



YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAM

PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE

Vic, age 18, was kicked out of the house by his parents because of his drug use. Vic had been sleeping in the “jungle” an area of town where homeless people camp out. When it became too cold for him, Vic learned from friends that Youth Outreach could help him find a safe place to stay. Staff referred Vic to DSS but he was denied services because his parents lied that he could come home. Staff made several calls on Vic’s behalf to DSS and Vic was eventually provided services, including access to the shelter. Unfortunately, Vic is very typical of the young people who enter Youth Outreach. 86% of our participants are runaway/throwaway youth. Throwaway is such a devastating label to use to describe the youth we serve. These young people are anything but something to throw away. They are in fact, strong, resilient young people with much to offer. Though they approach us with distrust, they are eager to make a connection with a caring, positive adult. They want to live a life that is stable and “normal.” They want to learn new ways to behave, new skills, and they want to create a life that they can feel proud of.

This year, over 871 YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OUR SERVICES, 718 RECEIVED OUTREACH SERVICES AND 153 WORKED IN OUR GENERAL PROGRAM. Noticing that a friend has money to buy food, lives in a decent place, and has plans often moves a young person to re-examine her own life and become motivated to make change. Over 75% of the young people who work in our program have heard about us through other youth that have used our services. Despite the overwhelming picture youth like Vic presents, our participants can and do overcome their life circumstances. Using the resources of Youth Outreach, these young people build healthy, productive, and self-sufficient lives. Stable housing, an education, and a decent job are the building blocks towards self-sufficiency. Fast forward these youths’ lives and see what they have done with some help from Youth Outreach and the community—

“Thanks for being my voice.”

Vic, age 18 to staff after they interceded on Vic’s behalf to gain access to the shelter



Youth Outreach participant shows staff where he was living in an area of town called, “the jungle.” Staff assisted the young person in securing warm, safe shelter.

Youth Served in 2010

Total	871 youth
	718 outreach (duplicated)
	153 general program
General Program:	
Age:	16 - 20: 84
	21 - 25: 69
Gender:	55% female
	45% male
Single youth:	112
Youth with children:	37

OUR RESULTS IN 2010

- Youth Outreach served 871 youth and young adults.
- 718 participants received outreach services (duplicated count).
- 153 participants received General Independent Living Program

100% of youth were homeless upon program admission.

At discharge or by year's end, the following milestones were achieved:

Housing

83% of youth secured housing.

31 youth were served in our Housing Scholarship Program. 14 youth had safe exits, 2 had unsafe exits and 15 are currently participating.

77% of youth with a prior history of eviction, avoided further eviction.

86 participants were eligible for Section 8 housing vouchers but avoided using them. With staff help, youth located other safe housing options that they could afford and did not use this benefit.

Education

94% of participants worked on educational goals.

The drop out rate fell by 14%, from 42% at admission to 28% at year end.

11 participants earned their GED's or high school diplomas.

21 participants were enrolled in post secondary school.

Employment

93% of participants worked on employment skills.

The unemployment rate fell by 32%, from 65% at admission to 33%.

33 participants worked in paid apprenticeships with community mentors, learning job skills that lead to employment.

Increasing Healthy Behaviors

75% of participants with substance/alcohol abuse issues, decreased use in terms of frequency of use and/or the intensity of the drugs used.

76% of delinquent participants decreased involvement with people participating in criminal activity.

Self-Sufficiency

44 participants became self-supporting.

29 youth transitioned off of Public Assistance and avoided using benefits.



Participation in our Housing Scholarship Program (HSP) has paid off for the young woman, pictured above, and our community. Using her time in the HSP to improve employment skills and save money, she now has a full time job with benefits and has moved out of the HSP into an apartment she can afford herself. Here this HSP grad receives a check from her HSP savings from Executive Director, Dale Schumacher.

AN ESTIMATED \$575,544 PUBLIC DOLLARS HAVE BEEN SAVED by assisting youth to find safe alternatives to a Section 8 voucher. (Assumes youths' subsidies were reduced by one year.)



