Voices of Unaccompanied Youth: A Program Evaluation of the Cove

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MSW Intern, The Cove
Agenda

▪ Research: Program Evaluation
▪ Questions
▪ Asset Map
▪ Questions
Background & Objectives

1. To identify the resources homeless youth envision for a safe refuge like the Cove

2. To determine how homeless youth define their own success in academic, social, and career development to guide outcomes

3. To examine personal strengths and community assets
Literature Review

▪ Risk Factors
▪ Causes
▪ Barriers to Services
▪ Effective Approaches

(Texas Homeless Education Office (THEO), 2009; National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY), 2015)
Causes

- Family conflict
- Being forced to leave the home
- Leaving home
- Conflict with sexual orientation

(Department of Human Services (DHHS), 2007; Bernstein & Foster, 2008; Slesnick et al., 2009; Thompson et al., 2010)
Risk Factors

▪ Poor physical health
▪ Physical and sexual abuse
▪ Poor emotional and mental health
▪ Sexual violence and trafficking
▪ Dropping out of school

(Ryan et al., 2000; Thompson, 2010; National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009; Evans et al., 2013; Krabbenborg et al., 2013)
Effective Approaches

▪ Targeted support services
  – Basic needs
  – Free or sliding scale medical services
  – Mental health counseling

▪ Shelter and stabilizing youth

▪ Outreach services to youth

(DHHS, 2007; Berstein & Foster, 2008; Thompson, et al., 2010; Hudson et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2013)
Effective Approaches

▪ Intensive case management

▪ Drop-in centers
  – Flexible hours
  – Safe, accessible
  – Consistent access to coordinated services

▪ Effective programming
  – Educating youth to advocate for selves
  – Positive Youth Development

(Slesnick et al., 2008; Shillington et al., 2011; Hyatt, 2013; Bender et al., 2015)
Unaccompanied Youth in Waco

86 enrolled
4 schools

- Waco High: 37%
- University: 31%
- Brazos: 29%
- DAEP: 2%

(Waco ISD Homeless Outreach Services, 2015)
Our Students

Age

- 18: 46.5%
- 17: 25.6%
- 16: 11.6%
- 15: 5.8%
- 14: 3.5%
- 19: 7.0%

Gades

- 12th Grade: 34%
- 11th Grade: 29%
- 10th Grade: 23%
- 9th Grade: 14%
- (Waco ISD Homeless Outreach Services, 2015)
Our Students

Ethnicity
- Hispanic: 37%
- Black or African American: 43%
- White: 12%
- Unknown: 8%

Gender
- Female: 67%
- Male: 33%

(Waco ISD Homeless Outreach Services, 2015)
Methodology

▪ Design: Evaluative, mixed-method
  – Surveys and Interviews

▪ Sample Population
  – Surveys: 23 current students, 6 former, and 13 professionals (42)
  – Interviews: 3 current or former students

▪ Data Collection
  – Online and In-person surveys
  – Phone & In-person interviews
Findings

- Student and staff perspectives on resources
- Other ideas generated for the Cove
- Potential barriers to the Cove
- Strengths of students
- Vision for the Cove
Percentage of students who strongly agree that it would be helpful to have the following services at the Cove

- A hot meal: 79%
- A safe place to sleep at night: 72%
- A place to do laundry: 72%
- Personal hygiene products: 72%
- Help getting a driver's license/state ID: 68%
- SNAP (Food stamps)/Medicaid: 66%
- Job training/Job shadowing opportunities: 66%
- A place to shower: 66%
- A college or adult mentor: 66%
- Tutoring: 62%
- Clothing closet: 62%
- Individual counseling: 59%
- Computer access: 59%
- Medical Assistance: 55%
- Family counseling: 52%
- City bus passes: 50%
- Arts and crafts: 50%
- Games: 50%
- A place to hang out: 45%
- A hair cut: 45%
- A place to do laundry: 66%
- Personal hygiene products: 72%
- Help getting a driver's license/state ID: 68%
- SNAP (Food stamps)/Medicaid: 66%
- Job training/Job shadowing opportunities: 66%
- A place to shower: 66%
- A college or adult mentor: 66%
- Tutoring: 62%
- Clothing closet: 62%
- Individual counseling: 59%
- Computer access: 59%
- Medical Assistance: 55%
- Family counseling: 52%
- City bus passes: 50%
- Arts and crafts: 50%
- Games: 50%
- A place to hang out: 45%
- A hair cut: 45%
Percentage of students who strongly agree and agree that it would be helpful to have the above services at the Cove

- Job training/Job shadowing opportunities: 94%
- A college or adult mentor: 94%
- A place to hang out: 97%
- Tutoring: 93%
- Computer access: 93%
- SNAP (Food stamps)/Medicaid: 90%
- Help getting a driver’s license/state ID: 90%
- Personal hygiene products: 89%
- A place to do laundry: 89%
- A hot meal: 89%
- Games: 88%
- Clothing closet: 86%
- Medical Assistance: 86%
- City bus passes: 82%
- Arts and crafts: 82%
- A safe place to sleep at night: 82%
- A place to shower: 80%
- Family counseling: 76%
- A hair cut: 76%
- Individual counseling: 74%
Percentage of staff who strongly agree that it would be helpful to have the following services at the Cove

