



HUCKLEBERRY HOUSE

WHAT DO YOU Expect?

Improving the future for at-risk and homeless youth starts with the right mindset.

And everyone has a role to play.

HUCKLEBERRY HOUSE 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Our contract with the community is about more than keeping kids off the street.

It's about changing the expectation of what we can collectively accomplish.

Judayza Johnson didn't expect to be homeless at 17. But when mom left town and didn't return for weeks, cutting off all communication with Judayza, she found herself with nowhere to turn. "At that point, what are your options?" she says. "I've seen other young people from my neighborhood in similar situations turn to selling drugs or selling their bodies just to survive. And they don't try to push you away from it, they try to lure you in. There's a lot of pressure to just give up and go that route."

But Judayza remembered hearing a presentation from the Huckleberry House at her school. She kept the card she received that day, and she decided to call the number. Today, five years later, Judayza is about to finish her culinary training and has already started her own business as a personal chef. She acknowledges that her life would probably look a lot different if it weren't for the support and direction she received from Huckleberry House.

You can read Judayza's story and the stories of other young people we work with on the pages of this report. While each young person's situation and challenges are unique, their outcomes have a common denominator: They found the support they needed to see beyond their current crisis. And they connected with people who expected more for them, until they could expect more for themselves.

For almost 50 years, Huckleberry House has worked relentlessly to redefine the community's expectations for our at-risk and homeless youth. As Franklin County's primary provider of shelter and services to these young people, we see our role as not only addressing immediate crises, but as working to resolve the root causes of the problems. We partner with other like-minded organizations, service providers, and individuals in the community to expand our outreach to all youth, creating a community-wide safety net that helps ensure no young person slips through the cracks.

To that end, in Fiscal Year 2019, Huckleberry House:

- Grew our Safe Place Partner network to 136 sites throughout Central Ohio
- Actively participated in shaping the Community Shelter Board's comprehensive plan for serving homeless young people
- Launched a training program to share our unique expertise in youth issues with other service providers throughout the state
- Hosted our second annual Sleep Out to raise awareness for youth homelessness and more than \$100,000 in funds to support our programs
- Awarded \$13,000 in post-secondary education scholarships to help deserving young people in our programs work toward their future goals
- Welcomed more than 1,065 volunteers from the community who contributed their time and talents in various ways to support at-risk youth



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4** Crisis Program
- 6** Brooklyn's Story
- 8** Transitional Living Program
- 10** Rose's Story
- 12** The Counseling Center
at Huckleberry House
- 14** Zach's Story
- 16** Youth Outreach Program
- 18** Destiny's Story
- 20** Scholarship Program
- 22** Judayza's Story
- 24** Sleep Out! Columbus 2019
- 26** Huckleberry House Supporters
- 28** Rebecca's Story
- 30** Individual Donors
- 36** Corporate and Organizational
- 38** 2019 Financials
- 39** Board of Directors

You'll see the numbers and personal stories that highlight our impact on the following pages. We're proud of these results. But we're even prouder of the change we're seeing in the community's response to the challenges we collectively face. With 3,000 youth in our community estimated to experience homelessness every year, we have to work together to change expectations about what is and isn't acceptable in a community as dynamic and prosperous as ours.

So, let's keep asking ourselves, "What do we expect for our young people?" The answers will fuel the momentum and open the door to more meaningful, sustainable changes. And when we make better options readily available to our at-risk youth, the young people will take it from there. Read on to see how.

Crisis PROGRAM

What Our Community Can Expect:

A long-term solution

The Crisis Shelter at Huckleberry House never has been, and never will be, simply a temporary respite. While we provide young people in crisis with a safe place to stay and meet their immediate needs for shelter, food, and personal care, the primary purpose of the program is to provide an environment to begin working toward longer-term solutions. The typical stay at the shelter is five to seven days. But we stay connected to the young people long after they leave. Youth build relationships with our counselors, participate in family meetings, and establish ongoing supports that help them continue working toward their family, education, employment, and personal goals.

