

GRO AHO

A GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING AHO IN A NEW COUNTY

Based on the successful AHO Marin County, CA organization



Updated: August, 2019



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About AHO

Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity (AHO) is a 501©(3) organization designed for youth, by youth, for the future of youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Since its inception in January, 2005, AHO has been leading the way in addressing the growing crisis of youth homelessness in Marin County, CA.

AHO VISION

Preventing and reducing youth homelessness in communities nationwide using AHO as a model.

AHO MISSION

To provide young adults ages 18 to 25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness personalized, comprehensive, essential resources and leadership opportunities to become financially self-sufficient, contributing adults.

OBJECTIVE

Share the knowledge AHO has gleaned over the last 15 years in Marin County to guide other communities that are interested in implementing their own program using the AHO model. We will provide specific guidance and knowledge transfer from AHO Marin, that has successfully served nearly 3,000 youth, so that your community can establish a program more easily while staying true to the AHO principles.

AHO PRINCIPLES

- AHO mindset and culture is for youth, by youth, for the future of youth which informs everything we do.
- Proactive and preventative program for both homeless and/or youth at risk of homelessness.
- Lead by Example: Show up, stay in communication and keep your word are the 3 principles that guide the youth and organization.
- We value the youth's experience and opinions and see them as courageous, caring, committed future leaders rather than as someone who needs fixing or has something wrong.
- Youth leadership is critical to how the program runs.
- We inspire youth to help themselves, not do it for them.
- Youth must make the call or text for help themselves.
- The youth leadership team actively participates in all decision making.
- We engage with the community and provide for the youth's needs without public funding.
- We provide continuous help for up to 5 years or more, depending on a youth's needs, not one time services.
- AHO is a hand up, not a hand out.

HOW WE APPLY THE PRINCIPLES

- We meet one on one with each youth in a café or familiar spot within 24 to 48 hours of receiving a call or text from the youth.
- We listen, rather than telling them what to do.
- We provide personalized resources that youth request.
- AHO is a one stop shop providing comprehensive support that is unique for each youth.
- We believe words are powerful so we partner with each youth on their personal life goals and provide opportunities for them to see themselves as valued human beings with important gifts to contribute in the world.
- We provide a youth-led model with extensive leadership opportunities for each youth.
- We provide opportunities for the youth to practice critical life skills:
Initiation – Collaboration - Creativity - Critical Thinking – Problem Solving -Communication
- We work with youth for up to five years for a one-time cash outlay of approximately \$2,000 (largely for housing security deposit). These monies go directly to a landlord vetted by AHO. All other services, resources and mentoring are pro bono by our large network of community support.

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

Here is one example a youth’s initial contact with AHO – please see more in the appendix.

CASE 1 Cindy, age 16 Host Family

Referred by a neighbor of an AHO Council member. A female student at San Rafael high school. Mother and Father divorced when she was 8. Cindy has not seen her birth father since then. Her Mother remarried when she was 10 to a man who was abusive emotionally and physically. Cindy called CPS to report the abuse, but they did not follow up with any action. Zara met Cindy the same day she sent a text for help. Cindy was crying uncontrollably and extremely anxious as she shared her story with Zara. Cindy did not feel safe at home and wanted to leave.

Cindy is currently prospering in a host family, an active member of the AHO Youth Team and beginning her senior year in high school. She is planning on going to college to specialize in public policy.

Resources Cindy requested and received in **first year**:

Attorney meeting to learn about emancipation: 2 hour @ \$200/hr	\$400
Host family meetings/match	120
Dental work	2,000
Job - babysitting with 3 host family children	
Trauma counseling (100 per session - 24 sessions)	2,400
Eye Exam	75
Eye Glasses	150
Laptop	2,000
Cell phone	100
Leadership opportunity stipends planning youth projects & trainings, speaking in the schools	300
Food for 12-Youth Leadership Team projects meetings	240
Food for 7-one on one meetings @ café/restaurant	90

TOTAL \$7,875 *

*Of this total, **\$7,245 was donated pro bono by AHO’s Alliance for Youth partners**

RESOURCES NEEDED

Most of these should be in place before the start of a program

AHO Youth can receive over 600+ hours of service each year, including; housing with a host family or a room or apartment with peers, employers that fast track youth into employment, top dentists that offer major and minor dental care, professional trauma therapists that work with youth for as long as they need, adult mentors in their field of interest, cell phones and/or a P.O. Box. AHO provides everything a parent typically does including leadership opportunities and a community of their peers who work together on the Youth Leadership Team designing youth-led projects to bring awareness to youth homelessness. All services and resources are provided at no cost to youth.

