

How do you measure a year?
Five Moments That Changed Kids' Lives

five

moments





Five Moments That Changed Kids' Lives ...

thanks to you

our youth

In the popular musical, *Rent*, written by composer and author Jonathan Larson, the signature song asks, “**How do you measure a year?**” It’s ‘**five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes,**’ the songwriter points out. It can be measured in ‘**daylights, in sunsets, in midnights, in cups of coffee,**’ but the real measure is in understanding a year in ‘**seasons of love.**’

At Youth Homes, we know that each one of those moments count — the moment that a boy feels safe under our roof or a girl starts to think about her future in a brand-new way or a family takes the first small steps toward building a clean and sober home to reunite with their children.

In this year’s annual report to our supporters, we invite you to look at just *five* of those ‘525,600 minutes.’ You made these moments possible, and we thank you for every one.



to our supporters

Our year has been filled with significant “moments.” While teaching essential life skills, Youth Homes continues to provide nurturing environments for our foster children and their families. Thanks to the support of our extended family of staff, volunteers, and generous donors, we are achieving individual and group milestones.

Despite turbulent times, the dedication and loyalty of our staff impresses me every single day. In a league of its own, Youth Homes has retained an **experienced and committed** group of individuals. The average tenure of our program supervisors is 10 years; several have been with us for more than 18 years and one group home counselor has been with us for more than 28 years. These are extraordinary facts in the field of social services and mental health work.

We have restructured and reinvigorated our adult mentor program and expanded our Aftercare program in order to provide our children with supportive relationships that will extend far beyond their stay with Youth Homes. Mentor recruitment is growing quickly and is supported by a strong training program. Our **Aftercare program**, which focuses on adolescents aging out of the foster care system has

expanded and now serves over 20 late teens and young adults. **Another significant milestone** was the move of East Bay Shelter to a new home with space for an onsite school, the Therapeutic Education Center. Looking to the future, our Board is in the midst of a comprehensive strategic planning process that will help chart our course for the next five years — included in that process is the launch of our Planned Giving program coming this fall.

If I had to pick a moment that reaffirms the faith I have in the work we do and the future we have, it is this: Early one weekday morning, I stopped by the Youth Homes conference room during a recent planning meeting for our first-ever Gala event. Around the table sat 20 people representing all areas of Contra Costa County, all working together to create significant positive change. I witnessed in that room, in that moment, the belief that anything is possible. In October of this year we will celebrate together at our inaugural Gala, under the banner of hope, to benefit the kids and families we serve. Your support makes these moments and milestones possible. We look forward to celebrating with you at our Gala, and to thanking you in person.

Until then, my deepest thanks for your generosity and support.



Stuart McCullough

The place: The North Beach Café, San Francisco

The people: Two mentors (Chuck Noll and Lori Tassano), one staff member, Tawnee Michelucci, five girls and two boys from Youth Homes Anderson House, Cherry Lane, and the East Bay Shelter.

A delicious stop on the road to adulthood when seven teens from Youth Homes learned how to order from an Italian menu, how to pronounce linguini al vongole, and what fun a night of fashion+fusilli can be with some cool adults.

moment

moment number 1: 7:30 pm, may 8, 2009

The back story: Amy Williams, fashion design chair at the California College of the Arts got interested in Youth Homes via her friend and Youth Homes board member, Ann Appert. “Our seniors put on a juried fashion show each year. It’s very exciting to see how imaginative and exciting they are. Think some Youth Homes young people would be interested in coming as our guests?” asked Professor Williams. Runway? Rock music? Fashions from classic to outrageous from 12 up-and-coming designers? The Youth Homes kids were all over that. Add in dinner at a colorful North Beach restau-

rant with cones at an ice cream parlor afterwards, and we’re talking a great evening. Says mentor Lori Tassano, “The kids were enthralled — the glamour and fun of the catwalk, the singing waiter who performed arias at the table, and just before we got home, we switched from their music to mine in the car. I played them a song from my daughter’s CD, and one of the girls said, ‘Her voice is so pretty she makes me want to cry.’”