3,040

crisis support hours provided by Crisis Case Managers and Huck House staff to teach skills for improving interactions with family members

906

additional counseling hours with Huck House social workers to help youth continue working toward their goals



What Crisis Program Youth Can Expect:

Easy access to resources and support

630

crisis episodes addressed

755

life skills training hours

75

hours of victim services support

Beyond Expectation

Easy access to the help they need

Huckleberry House expanded Project Safe Place this year. With a total of 136 Safe Place sites, the Central Ohio community is covered with places young people can go to get help getting to Huck House.



136 Safe Place sites including fire stations, libraries, White Castle and Donatos restaurants, and community centers

A safe place to stay and have basic needs met

3,446 regular bed nights of shelter

1,172 bed nights of extended shelter through partnership with Franklin County Children Services

10,595 meals and snacks served

Individualized support

Young people in the shelter meet with Case Workers and Licensed Social Workers to address the root causes of family problems and develop ongoing plans and goals for addressing family, housing, education, and employment needs.

393 hours of diagnostic assessments



A community that cares

Community members regularly visit the shelter to spend time with youth, provide special meals, and show support in various ways. In Fiscal Year 2019, our young people enjoyed several special events.

6 volunteers and **1** Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter rocked the house. Jason Mraz visited Huck House before playing at the Palace Theater Downtown in December, bringing with him a team of volunteers who helped decorate the shelter, bake cookies for the holidays, and add some special touches to the Shelter's Round Room, recently renovated by Daimler Construction. Before Jason treated the youth to an impromptu concert, he and his volunteers painted the words of Jason's song, *Have it All*, on the walls.

8,900 twinkle lights make the holidays bright. On December 2 Huckleberry House and AEP lit up the Shelter while the youth and the community looked on. Everyone enjoyed treats and hot cocoa while listening to carols performed by the Ohio State Women's Glee Club. (See page 28 for more information.)

94% of Crisis Program teens returned to safe and appropriate housing

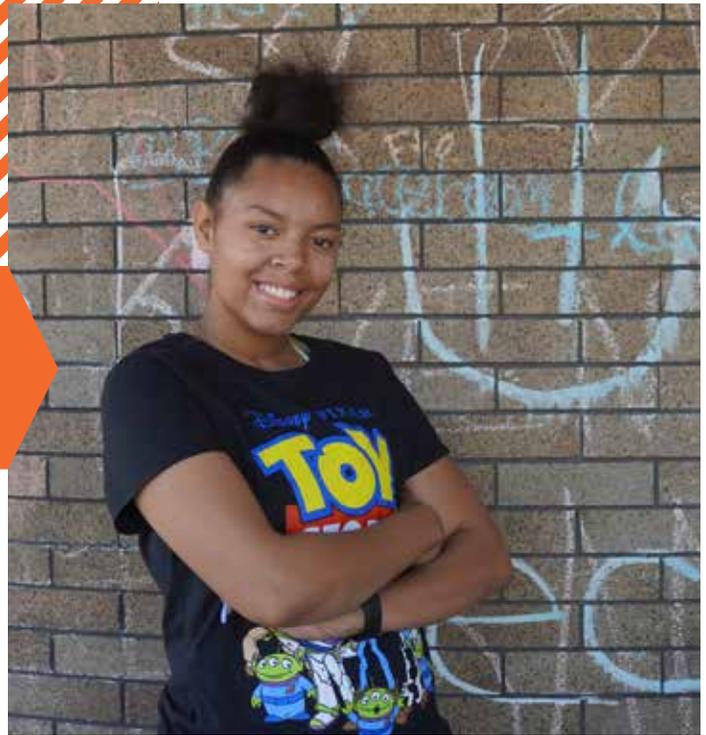


Brooklyn's story

Growing up is hard enough. It's even harder when you're not sure where home is.

Brooklyn and her family have always struggled to maintain stable housing. This left Brooklyn doing a lot of couch surfing during her high school years, which put her in some potentially dangerous situations. Scared and frustrated, Brooklyn turned to the Crisis Shelter at Huckleberry House. She stayed at the shelter several times during her senior year. While there, she found more than a warm bed and hot meals. She found the support she needed to set goals for her future and to stay focused on achieving them.

