

**Written by The League of Women Voters Umpqua Valley**  
**November, 2004.**

### **Summary:**

In 2004, 520 of Douglas County's adolescent young people are homeless. They are considered homeless if they are living in a shelter, living temporarily with friends, in abandoned buildings, in vehicles, or generally on the street. They have no address, no parental signatures to give them access to many services. There are a myriad of reasons children are in this condition: violence and abuse within their home, mental illness in the family, gender identification issues unacceptable to their parents, failure to thrive in school, paralyzing pressures of poverty, unfortunate foster care experiences, and drug and alcohol addictions, any of which may be happening amid the natural time of change we call adolescence.

They are homeless and are in need of each community's proactive support and assistance to help them find their way to a productive and positive tomorrow.

### **Presentation of Problem and Causes**

Children leave home because they are no longer safe. They are victims of sexual abuse, neglect, or physical abuse. Some parents can no longer afford to house and feed their children, asking them to leave. Some parents disagree with a child's sexual orientation and eject the child from the home. Their parents may suffer a mental illness, could be in trouble with the law or may be substance abusers.

Substance abuse is nationally recognized as a significant threat to families. 24% of youth report that they left home because a parent or step-parent had an alcohol problem. Other studies suggest high substance abuse (1). Many of the now-homeless teens have witnessed alcoholic parents and/or a parent addicted to drugs. The prevailing drug-of-choice is methamphetamines. This community-destroying drug is easy and inexpensive to manufacture; easy to purchase; easy to use; and instantly addictive. Rural America is seeing more and more law enforcement resources targeting "meth" labs, pushers, and addicts. Children in these abusing homes often find that their only means of survival is to leave.

In an April 2002 Midwest Longitudinal Study conducted by the University of Nebraska researchers interviewed 455 homeless children between spring 2000 and fall of 2001. This snapshot paints an alarming picture of the abusive life many of our younger citizens live under the hands of their parents or caregiver:

## HOMELESS TEENS: TOMORROW'S BURDEN OR TOMORROW'S CITIZEN?

<b><u>National Statistics (2)</u></b>	
Made you go the day without food or water	20.3%
Abandoned you for at least 24 hours	42.4%
Threw something at you in anger	71.0%
Pushed or grabbed you in anger	84.2%
Slapped you on head or face with an open hand	76.9%
Spanked you on the butt with tier hand	72.3%
Hit you with an object	74.2%
Beat you with fists	43.4%
Verbally or physically threatened you with a weapon	22.4%
Wounded you with a gun or knife	7.5%
Ever asked you to do something sexual	19.5%
Ever forced you to do something sexual	22.4%
Ever forced you to do something sexual (girls only)	32.1%

Once the child has left home only one aspect of their survival has been resolved. Now they must face the problem of survival on their own. Major challenges of being a homeless youth include a lack of services available to this population, the lack of family accountability, the inability of some human service organizations to collaborate due to perceived turf issues or legal obstacles, a lack of trust of the system and adults by the homeless youth population, and the community's attitude towards homeless children.

Dr. Ronald Paul Hill, C.S.C. Professor of Social Responsibility states that governmental policies for the Homeless do not include homeless young people. These children become invisible, without a face, and without a voice. He continues to paint a picture of the child in the streets: "The problems encountered by youths living on the streets are particularly dire. Many of the services for the homeless, already in existence, were developed for adults or families with small children and therefore are inappropriate for teenagers. With no place left to go, these youths selected to congregate and sleep outside in a small number of downtown locations." (3)

Many of these youths are not attending school on a regular basis. Getting to school is like crossing a field of land mines for some children. The home environment is hostile towards education. Children become truant when their parents are substance abusers, suffer from mental illness, and/or do not hold education in high esteem. [In Douglas County truancy is handled with a letter to the parents and, on rare occasions, a monetary fine by the courts may cause a family to depart the jurisdiction. (4)] These children are "lost" to the schools and the support they might otherwise receive. Many of these children live in a high-stress environment, contend with poverty, unstable adults and daily violence. School may be one of their few lifeboats. The stresses of their lives make consistent attendance difficult, and often make their studies seem irrelevant to their lives.

