcement involvement is not required for this placement option.

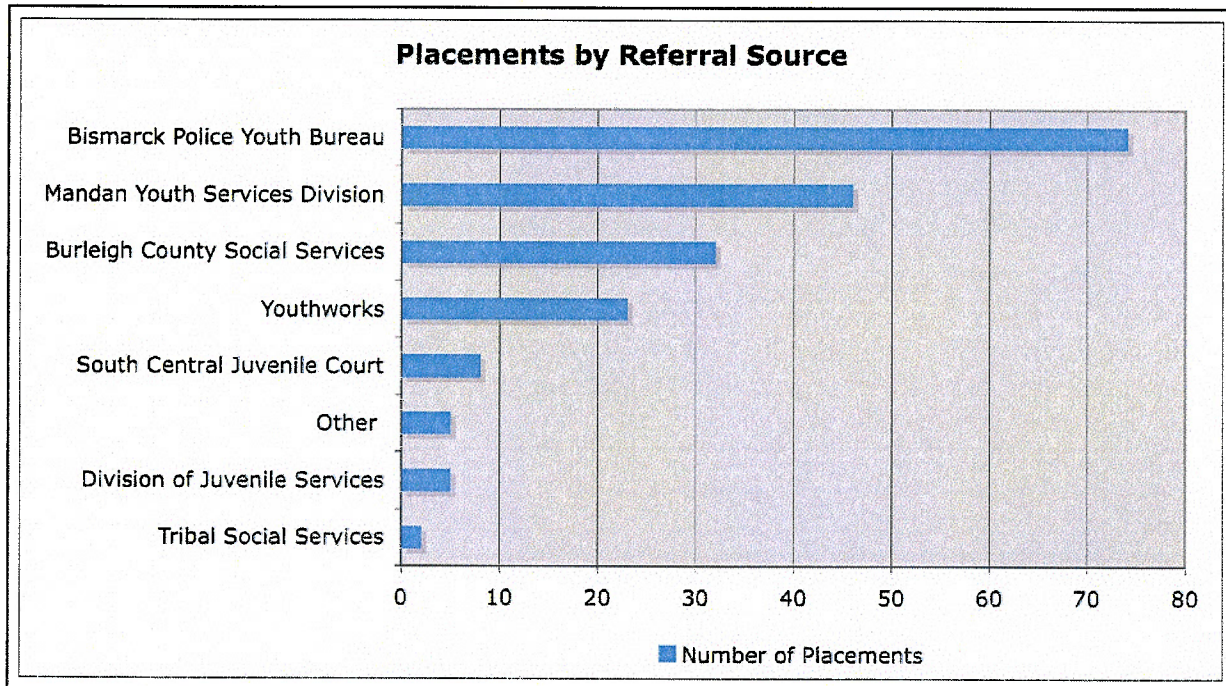
Parents/legal guardian must provide consent for the placement.

- ✓ Reunification must occur within 96 hours of placement at the Center or a court hearing must be held.
- ✓ Attendant Care and Short-Term Care/Shelter Care clients are co-mingled at the Center. The two populations are essentially identical to one another with the only difference being the exact sequence of events that led to the placement.
- ✓ All youth served at the agency have their case reviewed by the referring agencies and key stakeholders on a monthly basis. This Case Review Committee serves to ensure

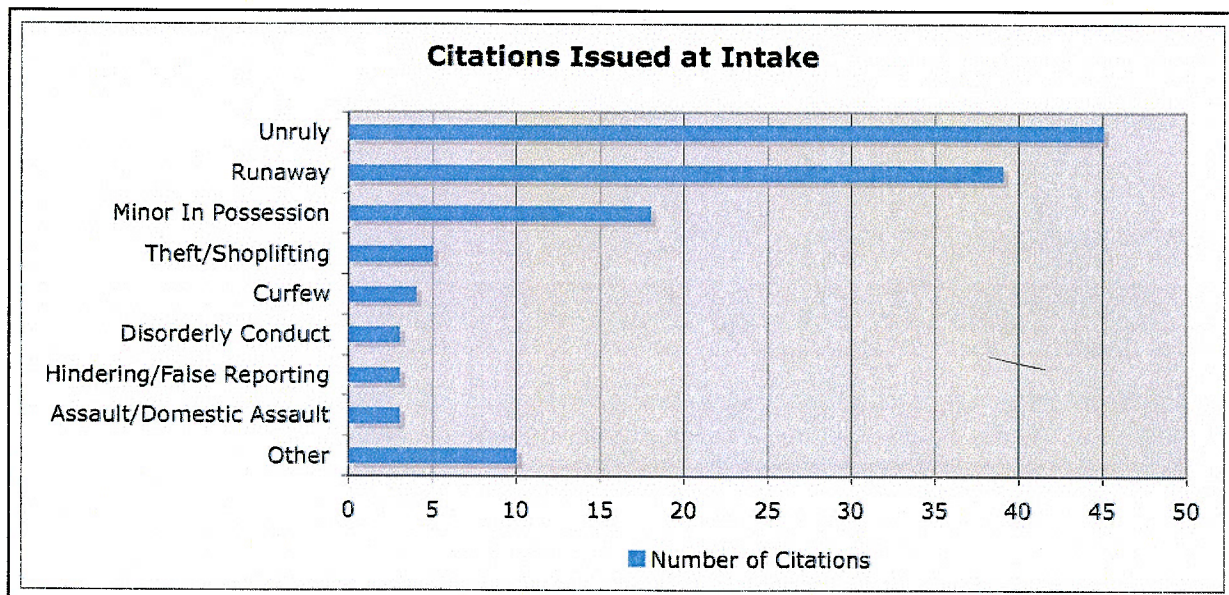
that quality services are being provided and that payment for each placement is arranged. Members of the Case Review Committee include: South Central Juvenile Court, West Central Human Service Center, Burleigh/Morton County Social Services, Bismarck Police Youth Bureau, Mandan Police Department (Youth Services Division), the Association of Counties (Attendant Care funder).