An evening of one great moment after another: fashion, fun, food, music, and conversation.



The place: De La Salle High School, Concord

The people: Graduating Class of 2009 including one proud senior from Youth Homes.

As his foster care family cheered him on, our Youth Homes teen in cap and gown, stood up with 250 fellow classmates and took the next significant step to independence — high school graduation — and earned a 3.23 average with honors.

moment

moment number 2: 9:00 am, may 26, 2009

The back story: The cap-and-gown happy ending began in September 2008 when this De La Salle senior was placed in one of the Youth Homes shelters to escape an abusive home. Five months later, he was placed in a loving foster home, thanks to the Youth Homes Intensive Treatment Foster Care program. He quickly impressed the staff with his intellect, wit and resolve. Everyone's shared goal — to keep him on track and support him at school. At graduation, the Assistant Dean of Students said to his foster parent, "I want to thank you and Youth Homes for taking care of our kid." Youth Homes staff helped him apply

for financial aid and, thanks to his grades, activities and his essay; this capable young man was awarded a scholarship from the Diablo Valley Assistance League. Speaking of his goals and aspirations, our teen explained, "I'm going to DVC to complete my general education. I'm thinking of a transfer to Cal and a major in business or sociology." Why college? "The whole reason I want to go to college and on to business and to be successful is so I can give my kids a life that I never had."

Believing in youth, believing in education — that is our promise at Youth Homes.



The place: Anderson House, Youth Homes residential group home

The people: One determined volunteer, professional artist Marcia Barrow Taylor, and four girls, all residents of Anderson House

During the creation of a collaborative art project with four residents of Anderson House, a Youth Homes volunteer discovers that passion and talent are inspiring influences.

moment

3

The back story: On this particularly rainy Sunday, local artist Marcia Barrow Taylor is encountering understandable resistance engaging Anderson house residents in creating a collaborative painting to be auctioned at the first-ever Youth Homes' Gala next October. As the session begins, only one of four residents will even sit at the table — discouraged, Marcia begins to question why she has come. Her enthusiasm for art, though, is infectious. Art, Marcia believes, is “transformational, especially to those who have lost their way or have specific challenges, a real gateway to humanity.”

This belief has inspired her to lend her talents to Youth Homes. She forges ahead, talking with her sole participant about art — line, color, and texture — one by one the other girls drift towards the table until they all join in. As the session ends, the most reluctant participant tucks the stack of papers created by the girls under her arm. She wants something tangible to remind her of the session; to study, to take in, and to help her improve.

It is still stormy outside, but the sun has broken through inside Anderson House.

moment number 3: 11:30 am, february 22, 2009



The place: Youth Homes office, Diablo Lanes, Golden Gate Fields

The people: The employees of RMC Water and Environment, the Youth Homes Auxiliary, Youth Homes Staff and female residents from Andersen and Pryor Center.

A summer phone call from Lindsey Clark at RMC Water and Environment turned into a generous holiday donation, a Friday bowling night in March with Youth Homes teens and a May day at the racetrack with the Youth Homes Auxiliary.

moment

moment number 4: 11:45 am, august 23, 2008

The back story: The \$8,325 donation from their 2008 employee holiday raffle was simply not enough for RMC Water and Environment. “We wanted to get involved in our community and follow through with Youth Homes, just as they do with their foster children — keeping in touch with the kids even after they begin independent lives. It just shows how much they truly care, and we do too,” says Lindsey Clark, Project Engineer. Fast forward two months and RMC hosted our first ever “Bowling Night” with girls from Andersen and Pryor Center. Watching the girls giggle, munch on snacks and try

to throw bowling balls into each other’s lanes, it was hard to imagine that these kids experienced troubled backgrounds. “They are just typical kids! Kids that want to have fun with their friends and goof around,” says Lindsey. RMC was back in May — this time participating in a Youth Homes Auxiliary annual event, a “Day at the Races” at Golden Gate Fields. Decked out in big sun hats, over 20 RMC employees opted to spend their “Fun Day” with Youth Homes.