## HOMELESS TEENS: TOMORROW'S BURDEN OR TOMORROW'S CITIZEN?

Some homeless youth drop out of school, and some do not. Lack of education is a major factor in determining the future of homeless youth.

Dropping out separates the child from a major source of support, the Homeless Student Liaison. This person is empowered by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2002 to act on behalf of the child maintaining his/her entitlement to an education and all that the school district offers in its programs. The Law mandates that students who are homeless receive enrollment, transportation, meals available at the school, and personal support and guidance from the Liaison who is a solid, knowledgeable and caring person. The Liaison's signature is acceptable for receiving any services available and necessary. The problem is that not all schools within Douglas County have embraced this law, thus many homeless children are not receiving available support and services.

Community attitudes about the plight of these children may include a lack of awareness about the problems and causes, the mistaken notion that all of "those" children are rebellious teenagers, and the sense that homelessness is "their" fault. In the 1997 *National Evaluation of Runaway and Homeless Youth: Final Report*, the authors concluded that "one of the themes that emerged... from the study is the degree of conflict in youths' families. Youth were not just arguing with their parents for guardians, but they were being beaten, sexually violated, and thrown out of the house." (5) The child has become disconnected from the "principal institution in U.S. society that ensures protection and care for others – the family" (6)

Attitudes commonly expressed towards the homeless are described by Sarah Roman, a Douglas County woman who lived homeless for eleven years.

"There is so much stereotype against homeless people, e.g., that being homeless is synonymous with being a drug addict, alcoholic, mentally defective, uneducated, lazy and unclean; not to mention criminal—never mind that details of what makes people "homeless" are too difficult or painfully negative for society-at-large to want to learn about, much less digest. Thus it is impossible for the homeless to be seen by society as "people" worthy of any type of dignity, respect, compassion, consideration, or support."

Community attitudes may include the view that the families should be held accountable. "It is a mistaken notion that the state can dictate family accountability. Services and other supports for parents are more useful and cost-effective than sanctions. Research has shown accountability laws of other states (than Oregon) to be effective deterrents, including most parents to take responsibility for their children's care, supervision and nurturing. However, once legal consequences are levied on a parent, the parent's motivation to follow though decreases. Additional sanctions are needed for compliance

## HOMELESS TEENS: TOMORROW'S BURDEN OR TOMORROW'S CITIZEN?

and judicial costs increase. Among families prone to violence, angry responses to sanctions are sometimes turned on the youth.” (7)

Society has acknowledged a failure of the family structure with the creation of Child Protection services and foster care systems. These agencies can be as wonderful and as horrible as the gamut of natural families. It is important to know that 40% - 50% of homeless children come from a failed placement with a foster family or group home. For the child, the family model is broken. The child has lost the structure that provides mentoring and guidance and an atmosphere conducive to limited risk-taking in order to gain maturity and learning. They are frequently excluded from society's roadmaps leading to strong citizenry, participation in a community, and inclusion in a healthy family. Many feel undervalued and unappreciated. They have no inner resources to battle the constant barrage and the frequent, if not daily, reminder that they are worthless.

In such a climate of disrespect, exclusion, and despair there is little hope for growth towards independence for the homeless. They face a world they know little of, where getting what they need involves trusting strangers. They fear authorities will merely send them back into their families with no more resources than they before. One teen mother said that she didn't know how to go about getting birth control, nor did she know whom she could trust to help her. The safer route is to do nothing.

Lacking trust in the system makes it very difficult for homeless teens to speak up about in their dysfunction. Dr. Natalie Dollar, Oregon State University, has observed and studied how negative attitudes about homeless youth mute their voices when they attempt to use the usual venues of town meetings and government hearings to define their place in society, and their goals with in it.

“Community forums and town meetings, no matter how street youth-supportive they intend to be, do not generally allow street youth to participate in the conversation in a way that gives voice to their social reality. Rather, these communicative settings often produce visions of street youth as ‘less than human,’ requiring ‘control for their own safety,’ and as socially and economically insignificant.”

