



# YOUTH

## HOMELESSNESS

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

## AGENDA

**Today's Goals:**

**Build  
Awareness**

**Ask for  
Your Ideas**

**Stories and statistics**

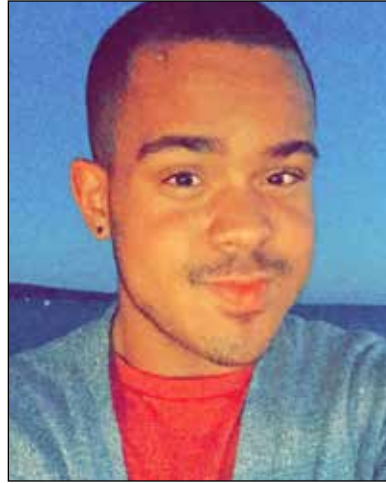
**What local youth tell us**

**Request for Innovation (RFI)**

**How you can help**

## STORIES AND STATISTICS

**“I always had the idea that this was something that would benefit me; I never had a negative view of foster care.”**



**David, age 24**

David was given up by his birth mother at the hospital shortly after birth; his father adopted him along with seven other children. Living in Ft. Lauderdale Florida, he was placed in foster care at age 13 after a house fire left the family homeless.

The family eventually was reunited and moved to Michigan. After his adoptive father passed away, he continued living with an extended family member until DHHS deemed the housing situation unfit. He was placed again in foster care until he aged out of the system on his 21st birthday.

At this point he started college, which provided him with housing. After dropping out and moving to Georgia with friends to try and make a new start, he's currently back in Traverse City and living with a friend.

Working multiple jobs, David plans to begin his college career again in 2017 with the University of Phoenix.

SOURCE: HMIS\*

GRAND TRAVERSE FIVE-COUNTY REGION

# 203

## unaccompanied\*\* homeless youth AGES 11-24

*“Our parents tell us we are 18 and now adults, but they don’t teach us how to [be adults].”*

**Female 114**

**Male 78**

**Unidentified 1**

Age	% of total	Total #
11-14	8.3%	17
15-17	36.6%	75
18-20	34.6%	71
21-24	20.5%	42

**\*The Homeless Management Information System** is a data management system used only by the following local housing agencies: Goodwill, NMCAA, and Third Level. We know the numbers included here are an underestimate of those at-risk

for homelessness because many of these youth are not working with one of these three agencies.

**\*\*Unaccompanied youth** refers to those youth not currently living with a parent or guardian. They may be homeless or doubled up.

SOURCE: HMIS

**Six** are young parents

**28%** have disabling conditions

**44%** Victims/Survivors of Domestic Violence (22% last three months)

**14%** have been on the street/homeless for over 12 months

**16%** have experienced homelessness 4 or more times in the past 3 years.

**45%** staying with family, friends

**36%** shelter or subsidized situation

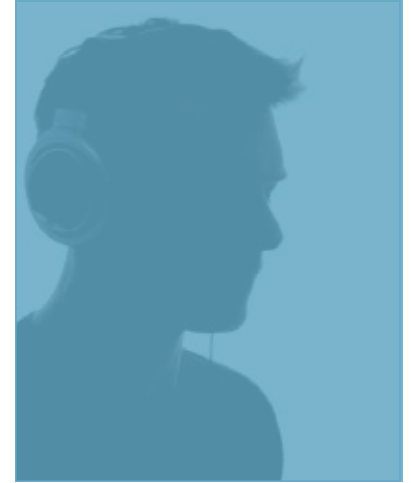
**4.5%** detention, psychiatric hospital, halfway house

**95** youth (ages 11-24) are living in homeless situations with a parent (in addition to the 203 unaccompanied youth)

**11.5% staying in a place not meant for habitation**

## STORIES AND STATISTICS

**“Since 2006 at age 9,  
I have moved 34 times.  
I hope to not be  
homeless as an adult.  
I hope to have a typical  
American lifestyle.”**



**Name withheld, age 21**

I was 7 years old when my parents separated. When they divorced, the judge ordered me to stay with my mom, but she left to live somewhere else. Against court orders, I lived with my dad, who was especially abusive when he was high or drunk. I continued to live with him until age 13, but not alone: along with biological siblings, step-siblings and others that my mother had taken in, there were 10 of us in all. I've come to think of them as my family.

During the school year we were allowed to live in my Dad's home, but during summers we were left to fend for ourselves. I usually lived under the Jefferson Bridge and panhandled at Comerica Park in order to survive. I lived off of the kindness of strangers.