Youthworks Short-Term Care and Assessment Center Statistical Summary -12/15/06 - 03/31/08

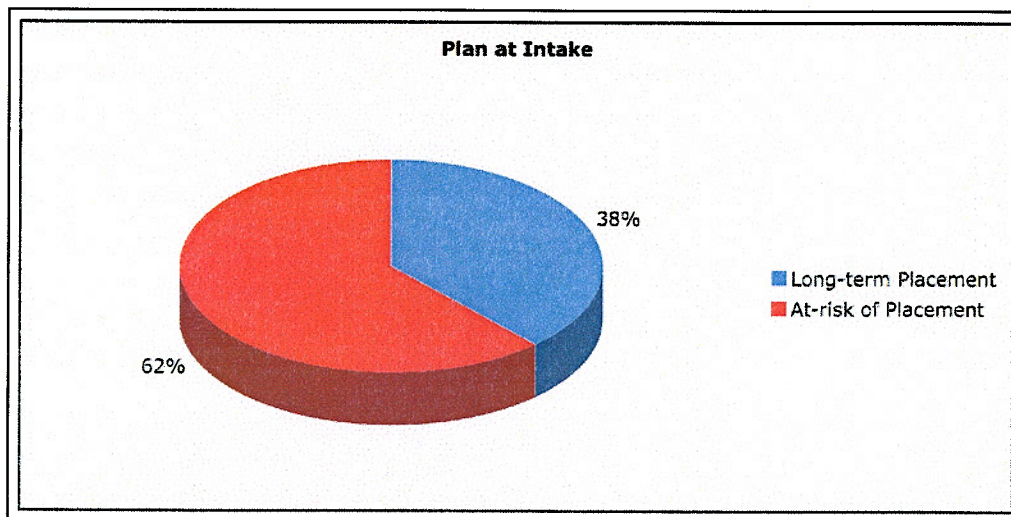
- ✓ The project has supported 183 placements in approximately 15 months. A total of 141 clients were served. Twenty-one (21) clients were served twice, 9 clients were served on three occasions and 1 client was served on four occasions. Fourteen (14) clients were served in both Attendant Care and Short-Term Care.
- ✓ Referring agencies:



- ✓ Seventy-one percent (71%) of the clients had been cited by law enforcement at intake. Delinquent offenses included: Assault, Terrorizing, Disorderly Conduct, Unauthorized Use of a Loaded Firearm and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.



- ✓ For 38% of the youth served (70 youth), long-term placement was the plan at intake. Seven (7) of these youth did not go into placement as planned.



- ✓ The remaining 62% of youth served were at-risk of out-of-home placement at intake (113 youth). **Long-term out-of-home placement was avoided for 94% of these youth, with 88% returning home, 7% placed temporarily with a relative and 5% entering short-term psychiatric care at a local hospital.**
- ✓ Youthworks provided assessment and/or reunification services for 53 of the 183 placements (29% of the total number of placements). Approximately 40% of the clients served went on to receive ongoing services from the agency.
- ✓ Sixty percent (60%) of the placements were for Attendant Care and 40% were for Shelter Care.
- ✓ The average length of placement for Shelter Care was 50 hours. The average length of placement for Attendant Care was 22 hours.
- ✓ Client Demographics:

Residence of clients at intake:

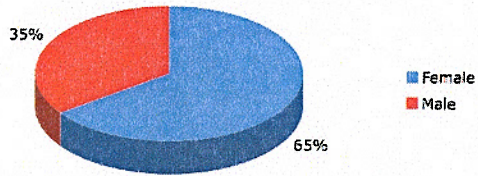
Burleigh County	63%
Morton County	21%
Surrounding Counties	16%

Race

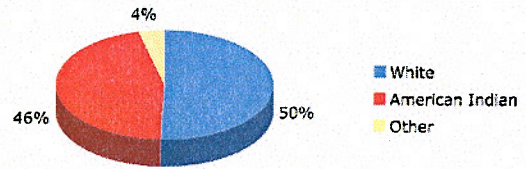
Approximately 5% of the population in North Dakota is Native American. Yet, 46% of the youth placed at the Center were Native American. This overrepresentation of Native American youth is also seen at the North Dakota Youth Correctional Center and other group care facilities in and around Bismarck.*

*Youthworks is currently working with the ND Supreme Court, the South Central Juvenile Court and a regional "workgroup" to develop a pilot advocate/liaison position to work with Native American youth and their families that come into contact with the juvenile justice system.

