



Since 1973, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has partnered with private non-profit providers to serve runaway and homeless youth, and their families, in Michigan. The statewide network known as the Michigan Network for Youth and Families (MNYF) represents 19 agencies providing services to runaway, homeless and at-risk youth, eighteen of whom contract with MDHHS.

We are among the most successful in the nation due in part to our extensive history of providing quality services and the cooperation of member agencies to assist one another. 95% of the young people discharged from our shelters are reunified with their families, and 88% remain enrolled in some education. However, in recent years we have lacked sufficient capacity to provide services at the level necessary to protect all of our state's most vulnerable youth, and seen a total of six program closures leaving multiple Michigan counties with a gap in service access for homeless and runaway youth.

Over the years, more youth are experiencing more instability and trauma, including sexual or physical abuse, domestic violence, and parental incarceration. Youth are finding fewer services in other similarly underfunded institutional programs and come to us, including: youth aging out of, or who are seen as problem placements in, foster care; youth who are leaving residential, delinquency and corrections facilities without a certain or stable plan; youth in need of respite mental health care; and youth who have families in homeless and domestic violence shelters that are unable to house adolescent males.

Contracted agencies were recognized two years ago with a modest increase of \$500,000 for the first time since 2001, which was retained for 2020 in the MDHHS budget. A further increase in last year's legislatively-passed budget of \$300,000, however, was line item vetoed. Our recent increase was utilized for workforce retention, facility improvements, youth services, and staff training. While very much appreciated, we view this as an initial step for rebuilding a stronger statewide network to help youth and families. Therefore, we are asking for continuation of the recent increase and **3 million dollars to continue these efforts and keep pace with the increasing demand for more complex services, the first step in an effort to ensure that every young person experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness and their families can access quality services. We ask that you urge all of your colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, to support this request.**

Please help us rebuild the safety net for our youth and families in crisis as well as one critical piece of a strategy to prevent family instability. After all, the citizens of this State deserve nothing less.

Thank you.

Benjamin Moe, LMSW
Executive Director, Do'chas II
Board President, Michigan Network for Youth and Families

DOMEDAY 2020



- **Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY)** programs are preventing homelessness, providing services to homeless youth, and preventing additional system involvement – **38% of youth served are in “prevention situations”**

- **Unserved counties** and recent RHY **program closures** across the state
- The **increasing cost** to serve youth and families with complex mental and physical health needs
- **Time-to-service** for youth expanding due to strained capacity
- Challenges in the areas of **staff training and retention**

- RHY programs **propel** homeless and runaway youth in a positive direction, **prevent** future housing instability, and effectively **intervene** in crisis situations to prevent homelessness
- RHY programs preserve families – **95% of youth discharged from emergency shelters are reunified with their families**
- RHY programs keep youth connected with school – **88% of emergency shelter youth are enrolled in education**



Michigan's
Children

914 Church Street
Flint, MI 48502
mnyf.org

215 S. Washington Square
Lansing, Michigan 48933
michiganschildren.org