

Huckleberry House  
1421 Hamlet Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43201

Administration (614) 294-8097  
24 hour Crisis Line: (614) 294-5553



Going home :)

## A Letter from the Executive Director

It seems to me that there is no more comforting phrase than “going home”. Whether I’m going home at the end of my work day or going home to visit my family, I experience that sense of comfort that can only be found at home. Home is where I can be safe, where my physical and emotional needs will be met, and where I can relax. That is what home should be.

For too many of our teens and their families, home can be a place of conflict, violence or poverty. As families try to cope with today’s pressures, they often do not have the support they need to find peace at home. Small problems can escalate, and big problems can overwhelm.

At Huckleberry House, we understand how to help families create a home that nurtures the best in individuals and that provides a haven for all family members. Sometimes families need help in learning new ways to communicate; sometimes families need help finding resources in the community; and sometimes families just need someone who understands their struggles.

We need your help as we work to make going home a safe, healthy option for our teens. Your gift to Huckleberry House supports families throughout Central Ohio through the programs included in this annual

report. Your gift means that teens will have a shelter to go to when they think things are too tough at home. Your gift means that families will have trained counselors to help them create a haven at home. Your gift means that teens who need to learn how to live independently can do so safely and with help from Huckleberry House. Your gift means that teens will learn how to express themselves in positive ways. At the end of the day, your gift means going home for troubled teens.

Thank you for your support. For the past 38 years, you have helped us work for our community’s teens and families. We could not have accomplished so much without you.

Becky Westerfelt  
Executive Director



## Crisis Program



The Crisis Program helps teens when they are without a home or are having problems which have led to a disruptive and difficult home situation. The crisis shelter is available to teens 12-17, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Teens come to the shelter on their own or with help from our Safe Place partners. Through Safe Place, a teen can go to a Kroger store, White Castle restaurant or a Fire Station and ask that Huckleberry House be called. While getting to the shelter is only a first step, it is important that teens have safe alternatives to the street.

When teens come to the shelter, they immediately begin working on the problems that brought them here. The main goal is to get them home or another safe place they can call home. Families are expected to actively work to resolve the problems that caused the young person to run away. That means everyone must participate in finding solutions – teens and parents.

Last year, 601 youth got the help they needed for a more peaceful, happier home life. When teens stayed at the shelter (an average of five days), through individual counseling, group sessions, and other therapy, they found that going home wasn't so scary after all.



## Transitional Living Program



Sometimes it is not possible for a teen to return home. As they face adulthood, they need to learn how to make their own home. Teens between the ages of 16 ½ and 18 enter the Transitional Living Program to learn how to live on their own successfully. The Transitional Living Team teaches independent living skills while providing mental health support and secure living arrangements. Learning basic skills such as economical grocery shopping, laundry, home safety, and budgeting help these teens become more self-sufficient in their own home.

The Transitional Living Program also helps teen parents learn how to care for their children on their own. Fifty-percent of teens in the program last year learned parenting skills for happy, healthy, safe children. Not only are the teens benefitting from the program, but they are teaching their children that you can have a safe and comfortable home.

Last year, 76 teens met with a Counselor, went to school, and/or had a job to reach their goals. They began a life-long process of living independently and becoming self-reliant.




## Family Support Program

The Family Support Program offers Counseling and Home-based Intervention to teens and families. When a family is struggling with problems at home such as depression, poverty, alcoholism or mental health issues the constant daily strain can hurt all family members. Through counseling, Huckleberry House helped 132 families ease that strain so they could have a more stable life at home. Our approach is practical and focused on solving the problems young people and families have so they can get on with their lives in a safe and confidential environment.

When it is necessary, counselors go to the family as part of our Home-based Intervention Services. Last year, we visited 94 families to help them create a better life for themselves. We support families and teens by helping with behavior problems and setting limits. We also provide referrals to other agencies and safety planning. Our workers know that often families and teens have strengths that can see them through the difficult transitions they are facing. Our role is to help them use the positive skills they have to solve problems and thrive at home.



## Youth Outreach Program



The Youth Outreach Program seeks to help youth ages 12-22 on the streets of Franklin County. With curb-side counseling, classroom presentations, and youth events our workers tell the youth about the resources available to them to keep them safe and help them get what they need. The goal of our Youth Outreach workers is to talk to teens before they leave home. The Youth Outreach Program can help before there is a crisis.

Last year, YOP reached out to 15,521 individuals to lead them out of harmful and unsafe situations. The Youth Outreach Program seeks youth who are reluctant to use traditional helping resources. Young people can talk with Outreach workers about getting help with school, finding a job, getting involved in positive activities after school or getting help with housing. We help youth and families get connected to counseling or other places for assistance. If a youth is in crisis, a Youth Outreach worker can help him or her get somewhere safe.

## Community Education Program



The Community Education Program educates the community on issues involving our teens such as their safety, issues of homelessness, peer pressures, violence, and drugs and alcohol. The program goal is to raise our community's awareness that runaway teens are everyday kids with everyday problems.

Community Education reaches the community through the Green Light Project, meeting in schools with teenage girls, the Youth Advisory Board and a campaign called "Speak Up – Be A Voice Not An Echo."

For five years, the Green Light project has raised awareness of teen homelessness issues. Huck House distributed 12,000+ green light bulbs throughout the Columbus area annually during National Runaway Prevention Month in November.

The "Speak Up – Be A Voice Not An Echo" campaign is targeting teens to inspire them to speak up among their peers and to stand up for what they believe in, even if it's not what the crowd is saying. Tactics being used to diffuse this message are a teen lock-in, the production of a PSA that will be launched on TV and radio, and a host of school presentations as well as a teen-oriented website.



## Community Education Program

Community Education is also meeting with teenage girls at their schools. These are young girls who have a history of violent behavior and low self-esteem because they haven't experienced anything different in their lives. By meeting with these teens we hope to change the cycle of violence in them and help them to grow into confident, safe women.

## MARC+ (Mentoring and Resolving Conflict Positively)

The MARC+ Program is a nine week session of classes designed to give young people conflict management skills. It is in-depth management of conflict and arguments such as: hints to de-escalate arguments, listening skills, understanding empathy and where the other person is coming from. They also learn to understand body language and how it can either improve a situation or make it worse. Teens learn in a classroom environment how to walk away from a fight, hold their temper, and use language to keep the peace. This can be easier said than done because, unfortunately, these are skills they have not learned at home.

By going through the classes last year, 256 teens learned skills to have a calm and friendly life and home. MARC+ is available because there are so many kids having so many conflicts, but also there is such a need to learn these basic life lessons. Resolving conflict and learning how to handle difficult or uncomfortable situations is something everyone can benefit from to help improve their lives at home.



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Darby Creek Nursery	Lisa Phelps
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Lang Stone	
McGraw-Hill	
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### Financial Information

#### Revenue

Grants	\$1,815,577
United Way	463,508
Medicaid	522,651
Purchase of Services & Discretionary Funding	63,745
Contributions	152,599
Interest & Investment	(56,060)

<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,962,020</b>
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#### Expenses

Crisis Program	888,907
Family Support Program	504,640
Huck Program	30,681
Transitional Living Program	1,153,863
Youth Outreach Program	231,018
MARC+ Program	74,580
Administration	372,947
Community Education Program	3,459

<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$3,260,095</b>
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