Self-sufficiency is a major goal of Youth Outreach and as such, job training is critical. YO staff placed the apprentice pictured above, Cal, in the physical therapy department of a local nursing home. Cal did a great job at his apprenticeship leading his mentor to recommend him for a regular staff position. Cal is now an employee at the facility with full benefits.

AN ESTIMATED \$130,440 PUBLIC DOLLARS HAVE BEEN SAVED if one assumes that the young people who transitioned off public assistance avoided using youth's benefits for one year.



Stable Housing — a key to self-sufficiency

“I would like [community leaders] to understand that it is really impossible to finance living on your own and accomplishing any sort of goal such as going to school.” The participants in Youth Outreach, like the youth just quoted, and the almost 500 homeless youth who struggle daily to subsist in Ithaca, need and deserve the chance to move out of crisis, chaos, and poverty. Youth Outreach’s existing program services of daily staff support and independent living skills training, delivered in both a non-residential model, and in the recently established transitional living residential model — our Housing Scholarship Program — are a powerful combination. Youth Outreach services and supports, combined with scattered-site apartments paid for by the Learning Web, allow these youth to better focus their energies on setting goals, working on education and employment, and moving towards self-sufficiency. Without these services, progress is much slower and only the most resilient youth will move out of poverty.

The Housing Scholarship Program (HSP)— the residential model

Young people will overcome incredible odds when given support and resources. Some residents who have used our program support and who are beating the odds and who were proud to “graduate” from the HSP this year include:

- 9 months pregnant and evicted from her apartment, Carrie was scared and alone. Having moved from Rochester 2 years ago, she had met a man who is now the father of her child. He already has a child and told Carrie he wanted nothing to do with her child. When YO staff met Carrie, she had just rented an apartment because the first month’s rent was free. She knew she couldn’t afford the rent but felt she had no options. She told staff her baby was due in 2 weeks and she was homeless. We were able to accept her into our HSP and she moved in the day before her baby arrived. A year later, Carrie’s job and a Section 8 voucher allowed her to move out of the HSP and into her own place with her child. Daycare and her job are nearby and stores are a convenient distance from her apartment. The quote at right, illustrates the impact of the HSP--Carrie was able to get ahead of her expenses and can now live within her budget. She is now being trained as a manager at her job.

“ I’m glad that I did save some money, it will come in handy now that I am moving into my new apartment. I can use it to help pay my portion of the rent and my moving costs.”
Carrie, age 19
- Josie, age 19, was also pregnant when arriving at YO’s doors. She was a “throwaway” youth and had no place she could stay though she was 7 months pregnant. Staff worked with her to piece together short term housing with a friend until a spot opened up in the HSP. Luckily there was an opening 1 week before Josie’s due date. She moved in and within 2 days, delivered a healthy baby. She also learned how to care for a baby and create a home while in the HSP. After 10 months in the HSP, her Section 8 was approved. After a long search, she and her case manager found Josie a 2 bedroom apartment. Mom and baby are thriving in their new home.
- Laura was 20 when she turned to Youth Outreach. She had been living in a car after leaving her parents’ home. They refused to give her any financial support after she did poorly in her first semester of college and there was serious conflict between Laura and her parents. She had lived in 5 different places over the course of the year she’d been on her own and was discouraged and said she felt “beaten down.” She had lost self-confidence, especially around the issue of returning to college. Laura applied for entrance into the HSP and was accepted. Staff has also supported her in trying to repair her relationship with her parents, and though Laura has tried hard and has proven that she has met school and life responsibilities, her parents still reject her. Laura continues to maintain her part time job at a local retail store and is attending community college full time. She earned a 3.70 grade point average last semester and is doing even better this semester. Her goal is to transfer to a four year college after she earns her 2 year degree and major in sociology. Laura “graduated” from the HSP in April as she has decided to move in with her boyfriend and his Dad. She has been very thoughtful about this decision and it appears to be a positive move. She continues to receive services through our non-residential program with a focus on supporting her in her job, education, and family relationships.

