

"A safety net of stable housing, guidance and community for young adults in transition"



## Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity

*Changing Lives Building Youth Leaders*

### AHO Mission

To prevent homelessness of young adults ages 18 to 25 and provide a personalized "safety net" of stable housing, guidance and community connections, to build a meaningful life.

### Crisis of Homeless Young Adults in Marin County

In Marin County and the nation, homeless youth are underserved and growing among **teens and young adults ages 18 to 25**. The **2009 Marin IJ** reported approximately **2,600 homeless youth** in Marin County - the Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) alone has identified 1,591 homeless youth in Marin. The exact number is difficult to determine because of their nomadic lifestyle, developmental age, and fear of stigmatization and control by adults. According to the CDC, CA Department of Education, the actual numbers are 3x any estimate.

**AHO has successfully served over 2,945 young people in Marin County over the past 15 years.**

Nationally, **4.2 mil** homeless young adults were reported in Feb 2018 University of Chicago Chapin Hall study. **A 700% increase from a study 4 years ago by the National Alliance for Youth Homelessness. The US Census**

**Bureau indicates that ages 14 to 25 represent 40% (the largest segment) of the growing homeless population.** Youth are at the highest risk for incarceration, victimization or a chronic life of homelessness if they do not receive age-appropriate support by age 25 according to the *Children's Advocacy Institute*.

**28% of the homeless in Marin are ages 18 to 24** as per January 2015 PIT HUD count.

#### Who do you help?

- Single youth ages 18 to 25
- Home push outs - abandoned by their parents
- Youth with "absent parents" - "parents not able to parent" due to mental illness, drug/alcohol addiction or incarceration
- Young women leaving abusive boyfriends
- LGBTQ youth & other youth that have exhausted all communication with their parents.
- Youth not supported by the funding streams for foster youth or mentally ill youth.
- Youth who have been sex-trafficked

#### Where do you find them?

"Couch surfing", living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, otherwise, under the radar of mainstream institutions. **The CA Research Bureau** "best practice research" indicates *youth need programs that fit their emotional and developmental age. It is not safe or appropriate to mix them with the adult homeless population.*

#### How do you connect to and engage them?

Although typically distrustful of adults and mainstream institutions, youth (who have been homeless

themselves) do the outreach at **AHO**. Youth can trust other youth who have experienced homelessness themselves. **AHO** partners with each youth to assist them to meet their personalized educational and life goals. Youth then "give back" by participating as peer mentors, program advisors, board members and spokesperson's of their experience.

#### What support does the AHO "safety net" provide?

**AHO** is designed for young adults, by young adults, for the future of young adults. **AHO** is a relationship-based youth-driven model that sees youth as future leaders. **AHO** provides many leadership opportunities along with housing assistance, job support, college scholarships, wardrobe, counseling, dental, financial literacy, healthcare & more.

**AHO** youth are met in non-clinical places like cafes, libraries and restaurants. They are connected with a peer mentor who has experienced homelessness and matched with a trained adult ally coach. Coaches assist youth to access housing and other resources personalized to their needs with the assistance of **AHO's 120-member Alliance for Youth** partner network.

With the **AHO** "safety net", youth have a caring adult ally and the resources to move forward on their goals to become self-sufficient contributing adults.

#### Referrals contact:

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