These children speak a different language than their community does. They define “family” as their group on the street and they receive the caring and the sense of belonging they could not feel at home. They recreate their version of a safe family. The community defines “family” as a group consisting of parent or parents and their children. Further we assume that the adults provide care, sustenance, shelter, love and support for their children as they grow into adults. It is a concept held over ages of time, and basically is the legal expectation. For young people who have become homeless, the community's definition is a fantasy they will never experience.

## HOMELESS TEENS: TOMORROW'S BURDEN OR TOMORROW'S CITIZEN?

Homeless teens also define themselves as citizens rather than as children—a very notable distinction. Most of these young people have been decision-makers for some time, maybe since they were eight or ten years old. One may have done the grocery shopping with the incoming check before the mother could spend it on drink or drugs. Or another may have stepped forward to take the beating to protect younger siblings. Many have been late to school because they get the little ones to their school first. Many were the “grown ups” in a household of mentally ill or violent “adults.” These young people may be inexperienced with living in the world we know, but they are not babes in the wood. They have come of age through hard-won experience and consider themselves a part of our society.

It is difficult to see a way out of this conundrum. Does society address the ills contributing to teen homelessness first before it addresses how to “fix” the homeless teen? It is not the intent of this study to research or describe solutions to domestic or societal dysfunction.

However, it is our intent to develop a model/blueprint in which Oregon’s communities can acknowledge the issue and propose actions that encompass short-term and long term solutions. We propose each community develop a strategic plan to support homeless children. We offer our work as a possible example for those efforts. We believe that if we start with each of our communities, we can solve this problem.

Douglas County has at least 520 of these children. Let us start here, at home, with our caring, community collaboration, visions, and solutions.

### **Finding and Developing Community Solutions**

“Street lifestyle is harmful to the physical and emotional health of our youth and increases their risk of becoming part of the adult homeless population and/or the criminal justice system. The existence of homeless teens is unhealthy for the community, in that it breeds illicit activity and crime, intimidates law-abiding citizens, and is destructive to the livability of the community.

A necessary goal of any plan or program for helping homeless youth is to help them transition to a more stable, secure and nurturing environment. Helping our youth grow to maturity is a community responsibility and should be a high priority for the greater (Portland) community and the state of Oregon.” (9)

Awareness of this issue was the catalyst which lead to collective community action in Douglas County. To gain awareness of the issue The League of Women Voters of the Umpqua Valley conducted a two-year study interviewing and analyzing human services

## HOMELESS TEENS: TOMORROW'S BURDEN OR TOMORROW'S CITIZEN?

agencies and collecting and analyzing data. A list of agencies interviewed can be found in Appendix C.

As the problem is multi-faceted so must be the solutions. They include:

Short-term solutions:

- Development of a Citizens Task Force to address homeless youth.
  - Could be modeled upon the Citizens Crime Commission – Homeless Youth Prevention Task Force in Portland, OR (comprised of business and governmental leaders).
- A collective community call for action at local, state and federal levels.
  - Educate the community via presentations to various civic, religious, and community organizations.
  - The voices of these children and their plight must be heard by those in elected office. Their constituencies have the power of the written or spoken word to lobby on behalf of the homeless youth in each community. Writing letters, follow-up telephone calls, discussions in public and town hall meetings are all valid and powerful tools in our democratic society to heighten awareness and mandate action. Suggestions for writing such letters are available in Appendix A at the end of this paper.
- Additional depth in short-term relief.
  - Publish a *Handbook of The Street for Teens*, listing services, agencies and shelters
  - An outreach program including intervention with the teen and his/her family
  - A Drop-In Center that provides meals, opportunities to complete their education, counseling, and a health clinic. An example of a friendly, safe, and productive Drop-In Center can be found at Portland, Oregon's *New Avenues for Youth*. (See Appendix C). Youth come to the Center: for meals, to use laundry facilities, obtain health care and substance abuse counseling, work with professional social workers, work in the classroom to obtain a high school diploma, become a candidate for transition into New Avenues' long-term shelter and job preparation programs. The adult-child interactions at the Drop-in Center set the stage for more productive conversations, establish common languages and a trust bond with the homeless teen.
  - Involve and include the homeless youth in the solutions.
- In Douglas County, a few comprehensive long term programs and strategies have begun to emerge but are in need of more advocacy, community awareness, and funding.
  - Support the *Casa de Belen*, a safe residence for homeless boys and girls and families, is the first step toward improving local conditions for homeless youth. The Casa de Belen Executive Director is working with the staff at *New Avenues for Youth* in program development.

