

YSS Mission

We believe ourselves to be, first and foremost, a community of caring individuals who are drawn together by a shared sense of ministry to children & their families.

It is the purpose of this community to create environments, provide services, and to be totally available to children and their families whose legitimate needs demand effective responses.

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In their own words

By John Moses

If you want to know what young people think, ask them.

The things they think about may astound you or even frighten you. More challenging is to learn how they feel. Feelings often get choked, muffled, hidden away... too painful to give voice to.

Imagine you are this child in a wheelchair, learning how it feels to be disabled.

As you read this newsletter, imagine how you felt when you were 12, 15, 20 years old. What would it have been like to be away from your home? To be thrust into a new situation with strangers?

Think about what it might have



Cornhole toss from a wheelchair—Celebrate Youth 2011

been like if you were living at Helinski, a resident of the Northern Regional Juvenile Center, or facing adulthood without someone holding a net for you, in case you fall.

Now you are like the child in this picture being asked to put your-

self in a different position, in this case in a wheelchair, playing a simple game, but from a new perspective.

Instead of an act of imagination, young men and women face this reality daily.

Out of these circumstances comes words, thoughts, written down to express how that person feels, right now.

From these experiences comes the content you hold in your hands. Young men and women thinking about their lives and describing how they feel.

These poems, letters, essays are offered as they were received.

Here's what they say, in their own words. Please listen. Thanks.

What your help means

Youth Services System works with over 120 youth each day. From our child care center and after-school programs, to our home and community-based services including training and employment programs to our emergency shelters, Northern Regional Juvenile Center, Youth

Achievement Center, and our Transitional Living Programs, we work with toddlers to young adults.

Donations to YSS help us meet needs we find that go beyond our public funding sources. Your support is vital to our mission.

From graduation gowns and test fees, to more basic needs like clothing, food, and health care, we are grateful for your contributions.

Our youth deserve our best efforts, thank you for yours.

"I have a noticeable sparkle, Sometimes I say things that aren't so helpful "

Wheeling SleepOut,
Tracy White, Girl
Scout Troop 3019



"Ms. Linda's biggest message is that education is the key."

New Day

It's time to start over.
Start your life, like you found a four leaf clover
Get out of bed.
The worries start to fill your head.
Your feet hit the floor.
Life hits you like a slammed door.
Look in the mirror and wonder how.
Life is on your shoulders like a fat cow.
Hit the streets.
Find out that they are to quick for your little feet.
The new day is at it's end.
Now you feel like you found a brand new friend.

—Northern Regional Juvenile Center youth

Ice

I feel like ice, With a melting point...but hard to slice
Everything from my past has tainted my heart with frost, I try to hide that frown
Sometimes my emotions are unstable, Unhappy could be a label
They tell me to stay around, But when I go away, I'd rather not be found
I don't like to get warmed up to people, In that area I am feeble
I come out on the coldest nights, Knowing my intentions just aren't right
Its more than a notion, To block away emotion
I have a noticeable sparkle, Sometimes, I say things that aren't so helpful
I come back after melting, But my times still ticking
For me to disappear, though in a different form I'm still here
My heart can be cold as ice, But sometimes it melts... and yeah
I can be nice <3

—Northern Regional Juvenile Center youth

“ Still Hope for the future...”

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident at the Northern Regional Juvenile Center in Wheeling, West Virginia. I would just like to share with you what I have learned during my stay here. First of all I would like to start off by telling you that I have been here multiple times, but this time I have only been here for four months; so I am pretty close with all the staff and most of them have really good hearts and care about us a lot, they really love their job and come into work everyday in a good mood and to try and brighten our days as well. The biggest message that the counselors try to give us here is that there is still hope for the future. I love it that when I'm discouraged about something I can go up to pretty much any of the staff here and talk, because they are trustworthy. When I'm having a bad day or one of the other residents are provoking me I can usually talk to Mrs. Linda Scott whom is our facility director, and she always helps me find a safe resolution. Also I love having group with our counselors, because they come up fun and effective ways to deal with our problems. Usually, Ms. Ruth (one of our counselors) makes up different kinds of groups. Another thing that I like is, even though this is a very structured facility, staff understand that we are still only kids, who have made bad choices, and don't judge us. There is one more thing I would like to share with you, and that is about our educational program that we have here. Most of the kids who come in are behind in school and the teachers here help us in any way they can. They understand that when we get irritated because of a phone call or stress or something at home; it's hard to concentrate on school work. So they work with us and try to help as much as possible. The teachers and Ms. Linda's biggest message is that education is the key. Finally, I would just like to say that I am a very lucky girl to be here. Even though I am in a detention center. I take it as a positive turn in my life. I have learned so many different types of life skills and anger management skills, and I am thankful for Mrs. Linda and our counselors here helping prepare me to treatment, then eventually to home again.