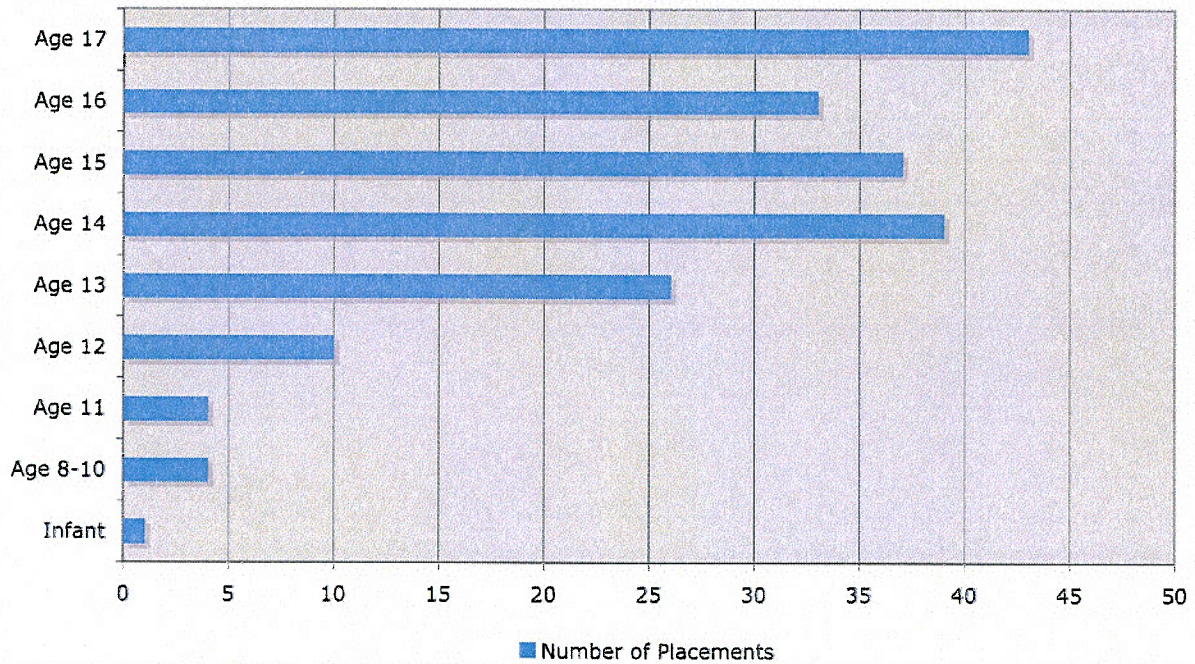
Sex of Youth Served

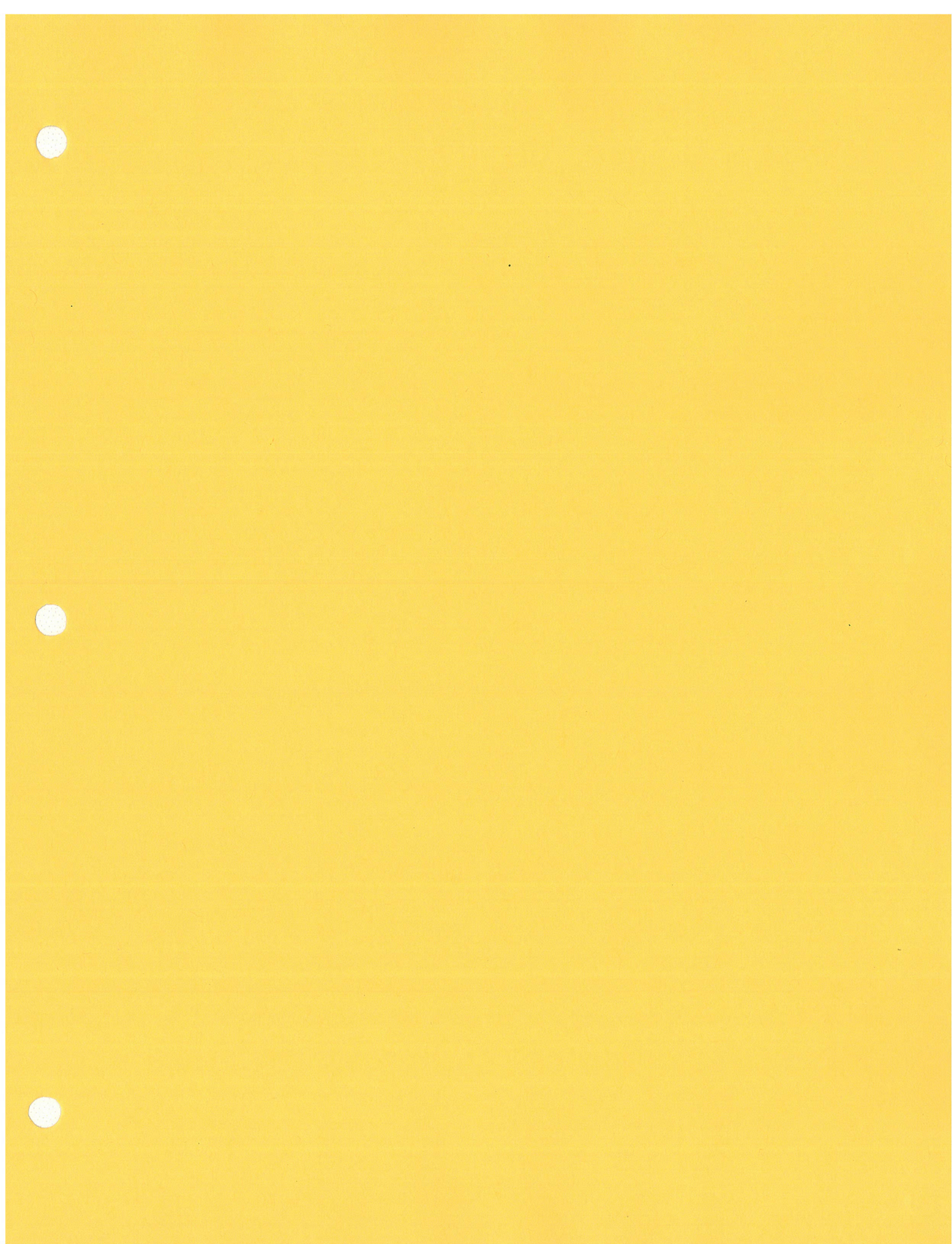


Race of Youth Served



Placements by Age







**Youth Services Division
Mandan/Morton County
205 1st Avenue NW
Mandan, ND 58554
7 June 2007**



Carol Olson
Department of Human Services
600 E. Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501

Dear Ms. Olson:

It is with pleasure that I write this letter of support for Youth Works short term care program. Having a place for juveniles that need additional time for assessment and care is essential for the Mandan/Morton County Youth Services program.

Youth Services has utilized this care facility not only for short term attendant care but also for longer term care. The nature of crisis with juveniles makes it especially critical that they are safely lodged and provided with a stable environment while plans for their future welfare are being tended to. Our agency has found that the staff and management of Youth Works have provided the necessary support and level of care necessary for this to occur.

We have been very pleased with the immediate response to our requests for service and staff has provided a high level of professionalism at all times. We have heard comments from youth and families who are grateful for the opportunity for intervention and the safety and stabilization that Youth Works has provided. Staff has always made utmost efforts to accommodate youth and families in a timely manner.

It is vital that funding be provided for this valuable community service! I strongly urge your department to favorably consider continued funding for this most worthwhile community asset.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or want additional information about how Youth Works has benefited our community youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kathleen Meckler".

KATHLEEN MECKLER, LSW, LPC
Youth Worker
Youth Services Division.

Bismarck

Police Department

June 5, 2007