- **Homebase**

A cottage, or similar space, that offers youth, and the organization, a confidential (off the grid) warm, inviting homelike setting close to transportation, rather than the typical clinical office. Homebase can be a work-live space for the Executive Director which is used for youth and organization meetings and activities. The home base location provides a place for youth to “hang out” with their peers, use the computers and/or plan their youth-led projects. It is beneficial to have a cat or dog on the property as animals help to create a welcoming and safe place.
- **Program Executive Director**
 - Must be a skilled community connector, collaborator and resource developer.
 - Ability to galvanize and actively create ongoing community awareness and participation with businesses, faith communities, organizations, individuals and professionals who want to be involved in the solution to youth homelessness.
 - Media savvy and able to secure publicity and stories in print and TV.
 - Capacity to educate and inspire partnerships and collaborations with law enforcement, educational institutions, the business community, and with potential host families and youth.
 - Ability to secure funding for the program.
- **Housing**
 - AHO works with local agencies and resources to determine various housing opportunities. It can be emergency short term housing such as a shelter or even a hotel. Locating vetted and known host families (screening process in appendix). AHO also provides a template with a suggested way to post on neighborhood forums when looking for a room or shared housing. A one-time cost of approximately \$2,000 is allotted per youth for housing support.
- **Jobs**

AHO currently has ten employers who will fast track AHO youth who are interested in a job. AHO alerts the employer that a youth will be applying, but the

youth must make the contact and take the initiative to get the job. AHO provides a resume template for the youth to complete if they do not have one.

- Dental Care
 - Major and minor dental care/cleanings are provided pro bono by top dentists.
- Cell Phones
 - AHO will provide a cell phone to the youth but they are responsible for the monthly fees.
- P.O. Box
 - Most of the youth have no address, and no way to receive mail. AHO keeps a P.O. box for them to use and the Director lets them know when they have mail.
- Trauma Therapy
 - Professional therapists trained in trauma are vetted to assist youth in their healing. They work with youth pro bono for as long as they need.
- Transportation
 - Providing donated bus passes, clipper cards and/or car repairs for youth with cars.
- Work wardrobes
 - Two week wardrobes, including underwear and shoes all provided pro bono from an AHO Alliance for Youth community partner organization.
- Laptops
 - Local IT company provides renewed laptops pro bono.
- Personalized financial mentors
 - One on one coaching for budgeting, credit clean up, school debt, and learning about and how to improve their credit scores.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Since its inception, AHO has consistently reached out to County officials, Board of Supervisors, Chamber of Commerce, schools, administrators, teachers, clubs, organizations, individuals, print and TV media to share the AHO story. Through forums, newspaper articles, and youth stories the AHO model has been shared with Marin and surrounding Bay Area communities to attract new resources. This outreach has engaged community members to get involved and give back by donating time, money, and resources to AHO and the youth it helps.

AHO is launching an app in September 2019 to be used to continue with its extensive outreach to educate communities about the crisis of youth homelessness and how the successful AHO model is changing lives and building youth leaders. The app will also be used for youth to be able to contact AHO for help.

COMMUNITY PARTNER TESTIMONIALS

Toscalito Tire & Automotive - Marin/San Francisco

As General Manager of Toscalito Tire & Automotive, with 6 locations in the Marin and San Francisco area, I have been an active supporter of AHO for the past 15 years. Toscalito has sponsored over 12-AHO Youth Team Car Washes for a Cause, Festivals for a Cause, and hosted many youth team meetings at our San Rafael Irwin Street location. I have been the Youth Outreach Advisor for AHO recruiting youth that need help. I've been personally involved with the AHO Youth Team projects as a participant, and as a spokesperson in the community on behalf of AHO.

We have provided car repairs for AHO youth for discounted parts, and no charge for labor, to help support AHO's mission with Marin's homeless youth. We are currently in the process of creating a special AHO package of car repair support for AHO.

Toscalito's managers have recruited volunteers for the AHO Youth Team's Youth Connect events and participated in their Town Hall Forum at Dominican University. We believe in the important and innovative work AHO is providing for the Marin community.

Kevin Ippolito

General Manager

Toscalito Tire & Automotive

668 Irwin Street, San Rafael, CA 94901

Safeway - West Coast

Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity, AHO nonprofit is a great gateway for youth who may be down on their luck without support, are homeless, or have gone through troubled times. AHO has been a strong partner with Safeway over the years. This relationship has given even more opportunity for the youth of Marin County who are struggling without support. Together, AHO and Safeway have developed multiple youths into responsible, reliable and effective

young adults. One example of an AHO youth is Juliana. AHO referred her to Safeway and got her on track to getting a job with us and all the other support she needed to grow and thrive. Juliana climbed the ladder into a management position in only 6 months and excelled as an employee for the 3 years she worked with us. This opportunity allowed Juliana to relocate to another area of the US where she will be able to further her success in whatever field she desires. We at Safeway are looking forward to more success stories in the future, for the good of the Safeway, AHO, Marin County, and most importantly, the youth.