## HOMELESS TEENS: TOMORROW'S BURDEN OR TOMORROW'S CITIZEN?

- Some housing is being built for this population by UCAN's CHES project.
- The coastal community of Reedsport has met with limited success in assisting their population of homeless youth.
- The Independent Living Project. A social worker, housed at the Phoenix School, counsels foster children, working with foster children/homeless teens to transition them to living on their own.
- Leverage and empower Educational Resources via the McKinney Vento Liaisons in partnership with the Oregon Department of Education and the Douglas County Education Services Department.
- Support and provide information on available services to the Opportunity Center in Tri-Cities area.
- Additional suggestions of comprehensive long-term solutions to end homeless teens include:
  - Collaboration between law enforcement and youth shelters identifying children in crisis and providing assistance and support to the children and their families.
  - Parenting classes for families in crisis or in need of assistance in living with their teen;
  - Collaboration between service providing agencies, including development of Memos of Understanding that allow all agencies to work with each other to assist and support the child;
  - Include young people in the solutions, those who are with homes as well as those who are not;
  - An aggressive outreach to these teens by schools, leveraging the McKinney-Vento Law to assist them, providing entrees and guidance into services; and
  - Empowering local schools to engage these students in good relationships between the child and the school to facilitate the delivery of services that provide foundations for reading, learning, and the development of critical thinking skills.
- An aggressive outreach by school districts and community members to these children.

In Douglas County, efforts are being made to identify homeless youth and to support them in finding safety, caring for themselves, completing their education, owning their lives with goals and decisions, and training for work. Many agencies which serve homeless people in Douglas County (see Appendix E for a partial list) work independently with the homeless youth they encounter. Most of them affirm that interagency communication in assisting a client would be helpful. Currently, partnerships between the State of Oregon's Department of Human Services and homeless youth providers are minimal due to client privacy issues. When information is not shared, the fabric of support is flawed, and the youth fall through the gaps once again.

## HOMELESS TEENS: TOMORROW'S BURDEN OR TOMORROW'S CITIZEN?

Encouraging and facilitating partnerships between agencies is a strong contributor to a long-term solution.

Bringing the homeless kids and the services together can, it seems, be successful with contact and guidance. At issue here is developing trust among the young, the adults, and the system. Generally speaking the kids don't know how to access services, they are anxious about being refused, and about being returned to their families.

Schools can be excellent facilitators between the children and the service providing agencies. Ron Breyne, Director of Roseburg's Phoenix School:

“Our homeless youth need a base to work from as they build stability into their lives. For example, they need an address/phone number and clean clothes so that they can look for work. Once they get to work, they need a place to stay and dependable transportation to get to work. They need health care when sick to keep from missing work. And, finally, they need help building a network for support –whom do you call when things happen...counseling for life issues including drug abuse, support for continued success, sobriety. These are some of the things that all youngsters need as people worthy of dignity, respect, compassion, consideration and support. These are things needed by worthy citizens in our community.”

All of our schools can act as the champion for these teens. The McKinney-Vento Assistance Act defines the entitlement of homeless children and youth to public school enrollment and full participation in all programs available in the school. The law mandates a liaison work with the children and the schools to ensure the child's needs are met and services delivered. The specific needs and services that would be available to children through this liaison are not yet fully defined. Fuller adherence to the elements of the McKinney-Vento Law throughout county school districts would be helpful, as the Liaison is instrumental in making and maintaining contact with the homeless children and teens. Due to a lack of funding and understanding only limited resources are available: a) The Roseburg School District's liaison is able to devote only 50% of her time to this assignment; b) Three other school districts will be represented by one part-time individual.