Community giving at its best.



The place: Naan-N-Curry, Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley

The people: Jeffrey Steimers, Youth Homes Aftercare clinician, and three young adults actively involved in our Aftercare program.

A Youth Homes Aftercare staff member partakes in a dinner time conversation about the future with three young men who once shared the pessimistic view that their futures were empty. That night, however, the discussion embraced words and ideas like *the real world, permanent employment, and even, college.*

moment

moment number 5: 6:30 pm, march 27, 2009

The back story: As dinner time rolls around, Jeffrey listens to a discussion about the future; college, the real world, and beyond. This conversation may not seem unique to the average 19 year old, but the young men present at this dinner table have overcome many emotional obstacles to reach this level of interaction and excitement about the future. Goals, even basic hopes and wishes, were once few and far between for these teens. Jeffrey has been a stable adult presence in their lives for over a year — as a counselor and role model, providing guidance on real life issues

such as transitional housing, education, employment. Tonight, as he has done before, Jeffrey brought these men together as he realizes the power that peers have with each other. Two of the young men like heavy metal music and all three share fears when it comes to ordinary social interactions. These common experiences level the playing field and provide an opportunity for the young man who has earned his GED and started college classes to inspire the other two.

Hope for the future — what could be better than that?

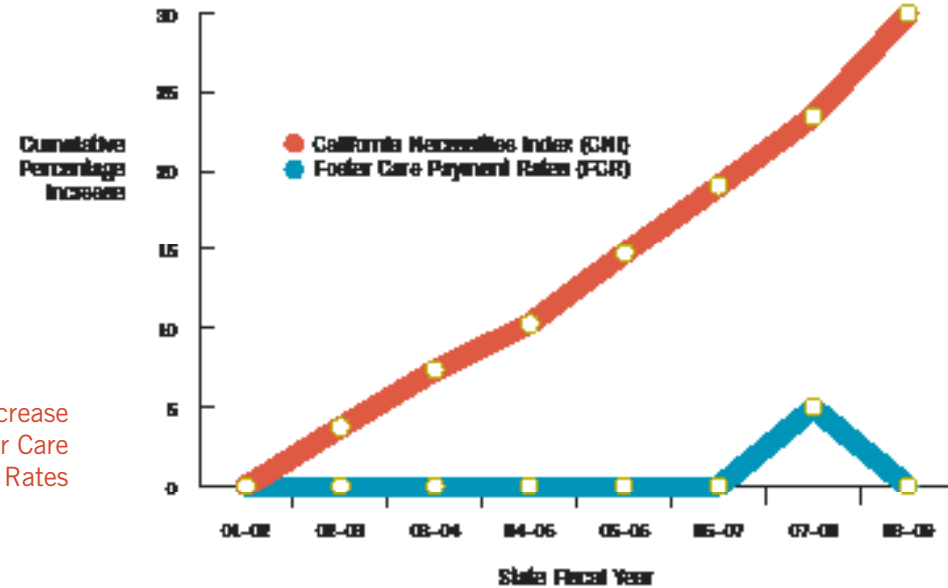


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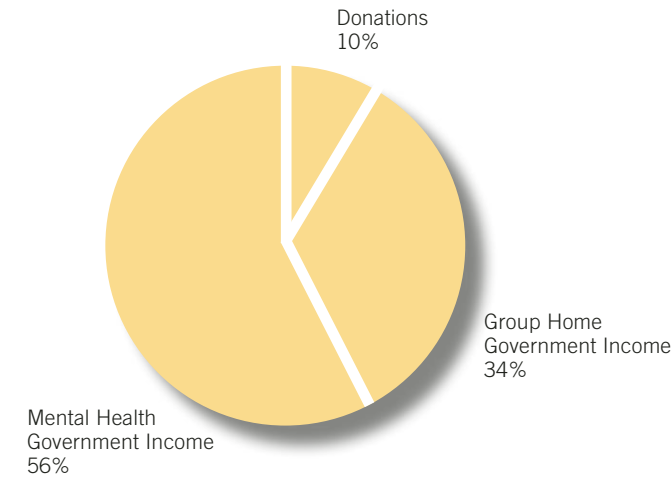
“Despite the certainly difficult times ahead in the next fiscal year, I remain optimistic that our organization has the staff, volunteer leadership and financial capacity to make a positive difference in the lives of the children we serve.” — *Stuart McCullough*

With almost no increase in state funding for foster care over the last 8 years, group home support has declined by 30% in real terms. Despite the State’s failure to fully fund the cost of this care, Youth Homes remains steadfast in our commitment to provide a therapeutic group alternative for those children who are too traumatized and wounded to be served in a foster family setting. (See chart below.)

