

Report on Youth for Tomorrow September 15, 2020

Report Mandate

The 2019 Acts of Assembly, Chapter 780, Item 348 I, appropriates \$100,000 in State Fiscal Year 2019 and 2020 to the organization Youth for Tomorrow (YFT) to provide “comprehensive residential, education, and counseling services to at-risk adolescent youth of the Commonwealth of Virginia who have been sexually exploited, including victims of sex trafficking.” The appropriations language instructs the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) to include in the contract with YFT specific goods and services that will be delivered to adolescents and youth of the Commonwealth as a result of this appropriation. The appropriations language also requires YFT to submit an annual report which is due to the Governor and the Chairmen of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees by October 1 of each year.

This document is the State Fiscal Year 2020 year-end report submitted by Youth for Tomorrow.

Background

Youth for Tomorrow is committed to servicing female victims of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST). According to Shared Hope International, DMST is the commercial sexual exploitation of American children within U.S. borders. It is the “recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act,” where the person is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident under the age of 18 years. The age of the victim is the critical issue, and there is no requirement to prove force, fraud, or coercion used to secure the victim’s actions. The law recognizes the effects of psychological manipulation by the trafficker, as well as the effect of threats of harm which traffickers/pimps use to maintain control over their young victims. DMST includes but is not limited to the commercial sexual exploitation of children through prostitution, pornography, and/or stripping.

According to the Polaris Project 2019 Data Report, there was a 20% increase in the number of victims and survivors contacting the National Trafficking Hotline. According to the FBI, sex trafficking is the third-largest criminal industry in the world and the fastest-growing organized crime in the United States. In 2018, 143 sex trafficking cases were reported in Virginia. The Polaris Project’s Virginia State Report for 2019, reported that the Trafficking Hotline received a total of 555 from calls identifying 198 Human Trafficking Cases, identifying 132 identified sex trafficking incidents of which 38 were minor victims of trafficking (increase from 22 in 2018).

YFT Services Overview

Since 2008, YFT has served more than 281 DMST victims. During this grant period, July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020, YFT served 39 victims from Virginia and around the country in our Residential Treatment Center. The first victim to utilize grant funding arrived on November 18, 2019. Again, YFT would like to attribute the latency in referrals due to many law enforcement changes that began early in the summer. Many of the FBI, Homeland Security and local police who referred residents were reassigned or offices were undergoing restructuring. For example, Detective Woolf, who had referred the vast majority of girls, was reassigned to the Missing and Exploited Children’s Division in the late spring of 2016. There was some confusion as to his

involvement in working on DMST cases until the fall of 2016, when he referred our first victim to be funded under the grant.

During this reporting period, YFT served two DMST victims from Virginia in its Girls on a Journey (GOAJ) Program. Of the two girls served during this funding period, 1 was from Rockingham County, Virginia and the other from Arlington, Virginia. The average length of stay (LOS) for both girls was eight months. Both girls were 14 years of age. During this period, both girls made adequate progress, meeting more than 85% of their Individual Service Goals (ISP). One girl was hospitalized for suicidal ideation several times, but stabilized before being taken into DSS custody and placed in foster care. The other girl was successfully reunited with her family. The previous year of this funding, four victims were served. The first year of this funding, 13 DMST victims were served, totaling 28 girls since funding began in August 2013. Lastly, 37 additional girls were served in the GOAJ program. Five from the state of Virginia and 32 from other states, but funded by other means.

In addition to being provided services specific to the need of DMST victims, two of the girls were enrolled in YFT's standard residential program. Both girls were referred to the program as DMST victims by parental concerns related to trafficking at the suggestion of local law enforcement. Both were assessed clinically and identified as DMST victims by YFT clinical staff using the Intervene DMST assessment tool and both girls were assessed for trauma using the Trauma Inventory.

Project Service Objectives & Outputs

***Objective1:** Youth For Tomorrow clinical staff will provide individual counseling to minor victims of sex trafficking which address their victimization and enable them to develop coping skills which relate to the mental health aspects of their victimization (i.e., trust, attachment issues, self-image, self-esteem, trauma-bond, anxiety, etc.), preventing long term mental health impacts.*

YFT clinical staff provided 70 individual counseling sessions to two girls over 8 months. In addition, 27 family sessions were provided during this reporting period.