Dear Carol Olson

As Director of the Police Youth Bureau I supervise Youthworkers who, on occasion, are required to place juveniles outside their homes for various reasons. The Out of Home Placement Task Force, which was first started through the Children's Services Coordinating Committee (now referred to as the Children's Services Coalition or CSC), has been looking at how to provide a smooth continuum of services to the community so the least restrictive placement can be utilized. The Police Youth Bureau is represented on that task force.

A bit over a year ago the Police Youth Bureau, along with others in the community, recognized a gap in services for youth that need a short-term placement option. Some placements were needed because the family was in such conflict that a cooling-off period was necessary, and at times a placement was needed to further evaluate the best long-term placement option for a child. Even though there were many reasons for needing to place children temporarily outside their home, the options were few and they didn't all fit well.

The Out of Home Placement Force pulled the community together to address the problem. What they found was a need for a facility that could hold and supervise children from 1 to 96 hours. Further, if this facility could have staff that was able to begin family reunification the next day and to do some brief counseling and assessments to help determine the best option for the child, then this would be ideal.

Mountain Plains Youthworks stepped up at the end of 2006 to fill this gap, and with a grant from the CSC's Donor Advised Funds from the Dacotah Foundation to get the needed start up funds, now provides this service 5 out of 7 days a week. Placements are made by PYB staff, but also Social Services, DJS, Juvenile Court, schools and other appropriate agencies. Some of these placements are reimbursable through Shelter Care dollars and some are funded by County Attendant Care dollars, but not all costs are covered.