"Stability isn't just about having a place to sleep at night," she says. "It's about having people who love and support you. That's what Huck House gave me. They really helped with my mental health, and they made sure I made it to school every day and did my homework. They helped me stay motivated to graduate."



With her newfound support system, Brooklyn did the work to obtain her diploma, bringing her grade point average up over two points in a short period of time. She is now enrolled at Wilberforce University where she is studying mental health rehabilitation.

"I've always wanted more for my life, but there were times when it just felt hopeless," she explains. "I don't want other kids to have to feel that. I want to do something that's going to make a difference."

Brooklyn hopes to become a probation officer after graduation. She wants to use her future profession as a way to connect with other young people who are facing difficulties or who have had a few missteps in life. She wants to help them see a better future and stay focused on achieving it.

"That's what Huck House did for me. They helped me see what I've always wanted for my life and showed me how I could get there. I'm working hard now so I can help other kids who need that same support."

What To Expect Next:

As Huck House continues to invite and encourage the community to play a part in supporting our youth, look for opportunities to get involved at the Shelter including cooking meals, planning activity nights, or hosting holiday parties. And be sure to mark your calendar for next Summer's Community Block Party, to be held June 6, 2020, at the Huckleberry House Crisis Shelter. For additional information or to share your own ideas for Shelter activity or events, please contact the Development Office at 614-294-8097 or volunteers@huck-house.org.



Transitional Living PROGRAM

What Our Community Can Expect:

A collaborative effort to resolve homelessness

In Franklin County, 3,000 youth are estimated to be homeless each year and another 4,000 at imminent risk of becoming homeless. When you're young and in this situation, you need more than a roof over your head. You need skills for living independently so you can sustain your home and work toward a better tomorrow. Through an effort spearheaded by the Community Shelter Board and chaired by Huckleberry House Executive Director Becky Westerfelt, organizations and individuals came together to create appropriate services for youth and address the community-wide issue. The resulting comprehensive plan, *A Place to Call Home for Youth*, leverages new *Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program* (YHDP) funding awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in July 2018.

250

stakeholders, including youth and young adults who have experienced homelessness along with representatives from 65 community organizations, contributed to planning comprehensive new approaches and strategies to dramatically reduce youth homelessness and ensure all young people, age 24 and under, have a safe place to call home

100%

capacity
TLP apartments are always filled and Huckleberry House maintains a waiting list, pointing to additional need in our community

80

transition-age young people (17-24) and their children housed at Huckleberry House's TLP apartments





Jefferson Place

What TLP Youth Can Expect:

A safe place to call their own

29 fully-furnished apartments, including 20 newly renovated homes located at Jefferson Place, a unique and supportive community nestled within the city's dynamic nonprofit district, with shared space for socializing and the children to play

15 apartments designated for young people who are survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking and victims of crime; located in a secure, alarmed building that is staffed around the clock by workers trained in safety planning and victim services

14,616 nights of shelter provided

A community that cares

15 youth from a Dayton high school volunteered to help TLP young people move into their apartments

18 volunteers from The Wellington School cooked a pancake breakfast for TLP residents

5 employees from HEAPY helped clean up the yard around the TLP apartments and donated flowers and mulch to improve the outdoor space

A path to a better future

While they are building the skills they need to survive, youth also work on skills they need to thrive. Through goal-setting and support, TLP youth gain the confidence and get the direction they need to take steps toward a more rewarding and fulfilling future.

79% of program graduates achieved education goals including enrolling in high school, a GED Program, or college courses and earning their degrees

87% of youth participating in TLP made significant progress toward mental health goals

93% of participants obtained work experience during the program

Support for independent living

During the 18-month Transitional Living Program, youth learn how to care for themselves and their children by developing cooking, budgeting, housekeeping, and parenting skills. They also receive counseling and support to address the issues that led to their homelessness and improve their own mental health and outlook.

