

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS YOUTH (ACHY)  
MEETING MINUTES**

MHUW – Founders Room

2505 18<sup>th</sup> St.

Denver, CO 80211

January 27, 2010

1:00 to 3:30 pm

<http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/shhp/Homeless-Youth.htm>

**Attendees:** Augusta Klimek, Nicole Sherwood, Doyle Robinson, Gary Sanford, Mandy Shotts, Tami Lack, Ricardo Mattaias, Andy Johnson, Dana Scott, Randall Loeb, Corey Barrett, Kippi Classen, Shehila Stephens, Bob Coulson, Diane Skufca, Aaron Cordova

**Facilitator:** Andy Johnson

**Minutes:** Sue Mays

**1. Welcome & Introductions** (Andy Johnson)

**2. ACHY Vision/Mission Review**

Vision: Public, private, and faith-based agencies working together to end youth homelessness in Colorado.

Mission: To end youth homelessness by improving the quality, availability, and accessibility of services provided to homeless youth and those at risk of homelessness.

**3. 2009 Annual Report Update and Highlights**

Artwork & photos highlighted on cover of the report taken by youth & youth organizations during Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month 2009. It will contain a brief overview of objectives of Office of Homeless Youth Services, key elements of Homeless Youth Action Plan, trends, accomplishments, and plans for 2010

**Key Trends**

About 1500 homeless youth statewide based on Homeless Point-in -Time studies and Dept of Education counts. School districts are beginning to identify unaccompanied youth. 2008-09 school year had increase of 29% over previous year (represents over 900 youth statewide) some districts still learning how to gather this data

Denver Homeless Initiative did study in Jan. 2009 and identified over 1100 homeless youth between ages 13-24 in the Denver metro area alone.

Lack of funding for prevention and intervention services, federal funding has to be leveraged with local resources, federal \$\$ not able to find local resources to match, resources scarce while demand is higher

Youth (ages 16-19) unemployment rate at 27.6% in Oct 2009 is record high. This is similar to the unemployment rate during the 'Great Depression.'

Recommendations: Ensure child welfare and juvenile justice systems use exit plans that include certain elements that will promote a successful transition to adulthood. Housing changes included significant progress in several areas especially with the Family Unification Program (FUP) program. Colorado's FUP program was featured in a national publication "Connect by 25" which highlighted new model of delivering FUP vouchers and partnering with state, and county public welfare agencies and non-profit agencies. ACHY entered into MOU with Colorado Links program. Rural Collaborative for Homeless Youth started in 2008 when Div of Child Welfare received Federal demonstration grant to start serving rural youth. Included Alamosa, Moffat, Montezuma, Garfield, and Montrose. In 2009 RCHY began leveraging the original grant with other grants obtained by the San Luis Valley Comprehensive Mental Health and Huerfano County. Agencies and partners such as ACHY, Urban Peak, Family Tree and CDHS Divisions of Child Welfare and Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs are wrapping around the six groups working toward effective approaches to provide rural services for homeless runaway youth. Other accomplishments include: trainings such as Human Trafficking done by Outreach workgroup, National Safe Place Webinar, which lead to rural collaborative partnership with National Safe Place, National Governor's Association came to Colorado in November 2009 and brought people from 7 states to explore the Office of Homeless Youth and observe other transitioning youth initiatives we have going on. Statewide Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month highlighted all activities going on. Office of Homeless Youth Services testified at the Interim Economic Opportunity and Poverty Reduction Task Force on runaway homeless youth issues. Education and Awareness activities included presentations at Community and School Health Conference, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless Annual Conference, National Association for Education of Homeless Children and Youth Conference, Colorado Vital Records Registrar Conference.

#### **Amend Colorado Homeless Youth Act**

Act needs to be amended to allow youth to be sheltered up to 21 days as opposed to 2-week limit currently there. To mirror new Federal Homeless Youth Act passed.

#### **Highlighted in 2009:**

Vital Documents Project, Bill 104 and CDHS Rule passed that requires youth exiting foster care system have vital documents

Streamlined process with Dept of Motor Vehicles making it easier for county caseworkers to obtain photo identification for youth in their care

Waiver process for cost of photo ID for youth from county Dept of Human Services is almost in place

#### **4. Host Home/Homeless Youth Shelter Licensing Recommendation**

ACHY Housing Workgroup developed language that will ensure the licensing requirements are broadened to allow for more flexible models of sheltering, such as host homes. This is especially important for Rural Collaborative for Homeless Youth as they work to implement their new federal grant to provide rural shelter beds for homeless youth, primarily using the host home model.