“I am a full time student with a 3.75 GPA and work no less than 20 hours per week and my parents still refuse to help me out and acknowledge my accomplishments. I know that I’ve made poor decisions in the past but I’m trying now and they just refuse to see it.”
Laura, age 20

Current HSP residents are using the opportunity to work towards stability including:

- Maria, age 19, who arrived at Youth Outreach new to Ithaca, homeless and unemployed, with 2 young children. She has since secured a full time job, arranged childcare for her children, and has created a home for herself and her family. She intends to return to community college to earn her AA degree and improve her employment prospects.
- Fiona, age 20, had unrealistic expectations of others and a sense of entitlement. With staff support she is now taking responsibility for her behaviors, attending school, maintaining her apartment, and contributing to her savings plan.
- Kyle, age 18, changed his name because his family has such a bad reputation in town. He wants a different life and is using his time in the TLP to work towards his goals. He is now attending school full time so that he earns his high school diploma. Once he has his diploma he will enter the Marine Corp.

These accomplishments reflect the goals of the HSP. The HSP gives homeless young people the chance to move up and break out of the cycle of poverty and provides stable housing and supportive services. Once graduated from the HSP, youth often continue receiving support through our non-residential independent living program.

New residents are given an orientation workshop that reviews the rights and responsibilities of the resident and of the Learning Web and landlord. Information discussed ranges from how to assemble belongings and plan for move in, to how to handle garbage and develop positive relationships with neighbors.

31 young people entered the HSP this year. 16 exited the program, 14 with safe exits and 2 with unsafe exits. 15 youth are currently residing in the HSP.

Non Residential Housing Support

Gina had received services from YO on and off for 3 years. She was homeless during much of that time, with little interest in doing what was necessary to maintain decent housing. Last January, Gina arrived at YO's doors, tired of the instability and pregnant. This time, she had the motivation to secure stable housing because she wanted to provide her baby with a good home. She complied with DSS and did all of the paperwork to secure a Section 8 voucher. Despite some setbacks including a break up with her unborn child's father, Gina has been steadfast in doing what needs to be done. She is now living in a very nice apartment, preparing for the imminent birth of her baby, and looking towards the future. Staff has assisted Gina with getting prenatal care, and arranging to get all of the equipment she'll need for the baby. During this time, Gina worked at an apprenticeship at a law office. The skills she acquired at the law office will help her secure a job when she is able to return to work after her baby is born.

Each quarter we have participants at various stages of developing self-sufficiency; youth who are anxious about where they will squat for the night, those excited about moving into their first apartment, those teetering on the brink of eviction, and those who have achieved stability and are working to upgrade their living situation. Some youth are satisfied to couch-surf, feeling like they don't want to spend the money on housing. Staff reflects back to them the costs of not having stable housing-- in terms of poor job prospects and the difficulty trying to work towards long term goals.

Living in a car, on acquaintances' floors, and with various boyfriends can be stressful and unhealthy. And in the winter homelessness poses special obstacles for our participants. The cold can be deadly for someone without shelter and it's no mystery why our young people are more concerned about where they'll sleep when the temperature is below freezing. Many of the youth turning to our program having rejected the shelters, further limiting their options. Often, staff can convince a youth to consider other options. In one such case, Carl and his friend Rome, both 19, had been drifting from place to place, sometimes staying on someone's floor and occasionally tenting outside in the cold. After several meetings with the pair, staff convinced them that it would be easier to rent a room in a friend's house. Staff accompanied the two youth to a meeting to negotiate the rent and the living arrangement. It is often this first step into stability that leads young people to value stability and begin to create long term housing stability.



Coaching TLP youth on all aspects of independent living includes creating a pleasant home. Pictured above, YO staff and a resident work together to assemble a dining room table for the resident's new apartment.

“ I never know where I am going to stay, my boyfriend always finds us a place to stay, he's better at that than I am. . . but we never know where it will be. . . it makes it hard to find a job. ”
Vonda, age 20

Independent Living Program—Supports for Independence

In addition to helping youth secure stable housing, a major focus of work is increasing their ability to live independently. Completing one's education, finding and keeping employment, taking care of all the business related to keeping a home, interacting with a partner and the others in one's life is a challenge. YO staff encourage youth to develop and pursue goals in all of these areas and offer them the resources and support needed to reach those goals.