1,045 hours of life skills training

580 parenting hours

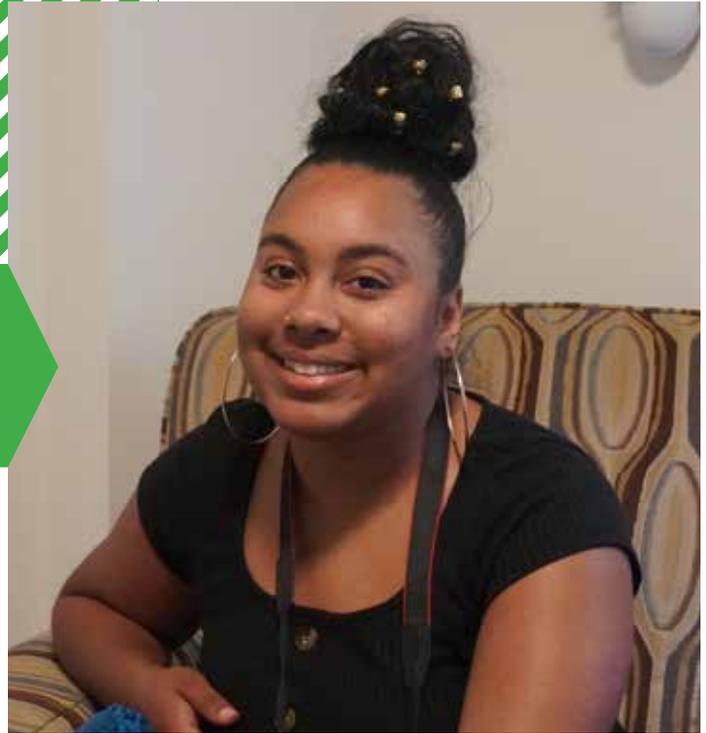
2,271 hours of mental health intervention

250 hours of victim services for TLP youth who have experienced domestic violence

Beyond Expectation

89% of previously homeless TLP graduates developed independent living skills and secured permanent housing

Rose's story



Rose worked hard all through high school to maintain a high GPA. She always wanted to go to college and knew it would take hard work to get there. But while her parents expected her to do well in school, they also expected her to help raise her eight younger siblings. And she had to do it all without their support and often while being told her efforts weren't good enough.

Rose graduated with high marks. But without any help or direction from her parents, she missed the deadline for applying for financial aid for college. Then, shortly after graduation, things erupted at home. Rose was kicked out and found herself without a place to live. She spent some time at her boyfriend's mom's home. And when that wasn't possible, she found herself sometimes spending the night on the streets and just trying to survive. Any dreams of college and the future she had always wanted started to slip away.

Then one of Rose's past teachers from high school told her about the Transitional Living Program. When she connected with the staff from Huck House, Rose felt for the first time like she had a parent to turn to for help. "I've always had to learn everything and do everything for myself. It was so nice to finally have a support system and someone to give me advice. And it was nice to hear that I was doing a good job instead of being called names or told I wasn't good enough," says Rose.

It made all the difference for Rose. With her team's help, she got settled into her TLP apartment, found a job, and was able to complete the paperwork for school. She is currently enrolled at Columbus State in the Pathways program and hopes to complete her general education courses then go to the Columbus College of Art and Design to receive her Bachelor of Arts. She dreams of opening a business for photography and visual editing design.

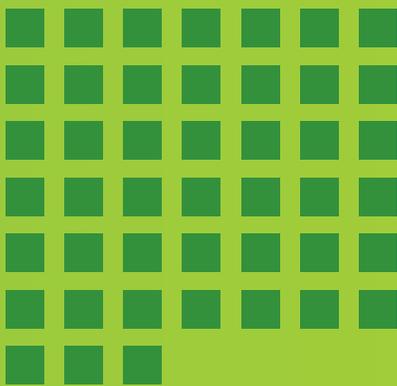
She's also working through her family issues with her counselor's help. While she doesn't know if she'll be able to repair her relationship with her parents, she's learning to let go of her anger and heal internally. "I'm really emotionally healthy right now, and I'm not willing to let negativity from my family drag me down," she says. Rose is currently focused on working and studying, finding a permanent apartment for after TLP, and enjoying her life.

"I just got a car, I'm doing really well, and I'm having fun," she says. Rose has her future back. And she's embracing it with open arms.

