

## **Report on Youth for Tomorrow December 6, 2021**

### **Report Mandate**

The 2021 Acts of Assembly, Chapter 780, Item 348 I, appropriates \$100,000 in State Fiscal Year 2021 and 2022 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 2021 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. The Polaris Project’s Virginia State Report for 2019, reported that the Trafficking Hotline received a total of 555 calls identifying 198 human trafficking cases and 132 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 284 DMST victims. During this grant period, July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 YFT served 33 victims from Virginia and around the country in our Residential Treatment Center in our Girls on a Journey (GOAJ) program. The first victim to utilize grant funding arrived on November 11, 2020. In the past year, many of the referrals that YFT has received for DMST victims have been connected to the Department of Social Services and therefore funding has not needed to be accessed. Referrals had also decreased significantly when the pandemic began, and many human trafficking initiatives were slowed down.

During this reporting period, YFT served two DMST victims from Virginia and one DMST victim from Louisiana. Of the three girls served during this funding period, one was from Haymarket, Virginia, one was from Alexandria, Virginia, and one was from New Orleans, Louisiana. The average length of stay (LOS) for these three girls was five months. Two of the girls were 15 years of age, and one was 17.

During this period, two girls made adequate progress, meeting more than 85% of their Individual Service Goals (ISP). Both of these two girls were successfully reunified with their families. One girl was hospitalized for suicidal ideation and was transitioned to a higher level of care.

Since funding began in August 2013, YFT has served 219 DMST victims in the GOAJ program. While many victims come to YFT with funding sources, some victims have no means of obtaining funding for residential treatment services.

Of the three girls that YFT served during this reporting year, they were all referred to the program as DMST victims – one by law enforcement, one by the Children’s Hospital, and one by parental concerns related to trafficking at the suggestion of local law enforcement. All were assessed clinically and identified as DMST victims by YFT clinical staff through a comprehensive clinical assessment.

### **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 76 individual counseling sessions to three girls over 8 months. In addition, 29 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 weekly group counseling sessions to the girls during this reporting period. Group counseling included trauma, healthy relationships, coping skills, and GOAJ.

***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 179 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 1,356 hours or 244 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 5 home visits and 2 on-campus visits. The relations between the residents and their families were greatly improved by family therapy sessions provided by YFT therapists and through these family visits coordinated by YFT Case Managers.

**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 three 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 44 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 a total of 37 medical appointments this reporting period including: 8 physicals, 19 medication management visits, 1 ER visit, 2 YFT Clinic visits, 4 dental appointments, 2 vaccination appointments, and 1 lab work appointment.

## **Service Outcomes**

Youth For Tomorrow's GOAJ program has served 33 adolescent girls in the last 12 months, including the 3 girls directly benefiting from VDSS funding this past year. Of those 33, 28 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;
- 100% are receive 30, 60, and 90 day follow-up Aftercare contacts from their YFT Case Manager. Many also continue to receive services from YFT including counseling, educational supports, and living supports; and
- 85% have successfully transitioned into the community (i.e., reside at home, maintained employment, and/or enrolled in school).

## **Conclusion**

Youth For Tomorrow is licensed by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to provide care to residents 12 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 three teenage female victims consisting of 12 months of services during this grant period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. 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 \$16,351/ 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 \$245,265 of which VDSS grant reimbursement is \$100,000 (40%) with YFT providing the remainder of \$145,265 (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.