For PYB, this has worked very well. Youthworkers are confident that when they place a juvenile into the Youthworks shelter that excellent supervision and even follow-up will occur upon request. We know that many youth that have been placed into this shelter care have avoided being placed into a more restrictive environment, or released home

Deborah K. Ness, Chief of Police

Phone: 701-223-1212 • FAX: 701-722-4 • TDD: 701-682- • 700 S. 1st Street, Bismarck, ND 58501-5000

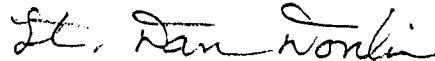


only to have officers called back to the home because of another dispute. Additionally, Youthworkers no longer have had to place a juvenile back into a home that they believed to be unsafe for the child because there was no other place for them to go.

I understand that the start-up funds will soon be spent and that other funds to continue this important service are being sought. I do encourage you to look into your resources to attempt to locate money to help this program continue, as it does fill an important need in our community. Without it we will again be in "panic mode" attempting to do something about the gap in services to the youth and families in our community.

Thank you for looking into this and considering seriously the need for this service to continue to function.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lt. Dan Donlin".

Lt. Dan Donlin
Director, Police Youth Bureau
Bismarck Police Department

NORTH DAKOTA
JUVENILE
STATE ADVISORY GROUP
JUSTICE

PO Box 877
Bismarck, ND
58502-0877

701-328-7300
Fax: 701-328-7308

ndjjsag@ndaco.org
www.ndaco.org/jj

*Appointed by the
Governor of North
Dakota to study
juvenile justice
issues and make
recommendations
regarding policy
and funding
decisions.*

June 5, 2007

Ms. Carol Olson, Executive Director
North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Dept 325
Bismarck N.D. 58505-0250

Re: Youthworks Short Term Care and Assessment Center

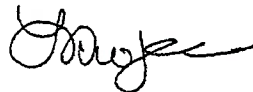
Dear Ms. Olson:

I am writing this letter in support of the Short Term Care and Assessment Center operated by Youthworks in Bismarck. As the State's Juvenile Justice Specialist, I administer federal funding that is used to operate attendant care services statewide, including the attendant care services provided locally by Youthworks. These services work in conjunction with other services the agency provides to youth and families as part of the Short Term Care and Assessment Center.

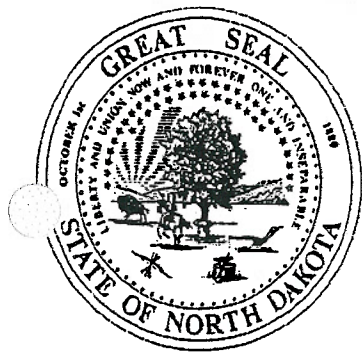
While attendant care services fill a critical need for youth who have been picked up by law enforcement and cannot return home, just as critical is services for youth that need temporary shelter care but do not meet the criteria for attendant care. In its short time of operation, the facility and the services provided while youth are placed, has been instrumental in family reunification and prevention of out-of-home placement.

I urge your support and financial assistance for the continued operation of the facility.

Sincerely,



Lisa Jahner
Juvenile Justice Specialist



WEST CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE

North Dakota Division of Juvenile Services

418 East Broadway, Suite 224 • Bismarck, ND 58501

Telephone: (701) 328-3940 • FAX (701) 328-3968 • TDD (701) 366-6888

State Website: www.nd.gov

May 21, 2007

MAY 22 2007

Carol Olson, Director
North Dakota Department of Human Services
North Dakota State Capitol
600 E. Boulevard
Bismarck, ND, 58505

Dear Ms. Olson,

This correspondence is in support of the Youthworks Short-Term Care and Assessment Center.

The new shelter care program has assisted our case managers in providing a safe, effective alternative for intervention and placement into more restricted placement.

We have had clients that have had an immediate need for placement due to safety issues to the child or the child needed immediate removal due to parent/child conflict. The clients needed to be removed until a safety plan could be developed with the parents. This short-term shelter care allowed us to remove the child until a more appropriate least restrictive placement could be found.

This program has provided the Division of Juvenile Services the option of not having to utilize the most restrictive placement without giving our case managers the option to intervene and resolve an immediate crisis with the family and child in the hopes of not removing the child or getting them to a safe environment until an appropriate placement is found.

Our agency has been able to utilize the Youthworks Shelter Care program on several occasions.

It is our hope that the program will be able to be fully funded.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ross A. Munns".

Ross Munns
Division of Juvenile Services
West Region Supervisor

jh

State of North Dakota
South Central Judicial District

Juvenile Court

514 East Thayer Avenue • Bismarck, North Dakota 58501 • Telephone (701) 222-6709 • FAX (701) 222-6699

May 23, 2007

Carol Olson, Director
Department of Human Services
600 E. Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Ms. Olson:

There is an urgent need in the Bismarck/Mandan region for appropriate shelter care for at risk youth which includes adequate and sustainable funding. These are youth who cannot be detained in a secure facility and who need immediate placement. These youth are generally unruly, deprived, or are experiencing parent/child conflicts in the parental home and need emergency placement for up to 96 hours prior to a hearing for safety reasons.