- A safe place to sleep at night: 100%
- Personal hygiene products: 100%
- A hot meal: 100%
- City bus passes: 92%
- Clothing closet: 92%
- A place to shower: 92%
- A place to hang out: 92%
- A hair cut: 85%
- SNAP (Food stamps)/Medicaid: 85%
- Computer access: 85%
- A place to do laundry: 85%
- Tutoring: 77%
- Medical Assistance: 79%
- Help getting a driver’s license/state ID: 69%
- Job training/Job shadowing opportunities: 69%
- Individual counseling: 69%
- A college or adult mentor: 69%
- Family counseling: 62%
- Games: 31%
- Arts and crafts: 31%
### Table 3

Comparison of Student and Professional Feedback on What is Most Helpful to Have at the Cove Tier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One (Top 4)</td>
<td>A hot meal</td>
<td>A hot meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A safe place to sleep at night</td>
<td>A safe place to sleep at night</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A place to do laundry</td>
<td>City bus passes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Personal hygiene products</td>
<td>Personal hygiene products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>A clothing closet</td>
<td>A clothing closet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A place to shower</td>
<td>A place to shower</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tutoring</td>
<td>A place to hang out</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A college or adult mentor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Job training/shadowing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SNAP/Medicaid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tier</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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</tr>
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<td>A clothing closet</td>
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<td>Tutoring</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A college or adult mentor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Job training/shadowing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SNAP/Medicaid</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“Being a previous teen on the street I understand the struggle of being alone. Maybe once a month “group night” obviously not required but it would be a night where you could have team building exercises, movie nights, etc. They can realize they’re not alone and encourage one another.”
62% Strongly Agree
27% Agree
8% Disagree
4% Unsure

Percentage of students who responded to “The Cove sounds like a place I want to be a part of”
Potential Barriers

**Students**
- Transportation
- Feeling like a client
- Lack of trust from caretakers
- Embarrassment or peer pressure
- Lack of knowledge and mission
- Not wanting to go

**Staff**
- Transportation
- Awareness
- Fear of family intervention
- Ashamed
- Feeling unsafe
- Fear of being singled out
- Lack of child care
- Jobs or workforce
STRENGTHS OF UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH IN WACO

**Their Skills**
- Football
- Running
- Drawing
- Being physically active
- Making Clothes
- DIY
- Art
- Painting

**They Deeply Care About...**
- Family
- Hopes
- Dreams
- Track
- My child
- Helping others
- Education
- Friends
- Faith

**They Want to Be Known For..**
- Public Speaking
- Changing the education system
- Being Outgoing
- Talking to other people

**They know a lot about...**
- The Military
- How Money Works
- The Economy
- Parenting
- Helping Others
- The Street
- Using my story to help others
- Making Money
- Being Homeless
- Overcoming Struggles
- Everyday Struggles

**They Dream Of**
- Being an officer in the U.S. Army
- Owning a business
- Opening an organization for young parents
- Owning a fashion business for kids clothing

**Meaningful Relationships**
- Mom- “A mother’s love is unconditional”
- Children- “He is my sunshine”
- Best friends- “They see something greater in me than I see in myself”

**Their Goals**
- Financial Stability
- Success in school and track
- Graduation
- Being best parent I can be
- Stay Positive
- Find the good in people
- Change the world
- Give Back
- Strong Relationship with God
What is something you deeply care about?

“Family—that means a lot to me just because when you go through something like that, when you’re wishing you did have a family you start to look towards the future a little more and you hope that never happens to them.”
Navigating High School

- Forced to grow up
  - Jobs (40 hours under the table + school)
  - Paying for lunch
- Lack of transportation (for self and child)
- No one to sign permission slips
- Needed someone for support
What was helpful during that time?

**People**

- Friends at school
- Friends’ parents
- Adults at school
  - Teachers, social workers, childcare workers
"The most helpful was accountability- having someone that was directly pushing me, whether that was on financial scale or even bravery scale- having a teacher that will tell you the truth even if it hurts."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Atmosphere</th>
<th>Hours of Operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basketball goal</td>
<td>Home-y</td>
<td>5am to 9pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football drills</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Crack of dawn, lunch time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxing bag</td>
<td>Not formal</td>
<td>Until 9pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great study center (quiet,</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>One night open late (Fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soft piano music, tables,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A spot to relax</td>
<td>Escape reality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like the YMCA</td>
<td>A safe place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Feeling at home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Not like school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational activities</td>
<td>Not like prison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti art</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiet room to think</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Room for fun</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Music room</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“Don’t let the atmosphere be like a prison, that’s what most people feel like school is and what I felt like school was for me, and when they go home or wherever they are going to, that feels like more anxiety and it should be, so the Cove should feel like their second home where no stress or anxiety exists.”
Discussion

▪ Most needed: Basic needs (Food, shelter, personal hygiene)
▪ Long-term services: Job readiness, mentors, tutoring
▪ Lack of transportation
▪ Family counseling
▪ School support
▪ Atmosphere of the Cove
▪ Safe place to sleep
Recommendations

▪ Transportation
▪ Atmosphere: Strengths-based, “informal,” accepting
▪ Incorporate student ideas
▪ Host Homes
▪ Constant evaluation
Questions, Thoughts, Comments
References


The Cove Asset Map

For the Students, By the Students
Purpose

▪ Identify Strengths
▪ Guidance
▪ Resource
Why an asset map?