Have lead agency licensed by state to certify host home parent.

Statute references needs to be added, but otherwise ACHY members voted to approve moving forward

Meeting will be set up with the CDHS, Division of Child Care to present the recommendation

## **5. CONET Structure Change Proposal**

### **CONET Direction for 2010**

#### **Background**

The Colorado Network of Youth Services (CONET) was established in 1980 to support young people who are in transition. Membership was made up of state stakeholders, runaway and homeless youth serving agencies, county departments of human services and individuals who are working to promote youth development and the provisions of quality services to youth and their families. CONET meetings were typically held quarterly. Once the Office of Homeless Youth Services (OHYS) became fully staffed, CONET members decided to suspend meetings. However, in January 2007 the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY) determined that CONET meetings should resume in order to carry out a few specific purposes that were beyond the current focus of the ACHY activities. Resuming CONET meetings for these purposes was incorporated as a strategy in the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan as follows:

Strategy 4.2. To ensure that homeless youth service agencies have opportunities to network and coordinate service delivery. The plan calls for the Colorado Network of Homeless and Runaway Youth Services (CONET) to be reinstated for the purposes of networking, coordinating service delivery, and coordinating with regional and national efforts. CONET meetings are to be held on the same day as the quarterly ACHY meetings in order to allow for broad statewide participation in both meetings. The plan calls for CONET to elect a representative to serve with the Youth Policy Council of the National Network for Youth and to secure funding to cover the costs associated with this position. CONET is to create a speaker's bureau and support statewide training and technical assistance efforts.

#### **Past CONET Accomplishments:**

- Passage of the Homeless Youth Act in Colorado in 1997 and the creation of the Office of Homeless Youth Services in 2002.
- Development of the Licensing Rules and Regulations with the Colorado Department of Human Services for Homeless Youth Shelters
- Developed a network of Youth Transitional Housing Programs, funded by HUD
- Helped in the application and award of the Youth Development State Collaboration Demonstration Grant – one of 13 grants awarded nationally
- Assisted in the development of the publication Youth on the Edge in December 1994. This was the first comprehensive effort to study Colorado's

homeless population, which included recommendations for public policy approaches to address the problem.

- Produced special cards for runaway youth with shelters in Colorado.
- Organized and ran a statewide effort called “Amnesty Days” for runaway and homeless youth to contact a 1-800 number to connect them with a shelter and/or a phone call to their guardian(s), if desired.
- Development of a statewide blog website for homeless and runaway youth providers.
- Representation at state and national meetings that impact policies and funding for this population, including the National Network for Youth, Policy Council.
- Sharing of information and resources through collaborative efforts and relationships.

### **Proposal for CONET Direction beginning in January 2010**

Many of the CONET functions are now at a point where they are infused within the ACHY and other relevant activities in Colorado. In order to add the intended value for CONET members during 2010, the key functions of CONET can be carried out as follows:

**Coordinated Service Delivery:** OHYS and ACHY have been able to assume a leadership role for this area through existing activities. In addition, due to changes at the federal level, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services holds weekly and monthly coordination and technical assistance calls with federally funded homeless youth providers in Colorado. Other initiatives, such as the Rural Collaborative for Homeless Youth and Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way, are also bringing many of the same providers together regularly which facilitates a coordinated service delivery approach.

**CONET Blog:** Runaway and homeless youth providers can take a more active role in ensuring valuable content is posted on the blog ([conetcolorado.blogspot.com](http://conetcolorado.blogspot.com)). The blog can be used for monthly topics that will assist direct service providers, information on the various providers represented in individual collaborative initiatives, agency updates, and for local and national public policy updates.

**Regional and National Coordination:** Current CONET chair and current National Network for Youth, Region 8 National Youth Policy Council member, Nicole Sherwood is working with the Policy Council to determine a plan to keep Region 8 connected. The Family and Youth Services Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is connecting with Colorado service providers at least monthly as well. The OHYS connects with national organizations regularly, such as the National Runaway Switchboard, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare.

**Speakers Bureau:** The ACHY Planning and Awareness Group has taken this task on as a part of the annual Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month planning. In addition, several other initiatives or groups have developed formal mechanisms to recruit, train, and engage youth leaders. These groups include current or formerly homeless youth that can be engaged when needed.

**Networking and Meetings:** Move away from quarterly meetings and instead only hold official CONET meetings as needed. Instead, CONET related announcements could be made through the blog and at ACHY meetings as needed. Instead, statewide networking can happen in conjunction with the annual statewide summits being planned by ACHY and the Rural Collaborative for Homeless Youth. CONET members can request that facilitated networking being incorporated with the summits.