On December 15, 2006, Youthworks in Bismarck created a shelter care facility to meet a crisis need in the region, but with limited funds. The "Short Term Care and Assessment Center," as it is called at Youthworks, likely will not continue without additional financial support from the Department of Human Services.

Over a year ago, Charles Hall Youth Services, who provided shelter care, discontinued their shelter care program. This created a major gap in services throughout the region. In actuality, there was a crisis. Some youth in need of emergency care were being sent home in unsafe situations by crisis intervention people because shelter care was not available. Ultimately, a task force was formed which included staff from Juvenile Court, Burleigh/Morton and rural county social services, West Central, Bismarck Police Youth Bureau, Youth Services of Mandan, Division of Juvenile Services (DJS), Charles Hall and Youthworks. After many meetings and hours of discussion, Youthworks agreed to open their facility to provide shelter care services for the region with limited funds from West Central (shelter care money), Burleigh/Morton County and some limited CSCC funds. It was a patchwork of funds to get the facility off the ground, but everyone on the task force knew these funds would not sustain the facility over the long term.

From December 15, 2006, to May 15, 2007, (five months) the "Youthworks Short-Term Care and Assessment Center" has provided shelter care services for 61 youth. Long term placement (foster care) was planned at intake for 33% of those youth. The remaining 67% were at risk of out of the home placement at intake. Ninety-five percent of these youth returned home following services at Youthworks following the initial emergency placement.

These youth went home, stayed in the community and continued to attend school in the community. The end result was the parents were able to retain custody during the shelter care stay, so county social services did not end up with custody for foster care purposes;

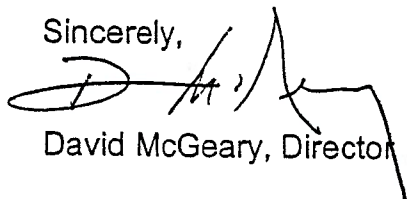
Carol Olson
May 23, 2007
Page 2

a significant cost savings in foster care dollars. I believe one could project that by the end of this year, December of 2007, "Youthworks Short-Term Care and Assessment Center will serve approximately 100 youth in the shelter care facility. The cost saving in foster care dollars will be greater yet. However, the Center will not likely remain as a shelter care facility for at risk youth without funding assistance from your department.

I respectfully request your immediate attention with regard to this subject matter. Community entities and agencies have pulled together resources and time in an effort to provide this emergency service for at risk youth. My hope is that there is some funding assistance available in order to keep the Center going long term for the sake of the youth and families that desperately need the service.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. McGeary", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David McGeary, Director

DM:rw



Burleigh County Social Services

The Provident Building • 415 E. Rosser Avenue, Suite 113 • Bismarck, ND 58501 • 4058 • Telephone: 701-222-6622 • Fax: 701-222-6644 • 701-222-6476

May 24, 2007

Carol Olson
Executive Director
ND Department of Human Services
Judicial Wing/State Capitol
600 E Boulevard Department 325
Bismarck ND 58505-0250

Re: Youthworks Short Term Care and Assessment Center

Dear Ms. Olson,

This letter is to express support for funding of the Youthworks Short Term Care and Assessment Center. This service has been extremely valuable to Burleigh and Morton County Social Services child welfare work.

Youthworks Short Term Care and Assessment Center has been in operation for five months and, as of 5/15/07, has provided services for 61 youth. Of these youth, 35% have been referred directly from Burleigh and Morton Counties. We have also encouraged other agencies (schools, etc.) to use this service to assist their youth in crisis.

The youth served by this program are between the ages of 10 – 17, in crisis (typically this is a severe conflict between the parent and the child) and at risk for out of home placement. Placements at Youthworks have either prevented or delayed a foster care placement. Stays at Youthworks Short Term Care Center average 46 hours and give children and parents time to “cool down” and to commit to implementing changes needed in order for the child to go home. Youthworks provides on-site crisis intervention for children and families 7 days a week. This helps youth and parents resolve conflicts and sets up guidelines for the child to return home. While at the Center, children are evaluated and services for the children and families can be initiated. If there are safety concerns regarding the family, Child Protection Workers have time to gather information and set up viable Safety Plans. Youthworks Short Term Care Center is also a place for children to stay until relatives can get here. Youth can also stay at the Youthworks Short Term Care Center to await court hearings in the event that a hearing is continued. If a placement at Home on the Range is the plan and a shelter care hearing is continued, youth can stay for up to 96 hours until the hearing can be held. This saves having to transport the child to Home on the Range (or

other facility) and then back again a day or two later for court. Finally, a youth can be placed into short term care prior to county custody to allow social service workers to look for placements that match the needs of the child.

The Region VII CSCC Out of Home Placement Task Force worked on putting this program together. It has been a very collaborative effort to meet a need identified by all entities involved with children in out of home placements. Several months ago there was discussion with Don Snyder and Deb Petry regarding supplemental funding for this program from Department. I was not part of that discussion and not aware of any dollar amounts discussed but I do support and encourage any financial support the Department could provide this program. Financial support from the Department of Human Services would not only help sustain the program, but it would also encourage financial support from other funding sources as Youthworks intends to apply for grant funding for the program.