Tim Bonifay | Relief Store Director & Viviane Thadal | Assistant Director
Safeway 653 | 700 B Street, San Rafael, CA 94901

Starbucks - International

In 2015, Starbucks NOCAL adopted Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity (AHO), a Marin County nonprofit working with homeless youth. NOCAL Regional Manager Polly Guy, along with District Managers from Marin and Sonoma counties participated in the planning of the AHO's Youth Leadership Team's Youth Connect (YC) project. The YC brought together the key resources of housing, jobs, dental, legal, trauma therapy that homeless youth needed to move forward. Over 75 Starbucks NOCAL store managers and staff participated in the training of volunteers for the event.

In May 2016, Larkin Bond the Team Leader for AHO's Youth Leadership Team, and a Starbucks employee, along with AHO's Founder were asked to present to an audience of over 200 at the annual NOCAL regional Starbucks year-end management meeting.

I met Larkin upon joining Starbucks, as her Store Manager. Meeting Larkin, I experienced an individual who was passionate, hardworking, who carried herself in a polite, professional manner. Larkin has personally played a major role to my own success. She is supportive and loyal to me and her peers and rises to any challenge. I am proud to have her on my team.

Within 4 months at Starbucks, Larkin was promoted to a Barista Trainer. She made such a positive impact in her store that she trained two individuals who are now high performing shift Supervisors. Larkin is best known for her capability to lead others and assist other Starbucks stores in their time of need.

Larkin is one example of the type of collaboration Starbucks and AHO have developed over the years to bring highly qualified, committed and dependable employees to our company. We look forward to continuing our ongoing partnership for the benefit of the many homeless youth that are employed by Starbucks.

Vicky Abadilla

Starbucks Store Manager
Vintage Oaks (5711) Novato, CA 94945

FUNDING EXPECTATIONS

Funding an initial start up of AHO is estimated to be \$60,000 to \$100,000 per year, for the first three years. This will vary by county, but this estimate assumes 40 youth per year are receiving AHO resources and includes a paid Executive Director. The specific budget estimate can be found in the appendix.

To provide for the annual needs, AHO has the following sources of income:

- Spring-Homeless Youth Housing Campaign – launches each April through June.
- Holiday Homeless Youth Challenge Campaign – launches in November and runs through January
 - Four or five longtime AHO supporters provide generous donations which are used to launch this campaign where donor's donations are matched.
- AHO writes grants to small foundations and receives monies from awards for its innovative program model.
- AHO Youth Leadership Team produces their own fundraisers to help support AHO.
- AHO Wish List is updated and discussed at all AHO monthly Council of Investors meetings and sent out to AHO's list of community supporters, through the County's newsletter, through AHO articles in the AHO newsletter and website to continue to secure ongoing pro bono partners and resources for youth.

ORGANIZATION – 3 KEY COMPONENTS

- Council of Investors – the fundraising arm of AHO is comprised of supporters from businesses, faith communities, professionals, organizations, educators and individuals from local and state government in both the private and public sectors and serves and the fundraising arm of AHO.
 - As a youth and community-driven nonprofit, youth and the Executive Director speak extensively to these groups to attract new investors, advisors, resources, sponsors and supporters to AHO's mission. In addition, AHO Council members recruit members from their personal circles of influence in the community to this team.
- Alliance for Youth – a 165-member service partner network of businesses, faith communities, professionals, organizations, clubs and individuals that donate their time, resources and services pro bono.
- AHO Youth Leadership Team – comprised of youth AHO has served and other youth from all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds who design youth-led projects to bring awareness and funding to AHO's mission.

EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE AHO'S

- Transfer knowledge – an Executive Director and youth leadership team leader must be willing and eager to share their learnings and experiences to new AHO organizations.
- Pay it forward – Executive Directors and youth leadership from an established AHO will assist neighboring new AHO's in finding resources, business partners, law and education partners, and other resources as needed.
- Initiate, plan and participate in a multi county/program panel to share learnings and ideas.

LESSONS LEARNED

These are the lessons AHO has learned that work in creating an effective, preventative, youth and community driven, comprehensive, personalized and cost effective program model.

AHO is an all-volunteer community and youth-driven organization, with the exception of the Executive Director, who is a paid community organizer and developer, broker of services, and key point person for the youth and organization.

The Council of Investors, Youth Leadership Team and Alliance for Youth partner of businesses, faith communities, organizations, professionals and others are all critical components of AHO's program model.

Executive Director

- It is helpful when the Executive Director is an "expert by experience" and has personal experience with homelessness, dealing with limitations of "the system", and has overcome the trauma of living in a family like the youth served by AHO. This personal life experience makes the program leader more relatable to the youth in a way that they can trust.

Working with Youth

- Youth need to make the first call or text themselves
 - A parent, or teacher or other adult cannot take the initiative for a youth. It is vital that youth show personal initiative and commitment to change their situations, rather than someone else doing it for them.

Community Partners

- Investors, donors, service providers and others wanting to assist AHO need to be aligned with the AHO principles and values. This is key to the youth succeeding in their journey. Egos and/or alternative agendas are not helpful or productive and derail the continuity and building of trust with the youth.
- AHO's Alliance for Youth partners receive a receipt for their donated services and resources which they can use on their tax returns as a thank you for their support.