A strong outreach and understanding of homelessness and poverty by educators and community members will assist this segment of the population in reclaiming their birthright: voting. By learning to read and developing critical thinking skills with guidance this population of children can and will learn they make a difference at the ballot box and can contribute to the community in a positive and constructive manner.

## HOMELESS TEENS: TOMORROW'S BURDEN OR TOMORROW'S CITIZEN?

Gaps in local service identified now include safe housing and temporary shelter, a drop-in center, effective response to the drug presence in Douglas County, help for dysfunctional parents, counseling for young people becoming aware of themselves as homosexual, and collaboration and coordination of service-providing agencies in guiding these young people through the use of services.

In this community efforts are being made to identify homeless youth, and to support them in finding safety, caring for themselves, getting their education, owning their lives with goals and decisions, and training for work.

- The Roseburg School District has an active and effective Liaison under the McKinney-Vento law.
- Phoenix School's mission is the empowerment of such teens in difficulty.
- The Independent Living Program, located at Phoenix School, supports and guides former foster youth who are homeless and living alone.
- Our judges are using their authority to encourage people out of drug use and domestic violence.
- All the agencies we have talked with express interest in being a part of the solution.

These solutions do not mandate large quantities of additional funding. Focusing existing services, available funds and local community resources will eliminate duplication of services and the continued depletion of the state and federal coffers. Breaking the cycle of poverty unleashes untold energy and opportunities.

### **Summary**

There are islands of energy and commitment to our homeless youth. Building the bridges between agencies and with the youth is essential to achieving a more effective short-term and long term response for these unsupported youth. In order for this to occur members of each community must invest in the future:

- Appeal to elected officials demanding solutions and actions to end the plight of homeless children
- Advocate for immediate action in short-term and long-term solutions
- League members can participate in a Speaker's Bureau educating various civic and religious organizations and requesting their support and action
- Develop and enhance community awareness that these children are our responsibility.
- Facilitate human services agencies collaboration/cooperation.

## HOMELESS TEENS: TOMORROW'S BURDEN OR TOMORROW'S CITIZEN?

The League of Women Voters of the Umpqua Valley advocates for a new standard of expectation no longer turning our eyes and hearts aside. We want visible, measurable, quantifiable reform and change on our streets, in the homeless teen programs and in the lives of these children.

Denial of the issue continues to contribute to the American skeleton in the closet, generational poverty. Taking the high moral ground, addressing the issue and its associative contributors to develop a comprehensive solution will provide a roadmap to success. These children, our future citizens deserve to enjoy their very basic civil rights: a home, an education, and a future with hope.

## End Notes

### Footnotes:

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4. Hill, Ronald Paul. *Service Provision Through Public-Private Partnerships.* Journal of Service Research. Volume 4, May 2002. 279-289.
5. Interview with John Williams , Douglas County ESD. November 15, 2004
6. Reeg, Bob. *The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and Disconnected Youth.* Bob Reeg. Center for Law and Social Policy. July 2003. pg. 57
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### End Notes (con't)

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**Appendix A - Letters to elected officials**

**\*STATE SENATORS\***

**Sen. Bill Fisher, R-Roseburg**

S-209, State Capitol  
900 Court St. N.E.  
Salem, OR 97301  
Phone: (503) 986-1701  
Fax: (503) 986-1984

*\*Local contact information:*

268 Akin Lane  
Roseburg, OR 97470  
Phone: (541) 672-1908  
Fax: (541) 672-0862

Email: [sen.billfisher@state.or.us](mailto:sen.billfisher@state.or.us)

Website: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/fisher/home.htm>

*Committees: Human Services (chairman); Health Policy (vice-chairman); Agriculture and Natural Resources.*

*Fisher is in his fourth Senate session representing District 1, which includes Roseburg and the areas south to Glendale and west to Bandon, Gold Beach and Brookings. Senator Fisher will retire effective January 1, 2005 and will be replaced by Jeff Kruse.*

**Rep. Bruce Hanna, R-Sutherlin**

H-286, State Capitol  
900 Court St. N.E.  
Salem, OR 97301  
Phone: (503) 986-1407