This is an innovative service that helps to keep children safe, families intact and reduces foster care costs. I hope you will consider assisting this program financially in some capacity. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Shari", with a small dot above the final letter.

Shari Doe
Director
Burleigh County Social Services



Children's Services Coordinating Committee

07/02/07

Carol Olson, Executive Director
ND Department of Human Services
600 E Blvd Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505

Re: Short-term Care and Assessment Center

Dear Ms. Olson,

As Chair of the Children's Services Coalition (CSC) Out-of-Home Task Force, I am writing to request your strong consideration for financial support for the Short-Term Care and Assessment Center. As Director of Youthworks, I am in a dual role in this regard. The Center opened on December 15, 2006 at Youthworks and serves both cited and non-cited youth in need of short-term shelter. It is located in the westernmost section of the Youthworks office building which was remodeled extensively to accommodate the change in purpose. The start-up of this facility was made possible by a grant from the CSC's donor advised funds. These dollars provide core funding for the facility and will end December 15, 2007

The Out-of-Home Task Force's purpose is prevention of long term, out-of-home placements. Our task force began addressing the issue of lack of available shelter beds and safe beds in our region following the announcements several years ago by Charles Hall Youth Services and Medcenter One stating they would no longer be providing emergency short-term beds for at-risk youth. The committee felt this was the most critical issue facing this task force. Members of the committee felt they and their staff were faced with a lack of safe resources for children in need of emergency placement while still in the custody of their parents. Youthworks was identified by the task force as a potential provider of shelter care services to compliment it's existing role as the Attendant Care provider for the region.

Planning for the project began in October/November of 2006 following the granting of core funding from the CSC. The ND Association of Counties and Division of Juvenile Services (Attendant Care funding) agreed to be a partner in the project and agreed to a new funding mechanism for reimbursement, believing this was a critical need and would assure continued safe placement of children. They agreed to reimburse at a set monthly amount based on prior occupancy.

The Center has served 27 youth/families through the Shelter Care program in the first 6 months of operation. A total of 77 days of service have been provided. A portion of the costs for Shelter Care have been paid by West Central Human Service Center. Youth

served in Shelter Care do not have to be cited and are referred for issues including; abuse/neglect, family conflict or domestic violence issues. Long-term placement was the plan at intake for 26% of the youth served. Many of these youth were already in a foster care arrangement under social services or DJS custody at intake. The remaining 74% were at risk of out-of-home placement at intake. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of these youth returned home following services. It is the committee's belief that if the facility was not available, most of the youth placed would have ended up in the foster care system with much greater costs to the State and counties. All statistical information has been reviewed by a case review committee that meets on a monthly basis. Agencies represented on this committee include: West Central Human Service Center, North Dakota Association of Counties, South Central Juvenile Court, Burleigh/Morton County Social Services, Bismarck Police Youth Bureau and Mandan Police Department (Youth Services Division).

As part of the effort to prevent youth from entering long-term care, Youthworks, with assistance from the United Way and Juvenile Court, is able to provide immediate family crisis intervention for youth served through the Center. Sixteen (16) families have utilized this service with 15 of the 16 children returning home with follow-up family services.

The committee approached Don Snyder and Paul Ronnigan in October of 2006 regarding this effort and submitted a proposal in an effort to request help from the Department of Human Services. Mr. Ronnigan informed us that it would be difficult to commit State dollars during this biennium because the Department dollars were short. It is our hope that with the recent legislative session, the Department may be in a position to help with the project.

The collaboration on this project is remarkable. I am attaching letters of support from our partners. I am also attaching a list of members of the task force. It is our sincere hope that you consider our project and the critical need in our area for safe shelter for youth with the goal of family reunification.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Melanie Heitkamp

Melanie Heitkamp, Chair
Out-of-Home Task force, CSC

Agency Staffing

The Youthworks' staff includes licensed social workers, licensed addiction workers, licensed professional counselors, youth workers, teachers, attendant care workers, mentors and peer youth workers providing support to other teenagers. Youthworks' programs are designed to be family friendly and voluntary. Programs are designed to keep kids in their homes, in school, and in the community.

Missouri Slope Areawide
United Way
Provides Funding For

Runaway Services
Transitional Living
Peer Support & Mentoring
Family Counseling Coop
Anger Management



Missouri Slope Areawide
United Way

YOUTHWORKS

Services include:
Information and Referral
Individual Counseling
Mentoring & Peer Support
Family Counseling and Mediation
24-hour Crisis Line
Support Groups for At-risk Youth
After-school Tutoring/Counseling
Runaway and Homeless Youth Services
Transitional Living
Young Parents & Teen Moms
Emancipation Preparation
Emergency shelter
Attendant & Shelter Care
Short-Term Care & Assessment
Diversion
Outreach Services
Out-of-School Suspension
Street Outreach