From the ages of 13-16, I couch-surfed because it was better than staying with my dad. Before my 16th birthday, I hitchhiked to Kalkaska to stay with my uncle, who offered to house me. He ended up locking me in his garage for two months - he would feed me through the mail slot. I had a patio chair to sleep on, food, roof over my head, and TV so it wasn't the worst situation I had lived in. Eventually I moved into Pete's Place, a youth shelter, on my own.

Even though I rarely attended school from 6th -9th grades, I was pushed through. I have started taking online classes and attend the Career Tech center, where I study electrical occupations. I continue to work throughout summers and the school year, and have been offered electrical employment once I graduate from high school.

SOURCE: MCKINNEY-VENTO

# Northwest Michigan STEP

Students in Transition Empowerment Program

# 485

## homeless or at-risk youth

between the ages of 14 and 20 in 20 public school districts in the 5-county area (2015-16 school year).

*“[We need] an onsite area with a place to do homework, get tutoring, and a place to better oneself.”*

### Defining Homeless

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” The act provides examples of children who would fall under this definition:

- Children and youth sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason
- Children and youth living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations
- Children and youth living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Children and youth abandoned in hospitals
- Children and youth whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc)
- Children and youth living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations
- Migratory children and youth living in any of the above situations

## STORIES AND STATISTICS

**“At 18 years old, I was  
out of school, a single  
mother and homeless  
once again.”**

**Denise, age 18**



Denise has experienced homelessness since she was 15 years old, when she became pregnant. Her mother would no longer let Denise live with her, telling her to “go and live with the father of her baby.” Denise moved in with the father of her baby and his family, but the housing situation was extremely crowded and stressful for Denise and her daughter.

At age 16, Denise and her daughter’s father broke up, leaving her homeless. She briefly moved back in with her mother and her mother’s new family, but they argued frequently and she had to leave. The father of Denise’s daughter was no longer an option, since he was living with a new girlfriend having had a child of their own.

Because Denise never knew her biological father, she went to live with her mother’s ex-husband and his children. He promised to give her a place to stay if she’d watch his children. After being in high school all day, she would watch three children in the evenings. Before long, her daughter’s day care fell through and she could no longer work toward her high school graduation. Her ex-step father then got remarried and his wife no longer wanted Denise to live in their home.

She currently lives with a friend’s family close to a bus line in Kalkaska county. She has no driver’s license, diploma or GED, employment or housing options, even though these are goals she’s tried many times to accomplish for herself and her daughter.



## MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

### Pregnant and Parenting Teens:

Though we don't have statistics locally for the number of homeless that are pregnant, there is a lot of national data on this issue.

- **About 50% of girls living on the street have been pregnant,** whereas less than 10% of housed girls have been pregnant.
- Most unaccompanied youth are sexually active, and **many practice "survival sex,"** the exchange of sex for food, clothing and shelter.
- Some teens get pregnant while homeless, while others become homeless because of their pregnancy. **Their parents evict them from the home** due to the pregnancy.

(Source: [https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/luuseBrief\\_Pregnancy-and-Parenting-2007\\_2010ish.pdf](https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/luuseBrief_Pregnancy-and-Parenting-2007_2010ish.pdf))

### Teen Births locally:

- **In 2015, there were 71 births to girls (ages 15-19) in the 5-county area.** We do not know how many of these were homeless.
- **Benzie and Kalkaska counties** have the highest teen birth rates in the area.
- In our local online survey, two teen parents reported getting kicked out of their home when they became pregnant.

### LGBTQ Youth:

- National research shows that between **20-40% of homeless youth** identify as LGBTQ.
- One study reports that **26% were kicked out of their home** when they came out.
- In our local online survey, **5% reported having family conflicts** around gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

### Youth in Foster Care:

- **Nationally, approx. 12-36% of youth ages 18-21** exiting the foster care system become homeless.

Source: [http://www.thetaskforce.org/static\\_html/downloads/HomelessYouth.pdf](http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/HomelessYouth.pdf)

## WHAT LOCAL YOUTH TELL US

# Homeless Youth Initiative Online Survey

The Homeless Youth Initiative developed and administered an online survey for youth, conducted between June-November of 2016 in the 5 county area.

This survey was conducted in June-November 2016 of youth (ages 14-24) in the following counties: Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau. This survey was targeted to youth that were currently experiencing homelessness, or at-risk of homelessness. A total of 15 questions were asked, covering topics ranging from their current housing situation, to what led them to unstable housing, and what type of housing they would consider utilizing if available.

