

Youth Service, Inc.
PROGRAM REPORT

2018 Edition





Gwendolyn A. Bailey, LSW



Sara S. Moran

Dear Friend,

This year was filled with encouragement and accomplishments. We have seen families in need continue to benefit from our crisis nursery at Baring House, Youth Emergency Service (YES), Family Empowerment Service (FES), and the full program array. Again and again, children, parents, grandparents and other relatives tell us how these crucial programs have helped them navigate lives marked by limited resources and other challenges. “My case manager helped me at a time when I didn’t have anyone else; she believed in me when nobody did,” a teenage girl in the FES program said. “It’s scary to think about how things could have turned out if I didn’t have her.”

YSI was selected to be part of former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick’s #10for10 challenge where he pledged to raise one million dollars to support services and programs for the most vulnerable across the country. Kaepernick partnered with Philadelphia rap artist Meek Mill to donate a combined \$20,000 to Youth Service, Inc. In the following days, former NBA player Kobe Bryant joined the pledge to total a combined \$30,000 donation to YSI. We look forward to utilizing this generous donation to help continue and improve YSI programs that you will read about in this report.

2018 also marks a few notable milestones at YSI. In May, we hosted our 16th annual Teen Conference at Temple University. The conference provided the opportunity for youth ages 12 - 18 to engage with a lineup of inspiring speakers and informative workshops. This year’s conference theme was “The World Is Listening. Use Your Voice,” and focused on teaching teens effective communication techniques with peers, family and those in power. This upcoming holiday season, YSI will have its 11th annual “Tri-State Area Tow 4 Tots” collaborative holiday toy drive where towing companies from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware collect and deliver toys and gifts for YSI youth and their caretakers.

As you read our report, know that your contributions – financial, in-kind and volunteer – make a difference in the lives of the children and families we serve. Thank you for helping YSI continue its legacy of programs that truly make an impact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gwendolyn A. Bailey".

Gwendolyn A. Bailey, LSW
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara S. Moran".

Sara S. Moran
President, Board of Directors

BARING HOUSE

Jerame* was a happy child who enjoyed his family, home and playing with his toys like any other three-year-old. However, when Jerame's mother was deemed unable to take care of her child, his entire life was uprooted.

As Jerame's mother struggled with personal challenges, she found herself unable to care adequately for her child. Jerame's child advocate was able to step in and take him to live with his grandmother in West Philadelphia.

"I've never seen someone able to grow in that environment," said Ms. Sweet*, Jerame's grandmother and now sole provider. "I did everything I could for my daughter, but when she called me with the news that Jerame was going to be taken away I couldn't let that happen."

Ms. Sweet, now retired, does what she can for Jerame, but finds it difficult to manage at times due to living with a disability and on a fixed income.

"I couldn't do this on my own. What I make is adequate for me, but for the two of us, it's just not enough. I needed help, and I wanted to give him a better life."

Baring House Crisis Nursery was there to help when she realized she needed extra support.

"They feed him, they have clothes for him and there are other kids for him to play with now, too. They really do it all," said Ms. Sweet of the support Baring House has provided, making life more manageable for her.

Having the Crisis Nursery available 24/7 makes a big difference as it allows Ms. Sweet to keep her appointments. After having Jerame start at the nursery, it has helped Ms. Sweet cut down on her costs for food and clothing for him, making her fixed income more than enough to support them both.



* All names have been changed to protect the privacy of Youth Service, Inc.'s clients. All photographs are reprinted with the permission of the subjects and do not illustrate specific stories in this report.

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT SERVICE

Based on her outgoing and friendly personality, you would never guess how difficult life was for 16 year

old Aymbre* before she started working with YSI's Family Empowerment Services (FES). She enjoys activities your average teenage girl likes to do: spending time with friends, shopping at the mall and playing sports. But Aymbre's story is far from average.

Aymbre never met her father, and after losing her mother to substance abuse at age 10, she was forced to live with her grandmother, a retired police officer and security guard. Aymbre began rebelling against her grandmother's strict rules and was eventually linked to YSI through Family Empowerment Services program. She was contacted by her FES case worker right away and they set small

goals that would be beneficial for both Aymbre and her grandmother. For a few years this arrangement worked, until her grandmother lost her job and Aymbre was forced to move to South Carolina to live with her only remaining uncle.

"He was abusive," she says, "but since grandma was so far away she couldn't do anything about it."