Education

19 year old Fiona will be the first in her family to graduate from high school—and will be the first to graduate from college. As a second semester freshman at the community college she earned a 3.5 GPA and plans to finish, transfer to a 4 year school and go to grad school for psychology. Fiona wants to create a satisfying and well-paying career and knows that education is the key.

94% of participants are working on their education. Eleven youth earned their high school diploma/GED and 21 participants were enrolled in community college. The drop out rate fell by 14%: from 42% at admission to 28% by discharge or year's end.

Staff encourage young people to pursue higher education as that is the surest way to become more employable. For many of our young people, this can be difficult. Youth who have dropped out of high school are resistant to reentering or studying for their GED. Their history of housing instability caused academic problems that present obstacles to being successful in post secondary studies. Staff help young people learn how to use the school's resources to achieve success. Hank, age 19, withdrew from community college in the fall after being sick and getting behind in classes. Since he withdrew late in the semester, he owed the school \$1200. Staff coached him through a process of requesting a waiver for the debt (which he did get approved), and a new financial aid application for spring semester. His financial aid was approved and he was placed on academic probation this semester. He has been attending regularly and at staff's suggestion, is getting extra help from the college's learning center. He is able to see an improvement in his grades and knows that getting the degree is a ticket to better job possibilities.

“Thanks for letting me use the computer to get my homework done, I didn't know where I was going to find a place with internet that I could sit down and get it done.”

Ana, computer lab user

Employment

Almost 29% of Tompkins County residents hold advanced educational degrees. That presents huge obstacles to our participants, the majority of whom are lucky if they have a high school diploma or GED.

As Ken said, at right, it is a vicious cycle when he can't get a job to earn the money that will allow him to return to school and improve his employability. Some young people are lucky enough to get a job but have difficulty keeping their job due to housing instability. This was the case with Brad who was employed full time at a restaurant. He was staying with various friends, couch surfing, because he couldn't afford the housing options available. He landed at a friend's apartment that was 15 miles from his job. With no car and no options for public transportation, he was in jeopardy of losing his job. Staff coached Brad to speak to his boss about his situation. His boss told Brad that he was a great employee and he understood Brad's predicament and need to make money. The boss arranged for one of his delivery staff to pick Brad up and drop him off at home after the restaurant closed at 3AM. Brad's reaction said it all, “This was such a relief, now I can keep working full time and save money to get my car fixed.”

Supporting participants like Ken and Brad as they enter the work world is critical. Providing transportation to interviews, arranging for childcare, preparing youth for the application process, counseling and advising when problems come up are all services we offer to working participants.

“I have been searching for a job for the past 3 months and have been unsuccessful. Unless you have a college degree you can't get a job anywhere and I can't get a college degree without any money. Nothing makes any sense anymore.”

Ken, age 19

“I don't want to be a bum all of my life.”

Dave, age 20

93% of participants worked on building employment skills this year. With employment services and staff support, the unemployment rate dropped by 32%, from 65% of young people unemployed at admission to 33% of youth unemployed at year’s end or upon discharge. Good jobs equal financial independence. 44 participants became self-supporting this year and 29 young people transitioned off of public assistance.

Apprenticeships are an integral part of assisting youth in upgrading their employability skills and becoming more competitive. We help young people prepare for a job search by offering paid apprenticeships. This year, 45 apprenticeship placements were arranged for participants.

Apprenticeships are geared to the developmental levels of our participants—from first-time workers to the chronically unemployed, to those who have been stable but underemployed. Clarifying skills, interests, and goals and developing a solid work ethic is essential to long term employability.

Assisting youth like Paul, age 20, to secure a job is a central aspect of Youth Outreach’s work. Paul came to YO with little work experience. During his participation in YO, he has experienced success and failure and has truly learned from his mistakes. He had successful apprenticeships at two apprenticeships where he improved his employability skills. The first apprenticeship was at a local nursing home where he developed skills including punctuality and accepting feedback and meeting his employer’s expectations. A second apprenticeship at a law office helped him develop office administration skills and good follow through. He was hired following his apprenticeship and worked there for 7 months before deciding that he wanted a full time job and better pay. He conducted a job search while still employed at the law office and ended the job well after accepting an offer at a restaurant. Paul has demonstrated maturity, responsibility and effective decision making as evidenced by both his ability to transition from one job to the next without interruption and his ability to remain employed for almost a year.