Your support makes a difference-Thank you !

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tion;**

Sands Charitable Trust.



Crafts Room, Northern Regional Juvenile Center

Father to Daughter

He made his way through the courtroom, After his daughter heard her doom
 Everybody was talking loud, As he made his way through the crowd
 He made many mistakes, But this he cannot take
 Gave her some pictures, Told her he loves her
 Then walked away...

She was supposed to graduate, I remember her first date
 How did this all happen, She's lucky her life wasn't taken
 She always looks sad, Envious happy kids with normal dads
 Never had a steady place to call home, She feels she's better off on her own
 She tries to hide behind a smile, Though depressed all the while
 All the tears, All the smiles All the screaming, All the laughing
 She remembers it like it was yesterday
 Her dad never cared, Now he acts as if it's for her he's scared

—Amanda

“I feel welcome here...”

Pam,

I want to thank you for all of the help you and all the staff at the Tuel Center have provided me with. I do greatly appreciate the hard work you've had to for me.

I feel welcome here and that's something that doesn't happen too often in my situation. Every single one of you has been there when I needed someone. Thank you so very much. You're all awesome!

Pam Jeffers is the YSS Transitional Living Program director.

⇒ Tuel Center is YSS's Transitional Living Training Center in New Martinsville



Photo by Missy Nash — hot food being served at November's Wheeling SleepOut

Happiness and how I achieve it

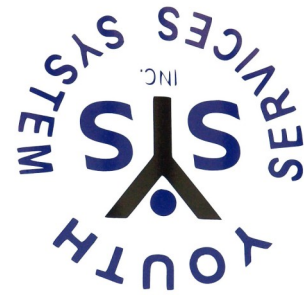
My happiness is hard to describe. Especially when I don't have the slightest idea what creates my “real” happiness. I'd like to say listening to good music, and hanging out makes me happy. And in a way they sort-of do, but is it “real” happiness? The answer, of course for me, is no, they don't, and it's not true happiness.

I believe true, or “real” happiness comes not from material items. Maybe, perhaps, it's the way you feel when you've just completed a good deed. However, for me, sometimes even a good deed doesn't make me happy. I believe my “real” happiness comes from making others happy. Or sometimes, just seeing someone else's happiness makes me happy. Truly

happy. However, maybe I'm just feeling that way because I think it's what makes me happy. When in fact, it's not. Maybe that sort of happiness just gives me an illusion of happiness. Although, I seek the pleasures of life, for I hope they will bring me happiness. Even though I know in all reality they can never create the true happiness I seek. So to truthfully and honestly an-

swer the question. I do not know what makes me happy. And maybe I never will. However, I believe I'm happy with myself and my life because it could be so much worse.

—Tuel Center youth



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Youth Services System, Inc.

Inspiring Success for Young People

Deliver to Current Resident



First Wheeling SleepOut a success

Sleeping out in November in cardboard boxes to draw attention to homeless youth-seems like a crazy idea.

On November 4-5, 150 participants and 34 volunteers made the first Wheeling SleepOut anything but crazy, in an event sponsored through YSS' s Safe Place program.

Fourteen dwellings made of cardboard appeared on the James LaRosa Soccer Field at Wheeling Jesuit University. They ranged from the West Liberty University social work students' effort to use found objects and create an authentic street dwelling, to Gumby's castle with 8 foot towers, and Bethany's cardboard cabin with cardboard furniture. Teams from Girl Scout Troop 3019 and youth from Christ United Methodist Church

joined with teams from Northwood Health Systems, and our host, Wheeling Jesuit University and YSS staff and families to spend the night. Salvation Army provided hot and cold drinks. Ye Olde Alpha and the Olive Garden fed us. Loretta and Ellie Garbuck, Two in Harmony? , and Elevate Outreach Ministry made music. The night was cold and long, but at the end of the experience, participants returned gratefully to warm homes and families. All of this was done to spotlight homeless youth.

Roger McDaniel leads Parkersburg's Elevate Outreach Ministry which performed and slept out. Roger had once been at YSS's Samaritan House. Children's Home Society of West Virginia staff, our partner in Transitional Living work with runaway or homeless youth, also raised money and spent the night.

Teams led by Dr. Joe Viglietta, the 18th Street Center, YSS's Board of Directors all raised money to assist homeless youth as well.

Patrick Maxwell from Wheeling Jesuit University; **Missy Nash** from West Virginia Northern Community College, and **Katie Hughes** from West Liberty University were the top individual fundraisers for the cause.

Crazy, yes, but watch for the next Wheeling SleepOut !