AHO Youth Leadership

- Selected youth on the volunteer AHO Youth Leadership Team are provided stipends for planning their projects, as spokespersons in the schools and/or for working at the AHO's cottage, the home base for AHO. These stipends help to supplement the youth's income as they work several jobs and complete their education.

Fundraising

- Typical nonprofit fundraisers are time consuming and take valuable time away from working directly with youth.
 - AHO has found that generating funding through the Spring Homeless Youth Housing Fund campaign and the Winter Holiday Homeless Youth Matching Challenge Grant have been most efficient and successful way to fund AHO.
 - AHO also generates funding through grants to small foundations and community businesses, and through awards received for its innovative model.
 - The AHO Youth Leadership Team initiates their own fundraisers. For example, youth-led car washes for a cause and concerts have been useful for youth leadership opportunities.

VISION FOR GROWING AHO

The success of Marin's initial AHO will be offered to interested communities throughout the State of California through AHO's partnership with the CA Coalition for Youth in Sacramento, CA and through the AHO app which will launch in September, 2019.

AHO will offer training and orientation courses, along with supporting training materials to interested parties. The cultures of each community will be incorporated into each training to align with each community's unique capacity and needs. These communities will have the opportunity to become AHO "certified" locations with ongoing support of AHO.

Training would be focused on bringing the Executive Director, as well as youth leadership, up to a level of supporting their own location as well as how to find, screen, qualify and train another location. Training would be via skype or zoom, or a webinar sent throughout the State, which limits costs for all concerned, and would focus on coaching and cross-mentoring from AHO staff and youth at all times.

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DRAFT



Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity (AHO) is Marin's *only nonprofit* serving homeless teens and young adults ages 18 to 25 who represent 1/3 of Marin's homeless population.

Changing Lives Building Youth Leaders

2,945

Youth Successfully Served



Working & Completing Education

1,500

College Graduates



COM, Dominican, UC Berkeley.....

1,850

School Outreach



Leadership

2,000

Housing Support



Housing Fund, Host Families

230

Youth Team Projects



'Youth Homelessness to Hope' traveling murals, 5 Forums, 6 Youth Connect, 8 Car Washes for a Cause....

12

Special Honors & Awards



Jefferson Award

Guidestar

2,945

Employed



23 Employers Fast Track into Jobs

2,175

Medical & Dental



Over \$48,000 Free Dental
4 Trauma Therapists, Acupuncture, Pain Release

145

Professionals, Businesses....



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

@ AHOBAYAREA

THINK DIFFERENT

AHO

vs

Other Programs

Preventative

Immediate help (24 to 48hr)

Youth **DECIDE** goals

Personalized to each youth

Whole person support

Comprehensive resources

Support **ongoing to 5yrs**

Prepares youth to succeed

Leadership opportunities

Community funding

Cost-effective

Sustainable

Not Pro-Active

Long waits for help

Youth **GIVEN** goals

(Boxed) fixed resources

Limited non-flexible support

Fixed (limited) resources

Arbitrary support cut-offs

Sets up youth to fail

Diversion activities

Public funding

Costly

Temporary fix

DRAFT

AHO Alliance for Youth Partners

AHO Alliance for Youth Housing

3 AHO Host Families
AHO Apartments with Peers
Next Door online community
Airbnb - in development
The Launching Pad
Calli House
Center for Domestic Peace
Adopt a Family
Gilead House
Mill Street

Food/Beverages

Extra Food
West Brooklyn Pizza
Rocco Pizza
Sweet Things
Trader Joes
Safeway
Starbucks, Polly Guy, NOCAL Regional Director
Peets Coffee
Chipotle
Pig in a Pickle
LJ'S Deli
Delicious Catering
Teeny Cakes
Cakes for Kids
Nugget Markets

Job Support

Whole Foods
Comcast
Target
Peets Coffee
Goodwill Industries
Costco
Trader Joes
Chipotle
Starbucks, Polly Guy NOCAL Regional Director
Bloom
Westamerica Bank
Good Earth
City of San Rafael
Job Core, Treasurer Island
North Bay Conservation Core
Career Point Marin
Marin Libraries
Laborers Union
Carpenters Union
Woodlands Pet Care
Peter Levi Plumbing
Marin Builders Association
Pig in a Pickle

LJ's Deli
Larkspur Landing Optometry
Old Navy
Juvenile Probation
Adult Offender Work Program (AOWP)
Downtown Streets Team
CAL Works
3 Private Contractors

Work Wardrobe

Bloom (*formerly Image for Success*)

