

Rotary Grant Narrative

Contact Person: Jennifer Heinen-Stiffler, Chief Operating Officer

Contact Information: Jennifer Heinen-Stiffler, COO (805) 569-1103 or jennifer.heinen-stiffler@ciymca.org

Administrative Office Address: 1180 Eugenia Place, Suite 104 Carpinteria, CA 93101

Program

The YMCA currently has three core programs that provide a continuum of service to youth ages 12–24 who experience crisis, abuse, neglect, and homelessness in the greater Santa Barbara area. The three programs are: Noah's Anchorage a shelter for runaway and homeless youth, My Home a supportive transitional-age housing program, and Haley Street Navigation Center a drop-in facility and street based program meeting basic needs. The YMCA also operates a 24/7 support hotline to support and intake youth in all three programs. Together these collaborative and low barrier services ensure that crisis intervention, shelter, food, counseling and referral services are available to youth 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Services are designed to meet youth where they are, there are minimal commitments to start and there are no fees.

Need

Youth homelessness is often referred to as an "invisible issue". When annual street counts of homeless youth are done few youth are counted (2022 Santa Barbara County Point In Time Count Found 11% of homeless individuals were under 24). In 2022–2023 the YMCA is projected to serve about 575 unduplicated youth who are homeless, at-risk or in crisis. Where are these youth? They are blending in on college campuses, sitting in Starbucks and moving from one friend's couch to another's. Youth experiencing homelessness don't want to be found, the majority are leaving abusive situations and like all youth they want to fit in. It takes low-barrier and youth focused service providers like the YMCA to make the difference.

Grant Use

The operating budget for all three of our crisis and homeless prevention programs is roughly \$1.1 million on an annual basis. There are no fees for service and staff work on an annual basis to cover operating expenses of the programs (including rental assistance). If this grant were received, it would be put toward our largest operating expense, front line staff. Through this grant, youth will be able to avoid the tragic outcomes that accompany living on the streets and can develop the life skills, supports, housing and employment needed to live independently.

Other

This is a story from Leslie who entered our program by visiting the drop-in center looking for basic resources like laundry and storage and has since moved into housing. *"I come from a family who doesn't support me and kicked me out while I was underage. I have supported myself for a year now. I am going to be 18 soon and usually parents are supposed to help you prepare for adulthood but since I've had no support in that I've had to find it on my own. The Y has helped me in areas such as education, finance and housing support. I now have signed up for college and will be the first in my family to attend. When you're 18 and have no idea how to do stuff on your own they have been a great help. They helped me sign up for ebt, college, apply for housing, get vouchers for my ID, free school supplies, and sign up for grants... Even though I am currently homeless, I know I have the Y team to help me. It just is going to take time. They have helped me a lot in my first steps to adulthood."*