What To Expect Next:

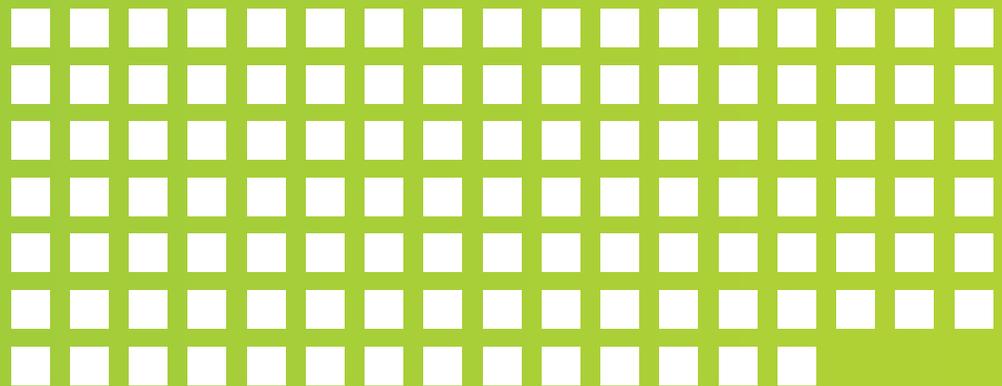
Homeless youth in our community will soon have more options for housing and support beyond the TLP apartments, which always run at capacity and currently have a waiting list. Marsh Brook Place, located at 5981 Chatterton Road, is under construction and scheduled to open in June 2020, providing 40 long-term units for young people in need of ongoing, intensive support and services. Huckleberry House is purchasing a 56-unit apartment complex in the Linden neighborhood. A portion of Huckleberry House TLP apartments will be housed in the complex and some units will be available to other organizations that help to provide housing for our community's youth. All told in 2020, in partnership with other youth organizations, we will grow from 45 apartments to 116!

2019



45

2020



116

The Counseling Center At Huckleberry House

What Our Community Can Expect:

Increased access to specialized support tailored to teen and young adult challenges

For nearly 50 years, the staff at Huckleberry House has been dedicated to supporting young people and families struggling with serious issues, like poverty, homelessness, abuse, and neglect. We've developed knowledge and expertise specific to this population. We understand that the impact of such issues affects young people differently than adults. And we know that care must be approached in unique ways, starting with identifying and building on individual strengths and including other family members whenever possible. To help meet the growing need for this customized support, in Fiscal Year 2019, Huckleberry House strengthened our commitment to the community by working to share our expertise and approach with other professionals who serve youth.



3 unique teen and young adult care curriculums

Professionals throughout Ohio can access training and earn CEUs through the new Huckleberry House Professional Development Program:

Working with Young Adults: How Housing Instability Influences Their Outcomes

Trauma Informed Care: Changing the Way We Think

Documentation 101: What, Why, and How to Document

What Counseling Center Youth Can Expect:



Ongoing support, when and where it's needed

1,982

counseling and assessment hours provided to young people and their families at Huck House, in their homes, at school, or anywhere it is convenient for them to meet

3,222

community support hours to practice skills learned in counseling in real-life situations



Support tailored to specific need

162

parenting support hours for young people with children of their own



17

victim services hours for young people and families who have been victims of violence



Beyond Expectation

229 youth and their families received ongoing support to develop communication, anger management, conflict resolution, coping, and self-sufficiency skills.

Zach's story



When Zach was first introduced to the Counseling Center at Huckleberry House, he had zero expectations for his future. In fact, he didn't expect to have a future at all. After his fourth suicide attempt, a friend of Zach's intervened and told authorities at the school about Zach's situation. Through a partnership with the school, licensed therapists from Huck House visit the building weekly to work with students. Zach was quickly connected with a Huck House counselor. But after suffering through years of neglect, physical, and mental abuse, Zach didn't have much confidence that anyone could help.

"I knew I probably needed help," he says. "I just felt like I should be able to do it on my own or that I didn't really deserve it. I was also embarrassed by everything that was going on in my life, and I figured no one was really going to listen anyway."

It took some time for Zach to start trusting his counselor. "I eventually realized this wasn't a person who was going to laugh when I started talking about everything I've been through. For the first time in my life, I was talking to someone who actually wanted to hear what I have to say."