Education

10,000 Degrees
College of Marin EOPS Program, Director Becky Reetz
COM Compass Program
College of Marin President David Coon
Santa Rosa JC President, Frank Chong
Sonoma State President, Judy Sakaki
Mary Jane Burke, Superintendent of Marin County Schools
Mike Grant, Director of Marin County Schools
Ken Lippi, Assistant Superintendent Marin County Schools
Jessica Colvin, Wellness Director TAM Unified District (TUHSD)
Karen Allen, MCOE Homeless Program Director
Marin Builders Association MCOE & COM programs
Dominican Interns
Dominican University of CA Psych Department
Dominican University of CA Leadership Ministry
Branson School Leadership Class
Terra Linda Leadership Class
Katy Dunlap, Principal Terra Linda High School
Ron Celli, Assistant Principal Terra Linda High School
Drake High School, Assistant Principal Chad Stuart
Davidson Middle School, Dean of Students Tom Kordick
Tam High School, Assistant Principal Tenisha Tate
San Rafael High School, Assistant Principal HerediaPeltz
Children4Change, Elizabeth Miller
Hidden Valley Elementary School – San Anselmo
White Hill Middle School – Fairfax
Chief Adam McGill, Novato PD
Antonio Rodrigues, Novato SRO
Chris Jacob, Sergeant, Novato PD
Patrice O'Neill, Not in Our Town (NOIT) Novato

Health & Dental Care

Operation Access, donated Surgical & Specialty Care
Marin Dental Society
RotaCare
Nystrom Chiropractic Group - Dr. Sydne Pomin, DC
Tam Acupuncture
Dr. Richard Schmotter, DDS.
Dr. Alex Schmotter, DDS.
Dr. Claudiu Marin, DDS.
Dr. Laleh Sootash, DDS.

Dr. Diana Parnell, MD, Dermatologist
Dr. Vince Freemantle, DDS
Dr. Clayton Perry, DDS
Dr. Marilyn Britton, DC, Active Release Pain Management

Counseling and Mental Health

Susan Amanda Schratter, MA, MFT trauma specialist
Cayenne Bierman, LCSW Trauma specialist Marin Clinic
Community Institute for Psychotherapy
A Home Within
Teen Solutions
Center for Domestic Peace
3 Private Professional Therapists - LMFT, MSW, DBT therapist

Legal Aide

Legal Aid of Marin
Community Court San Rafael, Judge Beverly Wood
Peter Crane, Attorney
Anna Pletcher Attorney
Kelly Reiter Attorney – Family Law Specialist
2 Public Defenders

Youth Financial Mentoring/Support

Community Action Marin
Westamerica Bank
Chona Sommers, Youth Financial Coach

Leadership & Life Coaching

Love Your Life – Spirit, Life & Business Coach
Awakened Wisdom Experiences, Inc.
Marie Lavin, MSW, LCSW, Energy Healer
2 Life Coaches
Young Men's Ultimate Solutions
The Center for Excellence

Youth Organizations

ASCOM COM student government
Umoja COM African-American club
Alpha Gamma Sigma COM Honor Society
Students for Social Justice COM
Youth Leadership Institute
Novato Teen Clinic
Project Avary
Huckleberry Youth Programs
Community Violence Solutions
Marin County Youth Commissioners
Novato Youth & Wellness Center

Art and Creative Projects

Professional Animation & Graphic Designer
Riley's Street Art Supply
Mill Valley Recreation Center
CMCM Cable TV, Tom McAfee Filmmaker/Editor
Mette, Graphic Design
Steve Peixotto Photography

Marion Shields - Speech Coach for Youth
Jay Hamilton Roth – Speech Coach for Youth
Will Rushton, Filmmaker
Tom Egan, Web & Graphic support
Larry Taymor, Filmmaker/Editor

Pet Care

Marin Humane Society
Woodlands Pet Care Strawberry Mill Valley

Street Outreach

San Rafael PD Home Team
Mt. Carmel Church - Sock Drive

General Support

Senator Mike McGuire
Mary Jane Burke, Superintendent Marin County Schools
Dr. Coon, President College of Marin
Novato “Giving Group”
Bay Area Networking Group
Marin Women’s Club
Hivery Work Lab
Marin County Health and Human Services
Youth Court
Dominican Sisters of San Rafael
First Presbyterian Church San Anselmo
First Presbyterian Church San Rafael
St. Luke Presbyterian Church San Rafael
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Toscalito Tire, GM Kevin Ippolito

Operating Support

Shakti Social Media - Web & Newsletter
IWB & Co - CPA
WIGT Printing
Marin Cursillo
Mette – Graphic Design
Sue Bachorski, Gro AHO Development Consultant
Tricia Conwell – Organizational Development
Peter Gray - Train the Trainer Development Consultant
PCC Professional Computer Concepts
Copy & Printing Business
Alex Sanchez – Marketing
Cassie Torda – App Design
Catrina Torda – App Development

Research

CA Research Bureau (CRB)
CA Coalition for Youth, President Jevon Wilkes
N. Bernstein, Author, filmmaker

Marin Independent Journal

Saturday, August 17, 2019 \$1.50 FACEBOOK.COM/MARINIJFAN TWITTER.COM/MARINIJ

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A9 OPINION

Marin Independent Journal

Rob Devincenzi, President, Publisher
Jennifer Upshaw Swartz, Managing Editor
Dave Allen, Opinion Editor
Brad Breithaupt, Editorial writer

Public member:
Stephanie Plante

✦ Marin Voice

It's time to change the face of youth homelessness

By Larkin Bond

The recently released January 2019 Marin Point-in-Time count provides a misleading impression about the scope of homelessness and especially homeless youth in Marin.