A total of 119 youth took this survey- the majority of them were from Grand Traverse and Benzie counties (Grand Traverse- 60%, Benzie-23%, Kalkaska- 4%, Leelanau- 4%, Antrim- 1%). Respondents ages were widely distributed (13% were 15 or younger, 36% were 16-17, 39% were 18-21, and 13% were 22-24). There were more females than males taking the survey (58% female, 40 male, and 2% unidentified). Most respondents were in school (59% were in high school, 17% were in college, 13% graduated high school, and 11% dropped out of high school).

SOURCE: HYI ONLINE SURVEY

**Q: If you needed a place to live, what type of housing would you prefer moving into?**

	<18	18-24
My own subsidized apartment	93%	95%
Shared apartment w/young adults	86%	67%
Host home type setting	62%	68%
My parent, if their situation changed	62%	54%
Supervised group house	66%	37%
Shared teen parent housing (for parents)	38%	43%
Group shelter for youth	23%	19%

*“A group setting because teenagers aren’t responsible and can’t have their own place”*

**Q: If you moved into a group housing situation for young adults, what would be important to you?**

	<18	18-24
Access to phone	91%	93%
Friends allowed to spend night	73%	77%
Access to a computer	73%	70%
Access to public transportation	66%	70%
Pet allowed to stay	68%	61%
Services on-site	39%	58%
Drugs/alcohol <b>not allowed</b>	34%	61%
Smoking <b>not allowed</b>	39%	49%
Gender separation in sleeping areas	9%	32%
Adult supervision	11%	18%
Curfew	4%	9%

*“I would want to share with a friend.”*

**SOURCE: HYI ONLINE SURVEY**

**Q: What types of services would you need to live without a parent/guardian?**

	<18	18-24
Money management	62%	87%
Medical Care (incl. birth control)	62%	81%
Access to transportation	65%	70%
Access to clothing, food, etc.	60%	74%
Employment assistance	63%	69%
Tutoring	67%	59%
Cooking/housekeeping instruction	50%	67%
Mental Health Counseling	46%	69%
Legal Help	29%	50%
Support Groups (LGBTQ, AA, peers)	25%	37%

*“A special hotel-like setting that had counseling on site, supports and a game room.”*

**Q. In the past year, where have you lived:**

	<18	18-24
Couch surfing with a friend/relative	18%	24%
Tent or camper	20%	11%
In a car, abandoned building, or a public building (library, school, etc...)	7%	9%
Shelter (Goodwill Inn or Pete’s Place)	7%	7%
Outside without a shelter	5%	5%
Host home	4%	5%

*“Until you graduate, you don’t realize how REAL the real world is!”*

## SOURCE: HYI ONLINE SURVEY

### Q: Your housing situation: have you ever ...

	<18	18-24
Lived apart from family/unstable housing?	48%	56%
Been kicked out?	48%	55%
Had no permanent address?	41%	62%
Considered yourself homeless?	43%	51%
Run away?	39%	42%

*“Most of the time it’s not [our] choice.”*

### Q: How old were you the first time you lived without a parent or guardian?

	<18	18-24
Under 12	4%	7%
13-14	20%	7%
15-16	13%	25%
17-18	2%	29%
19 or older	-	11%

*“17-year-olds end up staying with 30 year olds”*

**SOURCE: HYI ONLINE SURVEY**

**Q: Which of these situations apply to you?**

	<18	18-24
I use alcohol/drugs to cope	77%	29%
Family conflicts: religious/cultural	46%	50%
Family conflicts: gender/sexual orientation	23%	21%
Violence between family members	8%	29%
My family's house is too crowded for me	5%	16%
My family's house is unsafe	7%	14%
My family lost their housing	2%	12%
My parent is an addict, so I left	9%	2%

*“I sleep at my sister’s house when my dad kicks me out. She has a boyfriend and children and there’s no room for me.”*

**Q: How many places have you lived in the past year?**

Places	Respondents
1	9
2	7
3	9
4	4
5	4
6	1
8	1

*“[We] couch hop.” “Sleep bed to bed.” “house to house.”  
“Couches or floors of a friend’s house.”*

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

# How You Can Help

**Share with us the people in your community that think outside-the-box, work with youth, might want to get involved, and/or are visionaries.**

**Think about what you would like to see in your community to help youth experiencing homelessness. What great ideas (small or large) should we consider? Submit a Request for Innovation to the YHDP project.**

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Rotary Charities of Traverse City has provided generous support in launching the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project.

Community partners include: area youth, Goodwill, NMCAA, STEP, Child and Family Services, DHHS, Northwest Michigan Continuum of Care, and numerous volunteers.

**For additional information, contact:**

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