Apprenticeship Sites 2010
45 youth apprenticed in areas such as:
Cosmetology
Sound / music production
Legal assisting
Early childhood education
Clerical
Veterinary medicine
Bike repair
Arts & Theater
Academic research
Biodiesel manufacturing
Auto mechanics
Youth Recreation
Nurse Assisting

“I love my apprenticeship and the people are really cool. I know I could do this job, I wish they would hire me but I know I need my degree first.”
 Kayleigh, age 19



Building skills related to the construction trades was the goal of this apprentice, pictured with his mentor, building a new fence last summer at Significant Elements, a restoration and reuse organization. County summer employment monies were drastically cut last summer, limiting job opportunities for a large segment of our community’s most needy youth. We were fortunate to receive additional grant monies to support summer job stipends for young people in Youth Outreach and in our Life Skills Program for youth in family foster care. This young man was one of the young people who benefited from the additional summer job funds. The skills he learned at his apprenticeship led him to be hired by a roofer this fall!

Weaving a Tapestry of Skills— Supports for Youth Development

Youth Outreach participants reflect a very diverse population in terms of demographics and in terms of the aptitudes and skills they possess. All of our participants face a complex set of problems that must be addressed if they are to move from a life marked by crisis and chaos to one of stability and productivity. It isn't a quick fix. Young people and Youth Outreach staff must both be persistent and committed to break the patterns that have spanned generations.

The following table illustrates the barriers facing the youth who participated in our program this year.

Problem	Percentage of Participants	Problem	Percentage of Participants
Homelessness	100%	Pregnant / parenting	30%
Conflict w/ parent(s) or Parental Figure	96%	Health issues	29%
Employment related issues	91%	Serious mental health	16%
Education related issues	86%	Dual diagnosis / MH & Substance abuse	19%
Abuse / Neglect	77%	Sexual abuse-perpetrator or victim	12%
Substance / alcohol abuse	39%	Sexual issues	19%
Family Planning	71%	Suicidal	7%
Delinquency /criminal activity	33%	Gang violence	2%

Homeless youth are in a unique “double bind.” Regardless of whether or not they have been living on their own for years, they are youth—chronologically as well as developmentally. Unlike their chronological peers, who attend school regularly and have a stable home, they do not have access to the kinds of youth development activities that functional families, schools, or youth development programs offer adolescents to develop the emotional, cognitive, social, workplace, and moral skills necessary to live successful adult lives. Youth Outreach provided a strong youth development program last year, that allowed for a flexible mix of interventions and activities:

- **32 YOUTH ATTENDED “DINNER CLUB”** and independent living workshops increasing their ability to maintain housing, building the skills necessary to preserve good landlord-tenant and house mate relations and improve general independent living skills. Workshops also provides a chance for participants to socialize in a positive healthy manner.
- **7 YOUTH ATTENDED WOMEN’S GROUP** led by female staff exploring issues defined by the group such as relationships, career development and exploring interests and skills
- **78 YOUTH ENGAGED IN STAFF SUPERVISED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES** for program youth and their families including picnics, sports, and movies.
- **14 FEMALE AND MALE PARENTS ATTENDED SMALL GROUP PARENTING WORKSHOPS** led by YO staff. Topics include ages and stages, age-appropriate play, encouragement, self-control, choices, and respecting feelings.



The Dinner Club host, a Housing Scholarship resident, who graduated recently, shops for the ingredients she will use to prepare a meal for staff and other youth guests. Her cooking skills impressed those who attended.



Parenting Training series graduate (center) is joined by YO staff parenting instructors, Rick Alvord and Mona Smiley. Participants are proud of earning the Certificate of Completion and of the skills they learn in the series.