**Training and Technical Assistance:** Various initiatives and agencies have begun to offer collaborative training opportunities that are of use to homeless and runaway youth providers. Technical assistance is now available through the OHYS, other state agencies, peer assistance between agencies, the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Technical Assistance Center, and other related initiatives. OHYS/ACHY, homeless youth providers, other state and local agencies, etc are facilitating training opportunities. CONET members and other homeless youth providers should clearly communicate their training and technical assistance needs. Unmet training and technical assistance needs can be presented to the OHYS through the ACHY for potential problem solving.

ACHY members approved moving forward with the CONET proposal and amendments to the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan.

## **6. Life Skills Curriculum Feedback Discussion**

State Youth Council (SYC) considering promoting 'Get a Life' toolkit statewide as standard life skills curriculum that could be supplemented with additional material if needed. Many organization representatives were involved with the development of the toolkit. The intent was to create modules that could be used individually or in a series. It could supplement other resources with youth at different maturity and skill levels. FLASHDRIVE or IPOD options to hard copies. Cost per student is approx. \$400.00 for 17 weeks including cost of teachers. State Youth Council desires ACHY feedback. Provide feedback to Andy.

ACHY recommends looking at possible legislation if we agree on the tool to require life skills for youth across the state. Could include with GED or diploma requirements. Could look at a web based library of life skills (living document, best practice sharing, etc.)

Ask the Prevention Workgroup to craft a formal recommendation regarding life skills and bring it back to the ACHY. Kippi Clausen will run this by the Housing Workgroup members as well.

## **7. Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan - ACHY Workgroups - Discuss: Focus for 2010, workgroup membership, and teleconferencing sponsorship**

### **A. Prevention**

**I. Follow up on the 2009 Mentoring Summit** - Create framework for mentoring/connections model for highest risk and homeless youth and facilitate implementation

Big key to successful transition is peer-to-peer mentor relationship

**II. Vital Documents** - Priority areas include: training and life skills strategies/resources, streamline the DMV process for caseworkers, and create

a resource guide/issue brief that will act as a cheat sheet of what documents are needed for various types of public assistance

**B. Housing**

**I. Support testing new structure for the Family Unification Program (FUP) for Youth** - Care Management Network includes 7 counties and 8 non-profit organizations hoping to utilize Share Vending Project. Hoping to be statewide not just Metro area.

Matrix to insure safe and stable housing. What resources exist, what are gaps, needs around specialized populations for adequate housing resources based on their needs.

Bridging the Gap has Policy Coach that tracks state level policies relating to youth issues.

**II. Craft Recommendations for specific housing models, as well as the gaps and needs in various regions of the state.**

**C. Supportive Services**

**I. Build the case for Case Management**

**II. Support testing of the Care Management Network Model**

**D. Planning and Awareness**

**I. Colorado Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month - Nov. 2010**

Facilitate statewide public awareness campaign on the issues facing homeless and runaway youth, and the role the public can play in crafting solutions.

**II. Funding Summit** - To train providers as well as to strategize how to sustain existing funding and capitalize on potential future funding for preventing and addressing youth homelessness.

**E. Outreach**

**I. Outreach Summit** - To allow for homeless and runaway youth outreach providers to connect and explore promising practices to reach vulnerable youth in urban, rural and suburban settings.

**II. Human Trafficking 101 Trainings** - Host quarterly trainings for runaway/homeless youth direct service providers and reach out to agencies still needing to sign the recommendation. (\*Discuss days/times that are better for staff in March, June, September and December)

**8. Member Updates from other committees and initiatives**

**A. Rural Collaborative for Homeless Youth**

**B. People's Leadership Council**

- **Randle Loeb helping to found new organization. Would like youth voices at the table. The group is having a kickoff screening of the movie "The Soloist" on 2/10/2010. Contact Randle Loeb for more information.**

**C. Bridging the Gap**

- **Updates on legislation affecting youth. Contact Kippi Clausen for more information.**

**D. Colorado Prevention Leadership Council**

**E. Colorado LINKS for Mental Health**

**F. State Youth Council of the Colorado Workforce Development Council**

- G. Colorado Community and Interagency Council on Homelessness**
- H. Other**

**9. Announcements**

**A. Colorado Homeless Youth e-News Update – Will resume publication in early 2010**

**B. Next Meeting - 2010 ACHY meeting schedule**  
April 21, July 21, October 20