Aymbre felt trapped and alone in a new place with no support network. When things got to be too much, Aymbre would dial her case worker, who listened and provided her with the support she needed.

"She helped me in a time when I didn't have anyone else" she says, her voice heavy with emotion. "She believed in me when nobody did."

Eventually with the help of her case worker they were able to remove Aymbre from her abusive situation and get her back to safety in Philadelphia. Aymbre attributes much of her current success to the action plan she developed with her case worker, which allows freedom but also incorporates accountability.

"It's scary to think about how things could have turned out if I didn't have her," says Aymbre.



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YOUTH EMERGENCY SERVICE

Throughout the past year, Youth Emergency Service's (YES) Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program has seen a number of

success stories. The goal of this program is to get the youth the support and attention they need so that they can establish stability in housing and connect them to needed critical supports, such as medical care and counseling.

Last year Gloria* came to YES after safety issues in her family led to housing insecurity. After arriving at YES, the staff provided her with the resources needed to help maintain a sense of stability. This included a safe place to stay which led to continued attendance in high school. Due to the vigilant work of the RHY staff and our partners at the Department of Human Services, Gloria was able to reconnect with her father and return to his home after staying at YES for a month. Thanks to YSI's integrated programs, Gloria and her father received Family Empowerment Services in their home to support the transition process.

In addition to being reconnected with her father, YES was able to help Gloria get into the local YMCA's Y Achievers program, which helps "youth set and pursue high educational and career goals, resulting in graduation and acceptance to an institution of higher learning." Through the Y Achievers, Gloria was able to take part in the program's Global Service Learning Experience Ambassador trip to Haiti.

Today, Gloria is a senior in high school where she is maintaining good grades as well as serving as an intern at the Juvenile Law Center's Office. Upon graduation, she plans to continue her education and work to help the well-being of young children whose shoes she once was in.



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TEEN SUCCESS

The room is buzzing with excitement; it's Wednesday afternoon and the mothers from the Teen Success program are gearing up for their weekly group meeting. Teen Success serves as a support group and safe place for young mothers to share their experiences and set and achieve goals that will lead to stability.

Co-facilitator, Yasmeeen Davis, was a teen mother herself and understands the difficulties that these young women face each day. Davis is willing to be vulnerable and share the challenges she once faced as a teen mother.

One of the teen mothers, Monica*, says she looks forward to coming to group every week. "It's the only place I don't feel judged. There is such a strong stigma put on you as a teen parent and no one else really knows what that's like." The other mothers agree with her sentiments, making the point that the stigma can be difficult to escape, even with their own families.

In order to motivate the mothers to attend group every week they have systems in place that promote participation. Davis and her co-facilitator, Kisha Gadsden, have developed multiple strategies, including a "Mom of the Month" and "Teen Success Bucks" program that reinforce positive behavior. For each session the young mothers attend on time, and for each helpful piece of advice contributed, they are awarded points. If they rack up enough points, the young mothers can cash them in for real items like diapers, baby lotion, and soap. In addition to the points, the teens who come on time every week receive a \$10 stipend and after they attend

25 sessions they receive a \$100 bonus. By creating a place where constructive behavior is supported, the program has grown substantially over the past year and attendance is at an all-time high.

"It's important to have that support from your peers," Davis says. "People often focus on what's wrong. At group meetings, we make it a point to empower each other. Even if it's only a few hours each week, you know you can count on someone here to build you up."



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Gwendolyn A. Bailey
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(Retired June 2018)

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Erica Makowski, *Director*
Family Based
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YSI PROGRAMS

- Youth Emergency Service
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Program
- Time Limited Family Reunification
- Baring House Crisis Nursery
- Parenting Collaborative
- Family Empowerment Service
- Truancy Intervention and Prevention Service
- Housing for Youth Collaborative
- Teen Success





YSI Central Office

410 N. 34th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-222-3262
Fax: 215-222-2352
Website: www.ysiphila.org
Email: gbailey@ysiphila.org

Crittenton Family Support Center

6325 Burbridge Street
Philadelphia, PA 19144
215-848-6200
Fax: 215-842-0417
Email: emakowski@ysiphila.org

Youth Emergency Service

1526 Fairmount Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19130
215-787-0633
Fax: 215-787-0152
Email: tmassaquoi@ysiphila.org

Baring House

3401 Baring Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-386-0251
Fax: 215-222-2352
Email: lrinehart@ysiphila.org

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