*\*Local contact information:*

612 N.W. Cecil Ave.  
Roseburg, OR 97470  
Phone: (541) 672-6596

Email: [rep.brucehanna@state.or.us](mailto:rep.brucehanna@state.or.us)

Website: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/hanna>

*Committees: House Interim Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources*

*Hanna is representing House District 7, which includes Sutherlin and other portions of northern Douglas County and rural Lane County.*

**Appendix A - Letters to elected officials (con't)**

**Rep. Susan Morgan, R-Green**

H-381, State Capitol  
900 Court St. N.E.  
Salem, OR 97301  
Phone: (503) 986-1402

*\*Local contact information*

P.O. Box 2223  
Myrtle Creek, OR 97457  
Phone: (541) 784-2283  
Fax: (541) 784-2283  
Email: [rep.susanmorgan@state.or.us](mailto:rep.susanmorgan@state.or.us)  
Website: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/morgan/home.htm>

*Committees: Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Education (chairwoman); Audit & Human Services Budget Reform (vice-chairwoman); Budget (vice-chairwoman).*

*Morgan is in her third term, representing House District 2, which includes Roseburg, Myrtle Creek and Canyonville.*

**\*DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS\***

**Doug Robertson, Commissioner**

1036 SE Douglas RM 217  
Roseburg, OR 97470  
Phone: (541) 440-4201

**Joyce Morgan, Commissioner**

1036 SE Douglas RM 217  
Roseburg, OR 97470

## HOMELESS TEENS: TOMORROW'S BURDEN OR TOMORROW'S CITIZEN?

Phone: (541) 440-4201 Commissioner Morgan will be replaced by Marilyn Kittelman effective January 1, 2005.

### **Dan VanSlyke, Commissioner**

1036 SE Douglas RM 217  
Roseburg, OR 97470  
Phone: (541) 440-4201

### **Appendix A - Letters to elected officials (con't)**

Suggested content of the letter:

State your name, address (should include city and state of residence)

State you are disturbed with the fact that young people are without shelters and there seems to be a lack of a comprehensive solution to this issue.

You have been learning about this issue of teen homelessness and this is an important consideration for you and your community. If possible, talk a bit about the services that are performed and the gap you see. Include a fact or two for the elected official to ponder. Such as, "Are you aware that.....?" or "Did you know that....?"

Ask the official how s/he will take steps to change the situation for the better.

Thank him/her for their time and prompt attention to the matter.

**Appendix B – Statistics**

Douglas County is not different from the rest of the nation. The statistics are amazing considering our expectations about living in the America.

Between 500,000 and 1.5 million children and youth in the United States live out of their home each year. Of these youth, 21% are classified as homeless, and 79% as runaways.

In Oregon, current providers to homeless youth estimate 25,000 youth are in need of services every day, and combined with youth that are homeless with their families, that number climbs to over 38,000.

Approximately 3% of homeless youth are abandoned—youth who have been told to leave the house or are prevented from returning home.

Of the callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 35% have runaway before, 61% have been on the run for 7 days or less, and 40% will cross state lines. [In Oregon, the I-5 corridor is the path of nomadic homeless youth.]

Many youth are leaving homes affected by abuse, neglect, substance abuse, mental illness or other family problems.

More than half (53%) of homeless youth in a National Association of Social Workers survey reported education or school problems, 45% had an absent father, 41% came from families with long-term economic problems, and 38% had at least one foster care placement.

A recent study found that 46% of homeless youth had been physically abused and 17% had been forced into unwanted sexual activity by a family or household member.

Homeless youth often suffer from poor hygiene, lack of sleep, high exposure to violence and a variety of medical problems including injuries, malnutrition, and skin infections. They are at increased risk for HIV infection.

Homeless youth suffer from a high rate of psychological disorders, including major depression, conduct disorder, and post-traumatic stress syndrome. [Often this is the affect of their experience in their homes.]

## HOMELESS TEENS: TOMORROW'S BURDEN OR TOMORROW'S CITIZEN?

Roughly one-fifth of the youth admitted to shelters reported physical abuse, one-fourth reported emotional abuse, and one-fourth reported neglect.

Fifty-two percent of shelter youth and 48% of street youth were raised in single parent homes.