Comparison of the Cumulative Increase in the CNI and the Foster Care Standardized Schedule of Rates

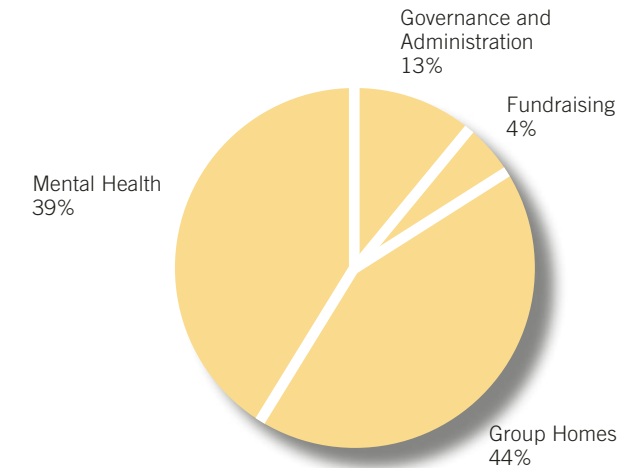


Sources of Funds FY 2008-09*



* Unaudited

Expenses FY 2008-09*



In 2005 the Board of Directors of Youth Homes, anticipating that an increase in funding for foster care youth was unlikely, made a prudent move. Our Board requested senior management to diversify the kinds of service we provided to accomplish two goals: serve youth and families more effectively and strengthen our ability to attract new public and private support. This strategy has proven to be effective. New mental health contracts have widened our resources and our ability to serve, and private support from individuals and institutions have grown by 68% or \$332,528 over the last three years. (See charts above.)

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Maude Blair Somers Yribarren
Lovey Zolintakis

Youth Homes Programs serve more than 350 children and families each year:

Emergency Assessment Shelters: Pryor Center and East Bay Shelter

The only shelters in Contra Costa County for abused, neglected, abandoned, and traumatized children (ages 6–17), removed from their homes for their own protection.

Intensive Residential Treatment Homes: Anderson House, Cherry Lane, and Grammercy House

Following individual treatment plans, and giving round-the-clock care, highly-skilled staffs' number one priority is the care and safety of the children and families Youth Homes serves.

Therapeutic Behavior Services (TBS)

Dedicated to preventing hospitalization or placement in high-level residential treatment, TBS provides one-to-one, in-home support and coaching.

Intensive Treatment Foster Care (ITFC)

Recruits, trains, and licenses foster families committed to forging long-term connections even after children in their care gain independence.

Aftercare Services

Youth Homes offers a comprehensive system of supportive services for youth aged 16–25 leaving our care as they mature into independent adulthood.

Mentor Program

Volunteers building healthy one-to-one relationships with both residents and emancipated youth.

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Please note: For confidentiality purposes, no photographs of current foster children are featured in this brochure.