- **43 YOUTH ENGAGED IN CIVIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES;** Giving of yourself to the community is an important concept, especially for youth who are often on the receiving end of service. Youth Outreach staff developed several opportunities for participants to give back to their community including attending focus groups that Cornell University researchers from the Family Life Development Center facilitated that gathered data regarding youth preventive health practices for the NYS Health Dept. A group of men-only and another group of women-only met with researchers and shared their thoughts on nutrition/diet, sleep, exercise, habits (including poor health habits like smoking), and safe sex. YO youth also helped local chefs who were setting up for a charity event that raised funds for local hunger relief programs. The group of young men and women moved all kinds of food service equipment into the venue where the event was held.
- **23 YOUTH PARTICIPATED IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES** through our collaboration with Family & Children’s Service (F&CS), the County Mental health Clinic and private therapists; parents and children used early intervention services, individuals and couples therapy. Small groups of young people attended workshops learning stress reduction techniques that they could apply to everyday living.
- **144 YOUTH UTILIZED OUR ON-SITE COMPUTER LEARNING LAB.** From writing term papers to scanning pictures of a baby for transfer onto a t-shirt, the Computer Lab serves a multitude of purposes. It links people together, educates, provides an artistic outlet, and helps young people develop valuable work skills.



Offering service at this year’s Taste of the Nation fund raiser was enjoyed by the young people. They had fun meeting the guest chefs and being a part of the event.



Here a lab workshop participant shows his pride after creating and executing an intricate t-shirt design.

Working Together to Provide Quality Services

Referrals to needed services are critical to assisting youth in living independently. We believe that the more positive adults involved in a youth’s life, the better. Staff make every attempt to coordinate and collaborate with other formal service providers and any informal networks with which a youth may be connected.

Just offering referral information to a young person is not enough---staff must facilitate a personal connection between the youth and the referral source. YO acts as a mentor for participants, advocating for them and teaching them to be their own advocates. Emphasis is placed on helping youth understand the requirements of DSS and other public anti-poverty programs and helping young people meet those requirements. From food stamps to WIC to childcare subsidies and public assistance grants, staff accompany young people through the often confusing government entitlement systems. When receiving a referral from another provider, we ask the referrer to avoid just giving us a name and phone number. Instead, a three-way meeting is set up with the referrer, the youth, and Youth Outreach staff. Some examples of service coordination that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our program include:

- Clare, age 19, had been evicted from the apartment she was renting with her boyfriend. Shortly after the eviction notice was served, Clare’s boyfriend was arrested when a neighbor called the police after hearing him beating Clare. Staff referred Clare to the Advocacy Center (AC) and is working closely with AC staff and Clare. Staff has also helped Clare apply for Section 8 at TC Action. While YO staff help her to find housing and another job (she called into her job after being beaten and she was fired. She was too embarrassed to tell her boss why she couldn’t go to work), the AC staff are supporting her around the domestic violence issues.
- Greg, age 19, was released from drug rehab and had nowhere to live. He arrived at YO, motivated to make a change and wanted help. He needed to meet the mandates of his release including completing Drug Court. Staff referred him to Workforce for employment, DSS for public assistance, counseling at the Mental Health Clinic, and TC3 to continue his education. Staff attended meetings with Sean, making sure that everyone was on the same page in terms of who was responsible for what and assuring that Sean understood his obligations. With such a complex array of service providers involved with a youth, it is critical for the YO staff to coordinate and collaborate with other providers. Greg graduated from Drug Court, is attending TC3 and is working. He was also accepted into the Housing Scholarship Program..

Activities & Services Provided & Referred to Participants this Year

Activity	Provided	Referred	Activity	Provided	Referred
Basic needs	100%	55%	Family Work	15%	14%
Housing Services	100%	84%	Women's Support Group	5%	---
Case Management	99%	46%	Mental Health Svce - onsite	20%	---
Independent Living Skills	100%	25%	Employment related	93%	84%
Life Skills Workshops	21%	---	Working Participant Support	35%	---
General Health Care	----	54%	Education	94%	72%
HIV/AIDS related	64%	49%	Legal	19%	15%
Substance abuse related	39%	18%	Recreation	59%	---
Counseling	93%	39%	Computer Learning Lab	94%	---
Transitional Living Housing	20%	11%	Youth Development Activities	67%	---
Parenting Workshops	24%	-----	Civic Participation Activities	28%	---

Taking a Good Look at Ourselves – Program Evaluation

Programs are only as valuable as they are useful to the people they serve. Ours are no different. We take seriously our commitment to evaluate all of our programs and services and the staff who work for our agency.