That realization helped Zach turn a corner and start to see that he could have a future and that it could look a lot different than his current situation. Zach has since graduated from high school, but he continues to work with his counselors at Huck House and he actively participates in EMDR, an intensive trauma-based therapy.

"I used to be terrified about the prospect of anyone hurting me or taking advantage of me, but my counselors helped me see that not all people are something to fear," he says. He is also learning to not let his past trauma hold him back from realizing his future potential. "It used to be that everything I did was

to try to live up to somebody else's unrealistic expectations. Now I can do things because they are what I want to do. I have expectations for myself that are reasonable and that I can manage."

Those expectations currently include looking for a new apartment, working, and pursuing a college degree so he can one day become a pediatrician.

"I don't even know if I'd still be here if it weren't for Huck House," he says. "The freedom I've gained to set my own direction, work past my issues, and be myself is nothing less than incredible. It's something I'll carry with me for the rest of my life."

What To Expect Next:

In order to help any young person in our community struggling with trauma, abuse, or violence, or struggling with anxiety, depression, or managing the stress of moving toward adulthood, Huckleberry House will soon accept many major health insurance plans. Making this change is key to fulfilling our contract with the community. We will be able to reach out and support any young person or family, whether they have health insurance or not, and share our proven approach to addressing and resolving issues and working toward a happier, healthier future.



THE COUNSELING CENTER AT HUCKLEBERRY HOUSE



Youth Outreach

PROGRAM

What Our Community Can Expect:

Diligence in finding the young people that need our help most

One of the things that young people in crisis almost always lack is support and direction from a trusted adult. As a result, they don't always know that help exists, or where to find it. The Huckleberry House Youth Outreach Program has worked from day one to break down that barrier by taking our services directly to the streets and helping young people connect with resources and supports that can help them address their challenges and gain self-sufficiency. In 2016, we added the YOP Shop to provide youth with easy access to our Youth Outreach Workers.

6,047

youth contacts made in schools, at community hangouts, on the streets, and at the YOP Shop

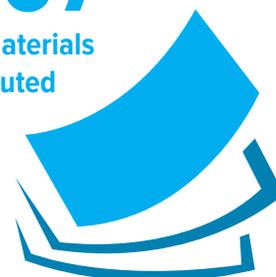


3,468

adult contacts made to help us spread the word about our programs and other resources that are available to help

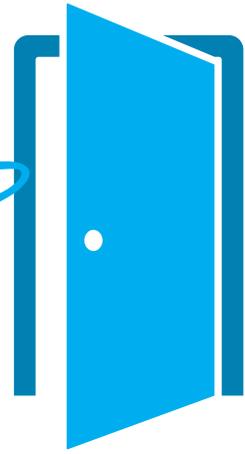
2,767

written materials distributed



What Youth Can Expect:

YOP SHOP



Easy access to resources and support

YOP workers make sure at-risk youth know help exists, and we make sure they know where and how to get it. YOP is the only local program that brings counseling and support to young people, ages 12-24, on their own turf. In addition, the YOP Shop, located on the bus line in the heart of the Linden community, gives young people a safe place to call or drop in, between 10 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday, to talk with a counselor, use the computers and phones, get connected to other community resources, or get help with anything from obtaining a copy of a birth certificate, to navigating public transportation, to applying for a job.

935

hours of street-based outreach

996

food/drink items distributed

253

health and hygiene products distributed

64

YOP Shop visits

57

YOP Shop phone calls



Ongoing street-based support

Young people who need longer-term support to reach education, food, safe housing, and employment goals are connected with Youth Outreach Counselors who will meet with them on the streets, at school, at the YOP Shop, or anywhere else that's convenient to help them create and stay on paths to self-sufficiency.

50

ongoing cases

505

hours of individual case management

Beyond Expectation

81% of youth visiting the YOP Shop and **93%** of street-based clients were linked with community support services that provide ongoing assistance to meet educational, employment, and safe housing needs.

Destiny's story



When Destiny learned she was pregnant, she left her home in Georgia and came to Columbus, where her baby's father had promised that he and his family would help care for her. Two weeks later, dad left town. And Destiny found herself expecting, alone, and in a new city with nowhere to live. Determined to do what was best for her unborn baby and herself, she connected with local resources and eventually found her way to the YOP Shop.

