

CITY House: Shelters

2009 Dashboard Overview

Overview

CITY House's inaugural program, the Teen Shelter, combined with our newest initiative, My Friend's House, will be able to offer a safe haven to meet the needs of vulnerable children ages newborn to 17 years old, specializing in sibling groups, children with special needs, medically fragile and behaviorally challenging children. The Shelter program provides emergency care and residential services to children who have been removed from their unsafe homes. CITY House is the only agency in Collin County to provide shelter resources for children and youth.

History

In 1988, two Plano school teachers discovered many of their students were homeless. From their supportive initiative 20 years ago, CITY House (incorporated as Collin Intervention to Youth) was founded as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization with the mission to protect children and strengthen families.

Beginning in a small house for homeless youth ages 10 to 17, it was soon clear that this six-bed shelter was inadequate for the needs of these lost and neglected youth. In 1992, a capital campaign raised the funds to purchase an historic home in downtown Plano and the shelter expanded to 15 beds.

Finally, due to the unmet needs of the youngest and most vulnerable children in Texas, CITY House has built a new shelter, My Friend's House, for children newborn to seventeen years old who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Community Need

- January, 2009 had a 102% increase in CPS referrals compared to January, 2008 (up to 1,500 from 742 referrals).
- Between September 2008 and May 2009, 185 children were removed from abusive homes in Collin County, yet only 40 children were able to be placed in the county's 40 foster homes.
- In 2008, only 15% of new CPS removals stayed within Collin Country.
- There are no shelters in Collin County to serve children 0-9 years old.
- There are no shelters north of Austin in the State of Texas that serve children with special needs, medically fragile and/or behaviorally challenging.
- Plano ISD Superintendant Doug Otto said, "Plano ISD vigorously supports CITY House and its mission to protect children and strengthen families. By providing temporary shelter and a safe environment in which to strengthen youth and their families, CITY House has contributed immeasurably during the past 20 years to helping our students come to school healthier and more eager to learn."

Services Offered

While residents are provided all the comforts of a caring and safe home, they receive 24-hour care provided by a highly trained staff to include services such as:

- Intake, discharge, and follow-up services
- Family visitation opportunities
- Individualized case management
- Skills groups
- Play therapy
- Academic assistance
- Recreational activities
- Transportation

- Medical care
- Nutritional education
- Clothing
- Gift registry during holiday and birthday celebrations
- Legal support, when needed

Purpose/Goal

The goal of the program is to provide traumatized and abused children with a safe place to live while a safer alternative is found.

Objectives

Objectives are based upon the intention of meeting each resident's holistic needs:

- Provide a safe, structured living environment that provides opportunities for learning about accepting responsibility, dealing with peer pressure, and making constructive decisions to promote a sense of accomplishment, increasing feelings of competency and self-worth.
- Offer activities and relationships that strengthen functioning through supportive services.
- Strengthen relationships and encourage stable living conditions.
- Assist in deciding upon constructive courses of action.

Evaluation Methods

Shelter services are extensively evaluated in the following ways:

- Client satisfaction surveys after each counseling session
- Follow-up satisfaction surveys at discharge, through letter, phone, and email
- Testimonials and self-reporting by clients
- Periodic audits of client files, program budget, and site inspections by Program Director, Clinical Director, and Executive Director
- Annual audit and corrective measures
- Field inspections by the funding sources
- Field inspections by United Way
- Periodic inspections by Board Members
- Feedback from referral sources and other service providers
- Clinical evaluation: clients are given a client history and assessment upon entering a CITY House program. Progress notes describe the progress or lack of progress towards stated action plan goals

Outcomes

- In 2008, 159 residents lived at the CITY House Shelter. Of the referrals, 45 were from CPS, 66 were runaway youth, and 48 were respite from family conflict.
- From January 1, 2009 to August 31, 2009, 76 residents have already lived at the CITY House Shelter. Of the referrals, 28 were from CPS, 21 were runaway youth, and 27 were respite from family conflict.

Primary Funding Sources

Funding through the Department of Family and Protective Services contributes to the majority of the baseline budget to continue and expand the program.