- Strengths – based
- Voice of youth
- Partnership
Practice Model

- Kretzmann and McKnight (1990)
  - Asset Based Community Development
  - Asset Mapping
Theoretical Framework

▪ Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation

(Arnstein, 1969)
How?

- Brainstorming
- Data Collection
- Mapping
Asset Map

- Trusted assets identified by youth

Legend

- The Cove
- Clothing
- Counseling
- Emergency Shelter and Housing
- Food Pantries
- Meals Provided
- Health Clinics
- In-School Resources
- Pregnancy Help
- Spiritual Development/Mentors
Identified Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Assets</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wraparound Services</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Pantries</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals Provided</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Clinics</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing/Shelter</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-School Resources</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual/Mentors</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clothing (3) & Counseling (2)
Food Sources (19) & Housing/Shelter (5)
Health Clinics (9) & Pregnancy Help (3)
In-School Resources (5) & Spiritual Mentoring (3)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets in Waco for Unaccompanied Youth</th>
<th>Food Sources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Cove</td>
<td>Food Pantries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>Caritas of Waco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things from the Heart – North Waco</td>
<td>Church of the Open Door/Food Basket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things from the Heart – Downtown</td>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smarty Pants</td>
<td>Wheels of Sharing Mobile Pantry (WACO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>Hands of Mercy/ First Spanish Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klara Center for Families</td>
<td>St. Francis Social Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starry</td>
<td>Acts Church Storehouse Food Delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter and Housing</td>
<td>Lakeshore Baptist Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Abuse Center</td>
<td>Shepherd’s Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally’s House (Salvation Army)</td>
<td>Antioch Community Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat for Humanity</td>
<td>Living Word COGIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Authority of Waco</td>
<td>Carver Park Baptist Church</td>
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<td>Methodist Children’s Home</td>
<td>St. Francis Social Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Clinics</td>
<td>2nd Missionary Baptist Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Health Center</td>
<td>Meals Provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bellmead Community Clinic</td>
<td>Antioch Community Church</td>
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<td>Bell’s Hill Community Clinic</td>
<td>First Lutheran Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elm Avenue Medical and Dental</td>
<td>Gospel Café</td>
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<td>Martin Luther King Clinic</td>
<td>Salvation Army Community Kitchen</td>
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<td>Madison Cooper Community Clinic</td>
<td>Salvation Army Mobile Canteen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Clinic at MCC</td>
<td>Grace Temple Baptist Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meyer Center Community Clinic</td>
<td>Acts Church Agape Community Meal</td>
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<tr>
<td>South 18th Street Community Clinic</td>
<td>Church Under the Bridge</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-School Resources</th>
<th>Pregnancy Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communities In Schools of the Heart of Texas</td>
<td>Care Net- Medical</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS- University High</td>
<td>Care Net- Administrative, Prenatal &amp; Parenting Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS- Waco High</td>
<td>Nurse Family Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parenting Education Program</td>
<td>Spiritual Development/Mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waco ISD Homeless Outreach</td>
<td>Young Life- Waco, University, and Rapoport HS</td>
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</table>
Student Identified Assets (19)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone #</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Bus Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrap Around Services for Unaccompanied Youth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Cove</strong></td>
<td>Dinner, laundry, showers, computers, clothing, job readiness</td>
<td>2226 Washington Ave.</td>
<td>(254) 300-8443</td>
<td>4-8pm Mon-Thurs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clothing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Things from the Heart – North Waco</strong></td>
<td>Clothing: Contact WISD Homeless Outreach for free voucher</td>
<td>3400 Bosque Blvd.</td>
<td>(254) 235-2508</td>
<td>9-4pm Tues-Sat</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Things from the Heart – Downtown</strong></td>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>3332 Franklin Ave.</td>
<td>(254) 732-2110</td>
<td>9-4pm Mon-Sat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smarty Pants</strong></td>
<td>Kids clothing</td>
<td>5301 Bosque Blvd Ste 190</td>
<td>(254) 751-0211</td>
<td>9-5pm M-S 10-4pm Sun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counseling</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Klaras Center for Families</strong></td>
<td>Counseling, intake, crisis services</td>
<td>1105 Jefferson Ave</td>
<td>(254) 752-7889</td>
<td>730-7pm M-F</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Starry</strong></td>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>3001b W Waco Dr.</td>
<td>(254) 399-6552</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Discussion & Next Steps

- Knowledge of assets
- What is behind trusted resources?
- Partnership & collaboration
- Future asset mapping: The neighborhood
References