As a one-day arbitrary count, the Department of Housing and Urban Development PIT numbers represent only the tip of the iceberg regarding homeless youth, the hardest to reach homeless population.

Karen Allen, Marin County Office of Education liaison for youth homelessness in the county, along with the California Department of Education, report that the actual homeless numbers are three times any estimate. While the exact numbers are difficult to determine because of young people's nomadic lifestyle and fear of stigmatization and control by adults, Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity, Marin's only nonprofit serv-

ing homeless youth, provides a successful youth- and community-driven model that is changing lives and building youth leaders.

The story of a young man named Lucas is an example of a homeless youth that would not be counted as homeless by the government's definition.

Lucas was still in high school when his mom decided to move to Brazil with her boyfriend, leaving Lucas to fend for himself at age 17. Even before his mother left, Lucas never had a stable life, as both of his parents were addicts, and his father was absent. Lucas often went to school hungry. When his mom left, Lucas began sleeping on the floor at his friend's house. He got a job, but his bike broke and the unpredictable bus schedule often made him late, causing him to lose his job. As his friends and classmates celebrated their graduation last spring, Lucas learned that he did not have the credits to graduate.

Then one day, his friend's mother heard a formerly homeless youth from AHO speak at her Rotary Club. AHO offered Lucas a beacon of hope for the future.

Lucas' story is not unique. Many youth in Marin in their teens and 20s do not have stable housing for a variety of reasons. While some end up on the streets, others sleep in their cars, couch surf or temporarily spend the night with friends.

They try to keep up the illusion of stability by continuing to attend work or school as if nothing is wrong. They do not want to be stigmatized as homeless, and just want to be normal and fit in. They do not show up in counts like the PIT. The government's restricted definition of homelessness contributes to the problem because Marin residents believe these HUD numbers are accurate.

For Marin and the government to effectively address the issue of homeless youth we must

As a one-day arbitrary count, the Department of Housing and Urban Development PIT numbers represent only the tip of the iceberg regarding homeless youth.

broaden the definition to address youth like Lucas. This will take the community becoming involved in the solution.

AHO has galvanized the local community of businesses, professionals, faith communities and organizations to donate their time, expertise and resources pro bono. This 165-member Alliance for Youth service partner network helps AHO to provide the comprehensive and personalized resources youth request, along with leadership opportunities which marginalized

youth typically do not receive, all without government funding.

AHO's work with youth is judgement free and designed for youth. Thereby, young people feel safe to reach out for help. AHO offers a hand-up toward stability for the long term with over 3,000 youth successfully served in 15 years who are in stable housing, working several jobs, completing their educations.

Others, like me, have graduated from schools like UC Berkeley and have come back to help grow the AHO model into other communities around the State. Help AHO with your time, resources and expertise so that all youth in our community have a safe and secure home. Contact Zara @ AHOproject.org to become part of the solution.

Larkin Bond, who has a bachelor's degree in sociology from UC Berkeley, is youth and community outreach consultant for AHO

Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity
Fiscal Year 2019
Projected Annual 2019 Budget

Income

Fundraising Income 200,000

In-Kind Income 50,000

Total Income 250,000

Program Fees

Executive Director Fee 50,000

Director Assistant 36,000

***Cottage: Rent 14,000

***Cottage: Maint 1,000

***Cottage: Telephone 2,000

***Cottage: Utilities 1,400

Youth Program Fees 63,000

Youth Meetings/Conferences 15,000

In-Kind Professional services 30,000

Total Program Fees 212,400

Admin Fees

Transportation 2,000

Bank charges 200

Dues 500

Office supplies/Postage 400

Insurance 4,000

Professional Fees 400

In-Kind Professional Fees 15,000

Total Admin Fees 22,500

Fundraising Fees

Marketing and printing 8,000

Transportation 2,000

In-Kind Professional Fees 5,000

Total Fundraising Fees 15,000

Total Expenses 249,900

***figures for cottage vetted by the IRS

ADDITIONAL CASE STUDIES FOR GRO AHO

CASE 2 Jed, age 18 No Family/Staying with Friends

Jed was 17 when his mother left Marin to live with her boyfriend in Brazil. Both Jed’s parents were meth addicts and unstable. When Jed lived with his Mom, he was often without food and ate at friends’ houses. When his Mom left, Jed had no place to live. A friend took him in temporarily, and he slept on the floor. He did not have a car, so he got rides from his friend who went to the same high school. He got a job, but could not always get a ride to work, with the unpredictable bus schedules, Jed was often late, or missed work, and was eventually fired. He was not able to graduate from high school with his friends because of his instability.

