



HOMELESS YOUTH OUTREACH PROJECT

2008-09 Progress Report

HYOP Goals

- Provide legal advocacy and representation to homeless youth to help bridge the gap between existing services.
- Partner with social service agencies serving homeless youth to create a "one stop shop" environment for homeless youth.
- Educate our courts, schools, service providers and the public about the growing number of homeless youth, their needs, and their many talents.
- Create community awareness of issues commonly faced by homeless youth.
- Stimulate grass-roots efforts to change the way society looks at and addresses youth homelessness.

About HYOP

The Homeless Youth Outreach Project (HYOP) was founded in 2006 by Kriste Draper as a special project of the Children's Advocacy Institute (CAI) at the University of San Diego (USD) School of Law. HYOP is the first and only program in San Diego County dedicated to providing legal and advocacy services to the County's homeless youth, helping to bridge the gap of access to available resources, government agencies, courts, schools and other vital resources and services.

HYOP's mission is to provide the advocacy and legal representation that San Diego's homeless youth need in order to transition off the streets and realize their dreams in an environment where they are safe and secure.

HYOP has experienced great success over its first three years and is now a vital part of San Diego's homeless youth provider network. Since its inception, HYOP has engaged in the following activities:

- HYOP has worked with over 500 homeless youth, helping them secure health insurance, access to health care providers, government benefits, mental health care, school enrollment, financial aid and housing.

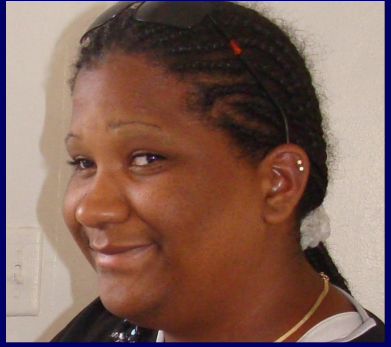
- HYOP has been instrumental in working with Homeless Court, the probation department, and the criminal court to achieve outcomes that will help homeless youth transition off the streets.
- Recognizing that better trained advocates will ensure further success for our homeless youth, HYOP has trained over 40 homeless youth service providers, court staff and attorneys on how to advocate for



homeless youth in the court system, identifying for them issues to look for and be sensitive to when working with homeless youth.

- HYOP has expanded the boundaries of San Diego's Homeless Court Program within the city and in North County to now include homeless youth and their service providers in its proceedings.

- For the last two years HYOP has helped Sony Electronics, Inc. host a holiday party for 100 of San Diego's homeless youth, providing them with a holiday meal, new sleeping bags, and backpacks full of wrapped presents—all aimed at providing the youth with hope for a better future.



La Quita is now a self-sufficient young woman well on her way toward earning an Associate's Degree.

Case Study: La Quita

On her 18th birthday, La Quita aged out of the foster care system and found herself homeless, without a job, and without a high school diploma. Determined to finish high school, La Quita slept behind a Home Depot and went to school every day — not eating

until dinner time when she could receive a meal from a nearby outreach center.

When Homeless Youth Outreach Project (HYOP) staff first met La Quita in October 2006, she was anything but cooperative; she did not believe that anybody was willing to help her. But HYOP staff persisted, going so far as obtaining a cap and gown for La Quita so that she could march with her high school graduating class, and proudly taking pictures as she received her high school diploma.

La Quita then relented and began working with HYOP. HYOP represented La Quita in Homeless Court, clearing her record of old trolley ticket fines and illegal lodging tickets for sleeping outside. Inspired by the support and kindness of the Homeless Court

Judge, La Quita applied to City College and started her first semester of college. Unable to afford rent for an apartment with her student loans, La Quita continued to live on the streets while she attended school. HYOP stuck with her, purchasing a bus pass for her and helping her get Food Stamps and school supplies, so that she could get to school each day energized and ready to learn. When La Quita began applying to transitional living programs, HYOP provided references and letters of recommendation on her behalf. Once she was in a transitional living program, HYOP referred La Quita to Just In Time For Foster Youth, a program that provides furnishings for former foster youth when they get their first apartment. HYOP also wrote a letter of recommendation for a scholarship that awarded La Quita a new laptop.

La Quita is now a self-sufficient young woman well on her way toward earning an Associate's Degree. HYOP continues to support La Quita, acting as a reference, assisting with credit issues and health insurance matters, and anything that comes up in her life.