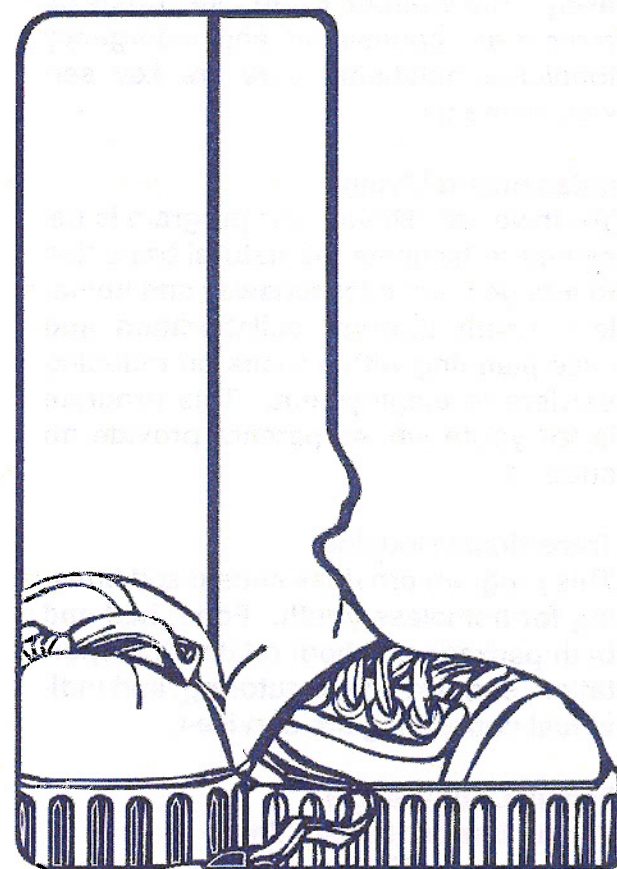
Youthworks
Administrative Offices
225 West Rosser
Bismarck, ND 58501
255-6909

Crisis Services Available 24 Hrs/Day
7 Days a week

Youthworks is a nonprofit corporation
and needs community support. Contri-
butions are tax deductible.

YOUTHWORKS

Serving Youth & Families



221 West Rosser
Bismarck, ND 58501
(701) 255-7229
youthworks@btinet.net

Runaway Center

Youthworks' runaway center returns runaways to their homes or other appropriate placements and provide the services necessary to prevent running away. The 24-hour Youth Line, crisis intervention, counseling and emergency food/clothing/shelter care are key service elements.

Independent Living.

Youthworks' "Movin' On" program is designed to facilitate the natural transition to independence for runaway and homeless youth through collaboration and case planning with a focus on reducing barriers to employment. This program is for youth whose parents provide no support.

Transitional Housing.

This program provides subsidized housing for homeless youth. Food, bed and bath packages, school related transportation, support group, tutoring, and individual counseling are services.

Family Counseling & Family Mental Health Clinic.

Youthworks offers counseling and mediation to help youth and families find appropriate solutions to conflict. The staff at Youthworks has considerable experience in working with youth and families in conflict and offers this service to families not meeting the eligibility requirements of other Youthworks' programs. A complimentary insurance-based program provides a wide-range of family mental health services to qualifying families.

Support Groups.

Youthworks facilitates support group program focusing on a wide range of high risk youth. Anger management, social skills, parent-child conflict, and after-care groups are facilitated by Youthworks' staff. Some groups are school based, some are after school and others operate only in the summer.

Peer Youth Worker Program.

Peer youth workers are used to provide one-on-one support with other teenagers. Youthworkers must complete an extensive training program on peer counseling and mentoring.

AmeriCorps Youth Workers.

Youthworks operates an AmeriCorps (AMC) program which trains college students as paraprofessional youth workers. The AmeriCorps members work in the at-risk, substance abuse and homeless programs.

Street Outreach.

Youthworks provides education, prevention and early intervention services to runaway, homeless and street youth in order to reduce the risk of sexual exploitation or abuse". Street outreach helps at-risk youth leave the streets and/or abusive, dangerous and overcrowded settings. Street outreach workers provide survival aide, individual assessment, counseling, crisis intervention, information and referral, follow-up, transitional living and other housing assistance. A **drop-in center** provides social and recreational programming for at-risk youth.

Turnabout.

An after school program providing tutoring, counseling, and recreation for high risk youth is offered as an alternative to more restrictive or out-of-home placement. Referrals to this program are through social services, schools, the court, and juvenile services and law enforcement.

Attendant Care.

Short term emergency placements of up to 12 hours can be made by local social service and law enforcement agencies for youth awaiting placement or awaiting pickup by the family. This is a staff secure on-call program offered only in Bismarck.

Short-Term Care & Assessment Center

The Center provides short-term care not to exceed 4 days along with an assessment of the ability of the youth to return home or the need for out of home placement. Placements are provided with parental consent.

Out-Of-School Suspension.

Youthworks provides counseling, community service and homework assistance to youth expelled or suspended from school.

Diversion.

The intent of Youthworks' Diversion Project is to prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice and child welfare systems and to work with the families to keep youth in their home and in the community.