Jed was referred to AHO by his friend’s mother who heard AHO speak at her Rotary. After Jed texted AHO, he was met that same day at a coffee shop near where he was living. At that meeting, Jed expressed how lost, guilty and depressed he was in spite of being able to stay at his friend’s house. He wanted more from his life, but didn’t know how to change his current circumstances.

With AHO’s support Jed is working on his GED and is looking forward to attending College of Marin. He is an active participant on the AHO Youth Team, working on the Building Bridges: Law Enforcement and Young Adults project. Jed is working several jobs and has a room in a home through the ongoing support of AHO.

Resources Jed requested & received in first year:

Tutoring and GED program	\$300
Laptop	1000
Eye exam	75
Eye glasses	150
Referral to job near where he was staying	
Bike repairs for transportation to job	100
Work clothes	200
Dental work (cleaning/cavities)	1200
Trauma therapy - 15 sessions @ \$100 (for dealing with neglectful parents and abandonment)	1500
One on one meetings 25 @ \$15	400
TOTAL	\$4925 *

*Of this total, **\$4,925** was donated pro bono by AHO’s Alliance for Youth partners

CASE 3 Jesus, age 20 Shelter/Room in a Home

Jesus, a 20 year old male, was attending college at Sonoma State when he started experiencing health problems. His parents moved to Kansas City when he was 18, leaving him to fend for himself. Since then, his parents haven't stayed in touch or helped him financially. When Jesus began experiencing stomach pains, he did not know what to do. He had no insurance and would go to the emergency room for relief. He had panic attacks and he didn't understand why he was in pain. He lost his job due to his frequent sick calls. His constant panic attacks made him stop going to class. He flunked out of Sonoma state, and without a job, he could not pay his rent. When an AHO youth and an old teacher referred Jesus to AHO, he was living in his car, which was not running and felt suicidal because of his pain and panic attacks.

Following Jesus' text for help, he was met the same day at a cafe in the community. Since connecting to AHO, Jesus is healing physically and mentally, slowly getting his life back on track and feeling that his life is looking up. He is back in college, working on a business degree, and is a member of the AHO Youth Leadership Team. Jesus speaks frequently on behalf of AHO in schools and in the community to give back to AHO for being there when he had no one. Jesus is continuing to inspire other youth with his story as he brings more awareness to the Marin community about the crisis of youth homelessness.

Resources Jesus requested & received in **first year:**

Medical appointments connection to Marin Clinic	
Help applying for Medical	
P.O. Box	
Therapy 30 sessions @ \$100/session	\$3000
Car repairs and alignment	2600
Housing Initially Mill Street Shelter until he was more stabilized and working & then online room in a home	1600
Community college application & FAFSA support	
Community college scholarship & books	500
Job Referrals	
Work wardrobe	1000
AHO Youth Team/Speaking Stipends	200
One on one meetings 18 @ \$15/meeting	270
TOTAL	\$9,170*

*Of this total, **\$7,100** was donated pro bono by AHO's Alliance for Youth partners

CASE 4 Catrina, age 22 Shelter/Studio Apartment

Referred by another youth from AHO, Catrina was met in a café the day after she texted AHO for help. There is no father in her life and she does not know who her father is. Catrina’s mother is emotionally abusive and mentally ill. She has fits of rage and is without the capacity to parent. Catrina was sexually abused by an uncle at age 3 and has attracted abusive partners. Catrina was also struggling with her sexual identity. She was in an abusive relationship when she reached out to AHO. She was not working or going to school, although she had completed 21 units for her BA degree a year prior.

Today Catrina is the Leader of the AHO Youth Leadership Team and has initiated youth’s Building Bridges: Law Enforcement and Young Adults project which AHO is taking into all the schools in Marin and surrounding counties throughout the State. She is completing her BA degree, was ordained as a deacon in her church, and is applying to the Police Academy to work as a chaplain with homeless youth.

Resources Catrina requested and received first **3 years**:

Cell Phone Received the day of the first meeting (2) bought as abusive partner broke her phone	200
Job referred to Safeway where she wanted to work. She became a manager in 6 months.	
Housing - referral to Mill Street shelter, dorm living, own studio Year 2 - 1 st & last deposit for her own apartment	2100
Dental Crown, 3 fillings, cleaning	5200
Trauma Counseling - 24 sessions @ \$100/session	2400
Eye Exam	75
Financial counseling 12 one on one sessions @ \$100/session	1200
Eye Glasses (2 pairs - abusive partner broke 1 st pair)	300
Car repairs/tires	1500
Food for 24 -Youth Team projects meetings	500
Food 10 -one on one meetings @ café/restaurant	190
TOTAL	\$13,665*