***Objective2:** Youth For Tomorrow clinical staff will provide group counseling related to victimization. Clinical staff will also identify other group therapy needs such as substance, chemical education, etc.*

YFT provided 15 group counseling sessions to the two girls during this reporting period. Group counseling included GOAJ, chemical education, 12-Step, and anger management groups.

***Objective 3:** Youth For Tomorrow will provide residential services to minor victims of sex trafficking, ensuring 24- hour, supervision process group related to cooperation and social skills development; life skills education and recreation.*

YFT residential staff provided 348 hours of recreational activities and leisure activities during this reporting period.

Objective 4: *Youth For Tomorrow will enroll minor victim of sex trafficking into the residential school, providing special education services when required and secondary level course work in-line with Virginia Department of Education Standards.*

YFT educational staff provided 1,527 hours or 135 days of educational instruction during the period of project funding.

Objective 5: *Youth For Tomorrow will ensure that minor victims meet regularly with their family, parents or legal guardians. Victims will be allowed phone calls and visitation as well as home visit off campus. Family will participate in family counseling.*

YFT case managers coordinated 2 home visits and 1 on-campus visits. The relations with the resident and their parents were poor. One resident would be placed in DSS custody while the other was reunited with her family after family relations improved through family counseling. Home visits were disrupted beginning mid-March due to COVID-19.

Objective 6: *An individual service plan will be completed within 30 days of admissions, which outlines the minor victims service needs as related to her primary reason for placement (sex trafficking); clinical, education and life skills assessments; and transition plan.*

YFT case managers developed ISPs for each of the two residents. ISPs can be found in the residents' files.

Objective 7: *Minor victims will participate in weekly life skills instruction based on the ARISE Life Management Skills curriculum. These skills will ensure victims are able to eventually live independently.*

YFT residential staff provided 54 hours of life skills activities during this reporting period.

Objective 8: *Youth For Tomorrow case management staff will identify long-term partnerships with local service providers who offer medical and mental health services to residents, when needed.*

YFT has a memorandum of agreement with Greater Prince William Community Health Center to provide medical services to clients.

Objective 9: *Youth For Tomorrow nursing staff will provide first aid, medication management, coordinate medical service or refer residents to community agencies for medical services. Victims placed at YFT require medical services related, but not limited to pediatrics, gynecology, dental, and eye care.*

YFT nursing staff coordinated: 4 FNP visit; 1 doctor's visit; 2 dental visits; 14 Medication Management visits with YFT's Psychiatrist; 4 ER visits; and one acute

hospitalization. One resident struggled initially with trauma and was taken to the hospital on four occasions and kept in an acute setting for four days the first two months in care.

Service Outcomes

Youth For Tomorrow's GOAJ program has served 39 adolescent girls in the last 12 months (a 66% increase from the previous year), including the 2 girls directly benefiting from VDSS funding this past year. Of those 39, 32 stayed in the GOAJ program for more than 60 days and were included in the outcomes below:

- 75% met more than 85% of their individual treatment plan goals;
- Eleven are currently receiving some type of after care services from YFT including counseling, educational supports, and living supports;
- Six girls obtained their high school diploma or GED; and,
- 82% have successfully transitioned into the community (i.e., reside at home, maintained employment, and/or enrolled in school).

Conclusion

Youth For Tomorrow reports that they are the only facility in Virginia and the Mid-Atlantic region that offers safe and secure housing, along with counseling, education, and medical and dental care for victims of sexual crimes against minors. Youth For Tomorrow is licensed to provide care to residents 13 years of age and up to 21 years of age who receive services from the local departments of social services or other public agencies.

The \$100,000 grant appropriation through VDSS has served two teenage female victims from Virginia consisting of 12 months of services during this grant period July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. For example, the 24/7 average cost per child for these comprehensive Youth for Tomorrow has matched dollar for dollar the funding provided by VDSS through the General Assembly appropriation to serve these victims services which is \$16,698/ month. These professional services include:

- State-supervised residential services
- Therapeutic services provided by licensed clinicians
- Professional nursing care
- Transportation for required medical/dental treatment
- Case management services
- Accredited secondary education services on campus (i.e. secure environment)

The 12 months of aggregate services provided to these girls comes to \$250,470 of which VDSS grant reimbursement is \$100,000 (40%) with YFT providing the remainder of \$150,470 (60%) under the current grant. State funding is important in supplementing the cost of financially serving this victimized population. Additional funding ensures more victims trying to recover from this type of violence will receive the safe, secure, therapeutic, medical and case management services they require.