"Losing hope and becoming depressed was never an option for me," she says. "I've always lived my life thinking about the next step and doing what I need to do."

Fortunately, the YOP program was there to make that next step easier. YOP case workers helped Destiny access the supplies she would need to be ready for her daughter's birth and helped make sure she and her baby had a safe place to stay. Then, when Destiny temporarily lost custody of her newborn daughter, her YOP case workers helped her connect with a counselor and parenting mentor at Huck House and provided support while she worked to resolve her housing and employment challenges. Destiny successfully completed her parenting plan and was quickly reunited with her daughter.

Today Destiny and her daughter are doing well in their own apartment. Destiny continues to meet with her Huck House counselor and parenting mentor from time to time and appreciates that she has a support system and a trusted place to turn when she has questions or needs advice.

"We just moved into our new place and had the utilities turned on," she says. "It's the first time I've done anything like that on my own. And it felt great."

Right now, Destiny is focused on her own mental health and trying not to be hard on herself when life doesn't go exactly according to plan. Connecting with case workers whom she trusts has made a big difference in her journey. "Either way, I would have done what I needed to do. But they've made things a lot easier. And it's nice having someone who really cares about you and you know you can turn to for advice," she says. "I'm a strong person. But they've showed me it's okay to not be okay sometimes."

Destiny is committed to helping other youth facing similar struggles. She participates on the Youth Action Board through the Community Shelter Board. Through her actions and hard work every day, she is proof that circumstances don't have to dictate your life. With the right attitude and a little support, young people can create the futures they desire.

What To Expect Next:

As part of the A Place to Call Home for Youth community plan, a Coordinated Access & Rapid Resolution Services (CARR) team was formed to provide developmentally-appropriate support and services to help homeless young people find safe, stable housing. Starting in fiscal year 2020, the Huck House Youth Outreach Program will head this initiative, working with young people to navigate the adult shelters and access rehousing services. This effort will help connect more at-risk and homeless youth in our community with housing resources and additional prevention assistance geared specifically to their unique needs.



Congratulations to Kyra Crockett Hodge, Huck House's Youth Outreach Program Manager, and winner of The Columbus Foundation's first ever Heart Work Award!

The Heart Work Award, presented by The Columbus Foundation for the first time in October 2018, recognizes those in the community who are in the trenches, relentlessly working on the frontlines with spirit and heart. For most of us, these people are in the background. But to individuals whose lives they touch, they are front and center, making a life-changing impact that can mean the difference between hopelessness and a meaningful future. Kyra exemplifies the essence of heart work, often walking the streets to identify and help youth in need. As the first ever Heart Work Award winner, Kyra is an inspiration to our team, our community, and the youth we serve. Thanks Kyra, for all you do to make Central Ohio a better place for everyone.



Scholarship PROGRAM

**What Our
Community
Can Expect:**

**A new generation of young
people with the drive to
achieve their dreams**

The Scholarship Program at Huckleberry House annually awards funds to young people in our programs who demonstrate the skill, dedication, and desire to pursue a degree or license that will help advance their futures and allow them to contribute to their communities in meaningful ways.



\$13,000

awarded by Huck House in scholarships
to young people in our programs.



**What
Youth Can
Expect:**

**Where there's a
will, there's a way**

The scholarship program helps remove the cost barrier to pursuing secondary education. Recipients can use their awards for college, technical school, or a career training program.