A Note of Thanks to Our Supporters

The Homeless Youth Outreach Project would like to acknowledge all of the individuals, foundations, and other entities that have supported HYOP since its inception in 2006. Thanks to the generous support of local and nationwide funders, HYOP's doors remain open as we look toward a promising future in our community. HYOP extends a special thanks to the following organizations for their generous support:

- Sony Electronics, Inc.
- San Diego County Bar Foundation
- Children's Advocacy Institute
- BNSF Foundation
- Simon Strauss Foundation
- McCarthy Family Foundation



2008 Accomplishments

During 2008, the Homeless Youth Outreach Project provided services to over 240 homeless youth and represented over 30 individual homeless youth in ongoing legal and advocacy matters involving access to education, health insurance, access to health care, mental health treatment, access to benefits, Supplemental Security Income, and Homeless Court matters. As part of its core program, HYOP held weekly legal clinics at the Stand Up For Kids Outreach Center in downtown San Diego, and partnered with over 15 different agencies in San Diego, including new partnerships with Counseling Cove, The Center Sunburst Youth Housing Project, and Legal Aid Society of San Diego. Some of HYOP's 2008 highlights include the following:

- ◆ HYOP successfully facilitated the inclusion of Toussiant Academy of the Arts and Sciences, The Center Sunburst Youth Housing Project, and Counseling Cove as providers to San Diego's Homeless Court Program. The Homeless Court Program plays a vital role in helping homeless individuals get and stay on the road towards self sufficiency. Homeless Court is held in a local shelter, away from the criminal courthouse, and addresses only misdemeanor and infraction tickets. This court recognizes and credits homeless individuals for their participation in the program and all of the steps they take toward addressing the underlying reasons behind their homelessness. When appropriate, the court will dismiss cases and fines acquired while an individual was living on the streets. Gaining access to Homeless Court for San Diego's homeless youth was invaluable in helping clean up a youth's record so that he/she can get a driver's license, rent an apartment, or get a student loan. Participating in the Homeless Court process also removes the constant fear that a youth will be arrested for an outstanding warrant, thus enabling that youth to focus on getting a job, going to school, taking care of family, and/or finding a place to live.



- ◆ In collaboration with the San Diego Public Defender's Office, the San Diego City Attorney's Office, and the San Diego District Attorney's Office, HYOP staff directed and facilitated legal training for Homeless Court service providers. This half-day training program, attended by over 40 homeless youth service providers, court staff, and attorneys, provided information on how to advocate for homeless youth in the court system and identified the issues to look for and be sensitive to when working with homeless youth.
- ◆ In partnership with Sony Electronics, Inc. HYOP staff helped coordinate and hold the 2nd annual holiday party for 100 homeless youth, providing them with a holiday meal and gifts such as sleeping bags, backpacks, clothes, first aid kits, raincoats and flashlights.
- ◆ In an expansion of its existing partnerships, HYOP staff provided legal assistance and advocacy services to homeless youth receiving services from Sunburst Youth Housing Project and Counseling Cove. HYOP also served as a resource to Sunburst and Counseling Cove staff, answering questions they may have about the legal system as it affects homeless youth.

Types of Cases Handled

In 2008 HYOP handled a wide variety of cases including:

- * Name changes
- * Supplemental Security Income denial appeal
- * Emancipation
- * Denial of health insurance
- * Outstanding bills with collections
- * Social Security fraud
- * Obtaining immigration status
- * Probation violations
- * Homeless Court matters
- * Access to mental health care
- * Denial of housing
- * Denial of Chaffee grant
- * Denial of residency status
- * Stay away orders
- * Sealing juvenile record
- * Probation modification
- * Access to government benefits
- * Access to Independent Living Services for former foster youth



HYOP by the Numbers

In addition to legal services, HYOP provides a wide variety of resources that are necessary to address the wide variety of immediate needs that homeless youth have — issues that must be resolved in order for these youth to have a meaningful chance of transitioning off the street. The following are examples of resources provided by HYOP to San Diego County's homeless youth during 2008:

- 98** meals purchased for kids before or after appointments, meetings, court dates, etc.
- 220** one-day trolley passes for transportation
- 18** monthly bus passes
- 16** birth certificates
- 22** California identification cards
- 2** health fees required for admission to college
- 3,976** miles driven by HYOP staff to advocate for and transport kids to and from meetings, appointments, and court appearances
- 7,300** minutes of phone time dedicated to advocacy efforts on behalf of homeless youth, connecting youth with families jobs and other agencies
- 1** CPR class for a youth to qualify for a caretaking job
- 2** name change notices published in the newspaper
- 1** set of school supplies for a student starting college
- 2** prescriptions filled
- 1** youth placed in outpatient treatment

Looking Toward the Future

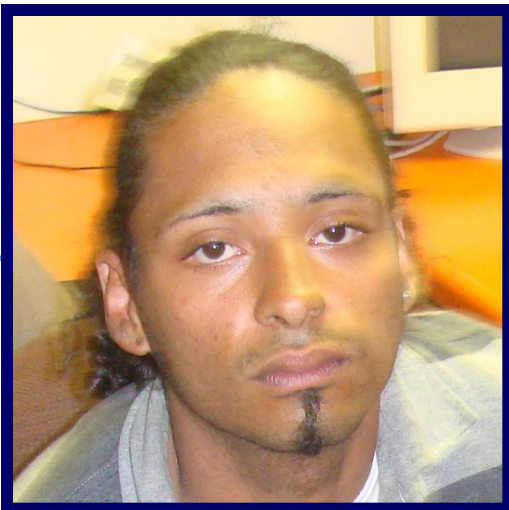
During the next year, the Homeless Youth Outreach Project will continue to partner with SDYS Storefront, St. Vincent de Paul's Tossiant Academy, Stand Up For Kids (San Diego and Oceanside), Counseling Cove, The Center Sunburst Youth Housing Project, San Diego Public Defender's Office, Homeless Court Program, Legal Aid Society of San Diego, and countless other programs bringing legal and advocacy services to San Diego's homeless youth. This combination of agencies providing social services, legal and advocacy services is the type of wraparound services our homeless youth need to address all of the issues underlying their homelessness and make real life lasting transformations.

HYOP will also start a new partnership and legal clinic with The Center, a youth drop-in center, and develop a legal education class for Monarch School.

Also, HYOP will collaborate with the Regional Task Force on the Homeless San Diego to develop and implement the first ever homeless youth study. This will be a grassroots effort largely staffed by community homeless youth providers. We will conduct a census as well as a survey of San Diego's homeless youth, with the goal of providing a real picture of San Diego's homeless youth numbers and needs. This study will serve as an invaluable tool in developing a countywide plan to end homelessness for our youth, and it will give San Diego the knowledge and data needed to influence systemic policy and legislation that impact funding and resources for our homeless youth.



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*The **Homeless Youth Outreach Project** is a special project of the Children's Advocacy Institute (CAI) of the University of San Diego, a 501(c)(3) organization, and specifically the USD School of Law. The mission of CAI, which was founded in 1989, is to improve the status and well-being of children and youth in our society by representing their interests and right to a safe, healthy childhood. In addition to its academic program, which trains law students to be effective child advocates, CAI represents the interests of children and youth in the state legislature, in the courts, before administrative agencies, and through public education programs.*

Donations to CAI or HYOP are tax-deductible to the extent the law allows.



HYOP Staff

HYOP staff has extensive experience working with homeless youth. HYOP was created and is directed by Kriste Draper, who has worked for several years with homeless and disadvantaged children. Kriste first began working with homeless youth at the age of 17 as an outreach counselor for Stand Up For Kids. She continued her work with homeless youth while obtaining an undergraduate degree in social work. Kriste then attended and graduated from the University of San Diego School of Law, where she participated in the Children's Advocacy Institute's academic program and was a co-recipient of the James A. D'Angelo Outstanding Child Advocate Award in 2006. Upon her graduation from Law School, Kriste created

HYOP as part of a two-year Equal Justice Works Fellowship originally funded by Sony Electronics, Inc., continuing her lifelong commitment to working on behalf of homeless youth.

HYOP staff is supervised by CAI Executive Director Robert C. Fellmeth, Price Professor of Public Interest Law at the University of San Diego School of Law, one of the nation's preeminent child advocates. In addition to overseeing CAI's academic and advocacy programs, Prof. Fellmeth currently serves as Chair of the National Association of Counsel for Children, on the Board of Directors of First Star, and as counsel to the Board of Voices for America's Children.