*Of this total, **\$10,675 was donated pro bono by AHO’s Alliance for Youth partners**

CASE 5 Jaymar, age 21 Sex-trafficked at age 13 Temporary & Permanent Housing

Jaymar heard about AHO from a neighbor. She texted for help after Sam, the father of her 7 year old son, Mathew, beat her up when he heard that a male co-worker had given her a ride home. Sam and Jaymar first met when Jaymar was 13. He lavished her with expensive gifts and love, and she soon became his sex slave. When Jaymar’s mother found out she was pregnant at age 14, she would not let her come home. When Mathew was born, Sam was 22, and had already fathered 3 children with several other women. Although Sam had been physically abusing Jaymar for years, Jaymar had no place to go, and lived with Sam in spite of his abuse. There were times she would escape from the abuse by couch surfing at friend’s houses with her son. However, Sam always found her, and promised he would change, and so she went back to him. Sam did not change. Jaymar constantly felt afraid and insecure with Sam and did not have a safe place to call home. And, because she had no one she could depend on to watch Mathew, she couldn’t keep a job, or go to school. When Jaymar texted AHO for help, she overwhelmed with life, suffering severe anxiety and panic attacks and deeply depressed.

With the help of AHO, today Jaymar is in a safe house for single moms. AHO is helping her get her GED so she can apply to College of Marin to work toward a business degree.

Resources Jaymar requested and received first **2 months**:

Emergency hotel stay after being kicked out - 2 nights @ \$89	\$178
Housing	
Referral to Domestic Peace for emergency housing (30 days)	
Referral to Gilead House for 2 to 3 year housing for single Moms	
P.O. Box	
Assistance to apply to CAL WORKS for jobs and support for single Moms	
DMV identity card	50
Dental (root canal and crown)	2500
Job referral with Babysitting onsite	
Community College (application & FAFSA)	200
Trauma counseling \$100 per session/20 sessions	2000
Help signing Matthew up for Kindergarten and school supplies	200
TOTAL	\$5,128*

*Of this total, **\$4,950** was donated pro bono by AHO’s Alliance for Youth partners

CASE 5 Rico, age 25 Homeless for 6 years

With his Father in prison and his mother's addiction, Rico has had no family support most of his life. Rico's Mom is an unstable parent incapable of healthy parenting. She married at 16, and had parents who were also addicts. She enables Rico by doing things for him (to absolve her guilt of being an absent parent) and treats him like a little boy, rather than a young man capable of reaching out for help himself. Rico has developed learned helplessness and a feeling of being worthless from his mother's unhealthy parenting. Rico is not working; he has no high school diploma or GED; and he is on probation. Rico's mother called AHO on his behalf and said Rico is too proud to call for help himself. Since AHO only works directly with the youth, Rico must make the call for help himself. When Rico is ready to reach out on his own behalf, AHO will be there to help. Until that happens, AHO cannot help Rico.

Rico has yet to text AHO for help

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Host Families

What is an AHO Host Family?

Host families volunteer to assist a homeless youth ages 18 to 25, served by AHO, to stabilize and reconnect to the community. By offering a room in their home for 2 months or, up to 6 months allows a youth to begin a job (*if they aren't already working*) and focus on securing stable housing and working toward their educational and life goals. All families have the 24/7 support of AHO in this process.

Youth Characteristics

AHO youth come to AHO with certain characteristics resulting from their histories of neglect, abuse and abandonment. They may display learned helplessness; delayed emotional development; concentration and focus challenges; PTSD, anxiety and depression; and distrust of adults and mainstream institutions. They are not mentally ill or drug/alcohol addicted.

AHO Host Families

- To insure maximum success, all youth and host families are screened for their readiness and ability to follow AHO's guiding principles: Showing up, staying in communication and keeping their word.
- Prior to a match, Host Families work with AHO's Founder, and a youth, to set clear guidelines, communicate non-negotiables, chores and other expectations.
- To insure that Host Families and youth are properly matched, intensive 24/7 support is provided by AHO to keep all individuals involved feeling supported and on track.
- AHO Host Families provide temporary housing to a youth, and *are not paid*.
 - Youth however are expected to pay a small amount for rent - approximately \$50 per month - to practice responsibility and show their appreciation.
 - These rent monies are typically returned to a youth when they leave.
- Host Families work with AHO's Founder and/or adult allies to provide the consistency and "wraparound" community resources that youth need to make a successful transition.
- During their Host Family stay, youth continue to work with AHO to practice the steps and life skills necessary for reaching their educational and life goals. In addition, they work with AHO toward securing an appropriate, affordable and stable living situation in the community.

Foster Families

AHO Host families and foster families are very different program models. Foster families are paid by the government, and offer youth support ongoing for years. AHO host families are not paid and offer youth transitional housing for one to six months. Foster families do not have the 24/7 support system like AHO provides its Host families, and thereby foster youth often end up abused.

Interested in learning more?

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