100 PERCENT of program objectives were achieved this year.

83 PERCENT of homeless youth secured safe housing alternatives to involvement in the streets.

62 PERCENT of youth secured and maintained safe, stable housing for 6 to 18 months and transitioned responsibly from one housing situation to another.

65 PERCENT of youth understood and valued the relationship between education and future employment and worked toward educational goals.

71 PERCENT of youth significantly increased their employment skills.

65 PERCENT demonstrated the ability to determine personal financial resources and responsibilities and met all personal financial responsibilities

72 PERCENT of youth demonstrated increased ability to follow healthy self-care routines.

69 PERCENT of youth developed a future orientation with a personal agenda and goals and learned skills to decrease the level of crisis in their lives.

29 PERCENT of youth were self-supporting.

In addition to the outcomes above, Housing Scholarship Program residents also met the following outcomes:

100% of HSP youth did not enter the law enforcement, child welfare, or juvenile justice systems.

88% of HSP youth obtained health insurance coverage.

85% of HSP youth decreased the time they were involved in street life.

Though this is an important measure of program and agency performance, it is only one piece of the picture. We look to our most important stakeholders: youth participants, agency staff, and the community adults who volunteer their time to work with our young people for feedback about the quality and relevance of our services and the performance of our staff. In the Youth Outreach program, we do not send parent evaluations out as most young people are alienated from their parents and do not want staff to contact a parent. We gather regular feedback about the apprenticeship services through the use of apprenticeship evaluation forms. We were very pleased with the feedback we received from apprenticeship evaluations this past year. Despite the fact that some apprentices have a difficult time fulfilling the goals of an apprenticeship, many apprentices were able to make a commitment, and their mentors' evaluations reflected satisfaction with the program and staff in almost all cases: 80 PERCENT of apprentice evaluations indicated that the youth met or exceeded their apprenticeship goals and were provided information about career options in the field of interest they explored. 87 PERCENT of mentor evaluations indicated that apprenticeship goals were met or exceeded and that their apprentice increased or significantly increased her/his knowledge of the duties, responsibilities, training, and qualifications of the career field explored.

Anecdotal evidence about the general program indicates that participants value the staff and services. Suggestions continue to revolve around increasing stipend rates and hours and wanting to spend more time with staff.

Anecdotal Comments from stakeholders reflect program satisfaction:

"Thank you for helping Fiona Grow up—she has a lot of growing up to do and your program has helped her on her way."

—Grandma of HSP resident

"This young lady has exceeded my expectations, she is really doing well. Your program is great for providing this opportunity to the youth of our community."

— Mentor of program participant.

"I want to thank you for giving me a chance to share my thoughts, nobody ever asks me about my ideas."

— Pat, age 20,
YO Health focus group participant

"This sounds like such a wonderful program for young people. Our community is so lucky to have people like you looking out for our young kids."

— BOCES teacher

"I am glad to see that there are programs in our community to help young people to learn life skills as well as job skills. . . Staff was there whenever I needed, great communication!"

—Mentor of program participant

"You guys are like family to me. You know more about me than my real family."

—Program participant, age 19

"It is the second time I have worked with this program. This was a great experience. Our apprentice really wanted to work with children. She grew with her experience and became a regularly employed substitute at the end of the program."

— Mentor of program participant

"[Mentoring] continues to feed my excitement at seeing an eager young women who want to learn and grow, come in and do their best. . . The staff are always open to suggestions, concerns, or questions."

— Mentor of program participant

"I'm glad my [caseworker] told me about this. I was getting scared I couldn't get someone to listen and be there for me, not just my baby."

— Program participant, age 20

"I couldn't forget you guys, you were the first ones to help me out!"

— Past program participant, age 21