In a recent study, 26% of shelter youth and 32% of street youth reported that they had attempted suicide at least once.

More than half of the youth interviewed during shelter stays reported that their parents told them to leave, or knew they were leaving and did not care

Nationally, young, single women with small children are the typical homeless family.

Homeless young people frequently have many dealings with the Foster Care system and the Probation and Parole system. The latter is basically judgment; the former spawns 40 to 50% of adolescent homeless kids, according to several homeless youth providers.

Please reference *End Notes* for sources.

**Appendix C - Other informative sites or sources**

1. Agencies serving youth in Douglas County:  
Oregon State Department of Human Resources  
Umpqua Community Action Network (UCAN)  
Roseburg Public Schools  
Umpqua Community College  
UCC JOBS Program  
Glide Together  
Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians,  
Douglas County Circuit Court Drug Court  
Neighbor to Neighbor mediators  
Umpqua Valley DisAbilities Network  
Oregon Department of Transportation  
The Family Development Center
  
2. Agencies interviewed by LWV:  
Adapt  
Boys and Girls Club  
CASA  
Casa de Belin  
District Attorney's Office  
Douglas County AIDS Council  
Douglas County Commission on Children and Families  
Douglas County Juvenile Department  
Douglas County Mental Health  
Educational Services District – Douglas County  
First Step  
FISH  
Ford Family Foundation  
Homeless Coalition – Douglas County  
Jobs Corps  
Judges Joan Seitz and Robert Millikan

**Appendix C (con't)**

Mercy Behavioral Health Unit  
Mission, The  
New Avenues for Youth  
OHSC  
Oregon, State of Employment Dept.  
Oregon, State of Department of Human Services  
Phoenix School  
Reedsport School District  
Roseburg High School Counseling  
Roseburg School District McKinney Vento Liaison  
Safe Haven and Hope  
Salvation Army  
Tri-City Opportunity Center  
Umpqua CDC  
Umpqua Community College  
Umpqua Community Action Network  
Umpqua DisAbilities Network  
Umpqua Health Clinic  
Vista Volunteers  
YMCA

2. Description of *New Avenues for Youth*

The shelter is founded upon four principles, which are entwined in a beautiful comprehensive program:

1. Prevent homelessness among youth by immediately responding to the needs of kids in crisis. Includes:
  - a. Reception Center at Police Department staffed with NA counselors that meet with kids and intervene with families to prevent homelessness in youth.
  - b. Outreach to schools, organizations, churches, and youth.
  - c. Web-site chat room offering summaries of services

**Appendix C (con't)**

2. Engage homeless youth by building trust. Includes:
  - a. Drop-in Center which serves three meals and snacks each day. Also offers washer/dryer for kids, computer lab, classrooms to support kids in obtaining their GED, a recording studio, music lessons (piano and guitar), and a Medical Clinic (which also provides drug and alcohol counseling)
  - b. Classroom is an alternative school that works with drop-ins and also a revolving cadre of approximately 24 kids who are working on their diplomas.
3. Stabilize youth so they can begin to heal from abuse. Includes:
  - a. Clinical program – counseling work with kids
  - b. Transitional housing (24 beds, no more than 3 years stay)
  - c. Independent Living (subsidized apartments graduating into 100% paid by youth)
  - d.
4. Educate and train youth so they never have to return to the streets. Includes:
  - a. Federally-funded workforce training center with computer lab, job counselors, and coaches.
  - b. Ben and Jerry's Scoop Shop partnership

**Financing:**

1. Originally 100% publicly funded. Currently: 65% public and 25% private
2. Well-coordinated large fund raising campaigns (*Kows for Kids* raised \$2.1 million in 2001 total, and was split 50-50 with another youth agency) allowing New Avenues to retire its entire start-up debt. Next big event – Jay Leno Comedy Show Summer 2004.
3. One of the reasons they are able to obtain funding is their MIS provides statistics and input tools that track outcomes, which are utilized internally and reported to funders.

**Partnerships:**

Includes the State of Oregon, Multnomah County, City of Portland, Portland School Districts Network, Ben and Jerry's and numerous private ventures.