**Congratulations to our
2019 Scholarship Recipients:**

1

**Soltis-Homer
SCHOLARSHIP**

**Keely
Shorter
\$4,000**

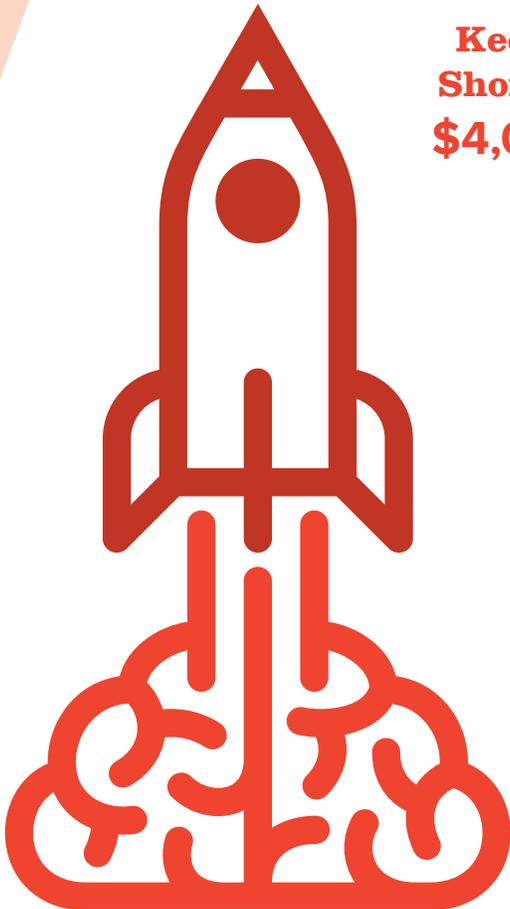
3

**William R.
McNamara
SCHOLARSHIPS**

**Jamyah
Cooper
\$3,000**

**Rose
Cunningham
\$3,000**

**Katelynn
Spencer
\$3,000**



Judayza's story



Growing up, Judayza's family never stayed in one place for very long. Judayza found that as soon as she got into a routine in a new place, it was time to move again. "And you had to start over from scratch, with all of your stuff gone."

While that was an ongoing challenge, one thing that was a constant in Judayza's life was her family's love of food. From a young age, Judayza learned to cook, often helping her parents or grandmother in the kitchen and learning the family recipes along the way. Sometimes, Judayza and her brother had to cook out of necessity when her parents wouldn't or couldn't. But it was one chore Judayza enjoyed. "I made the best oatmeal on the block," Judayza recalls proudly. As soon as she was old enough, she began working in the food service industry and would walk to jobs at the local McDonalds or Donatos, dreaming of one day working as a chef.

That dream got cut short when Judayza found herself homeless at age 17. After mom left town and cut off communications, Judayza found herself with no legal guardian and nowhere to stay. She had friends in similar situations who had ended up on the streets. Some had overdosed. Some had started working in strip clubs or selling drugs just to survive. Judayza knew she didn't want that for her own life. Remembering a high school presentation about Huckleberry House, Judayza reached out for support. She got connected with a counselor and was later accepted into the TLP program.

"I remember the day I moved into my TLP apartment. Someone picked me up from the Huck House shelter and took me shopping for appliances and supplies. It was the first time anyone dedicated that much time to me. Having a group of people rooting for me and helping me out with whatever I needed was life changing."

Judayza started putting in the hard work to get back on track for the future she always wanted. Although she was two years behind at school, she managed to catch up and graduate with her class. To recognize her hard work, Judayza was selected to receive the William R. McNamara Scholarship in 2015. Each year since, she has received funds through the Huckleberry House scholarship program, which she uses to help pay for

the culinary arts program at Columbus State. While studying, she has continued to work in the food service industry, landing several jobs as a cook and catering assistant in establishments including the Westin Hotel, the Columbus Convention Center, and The Boat House at Confluence Park.

"The more I learned in school and the more hands-on experience I gained in my jobs, the more I wanted to start my own business," says Judayza. And that's exactly what she did. She became a student member of the U.S. Personal Chef Association, earned her certification as a personal chef, and launched her own private chef service, Food Specifics LLC, in 2019. She cooks in family homes and has successfully catered several events, including the Huck House TLP Open House held in September of 2019.

Judayza has just a few classes left before she graduates from the culinary program. And she has plans to finish her degree at the Culinary Institute of American in New York City. In the meantime, she's giving back some of what she's been given through Huck House by returning to her high school to share her story, teach cooking classes, and provide inspiration for other students to stay focused on their futures.

Recalling where she was just five years ago, Judayza feels blessed that she found Huck House when she did. "When you are young and you have no family to take responsibility for you, it's so hard. The world is cruel, especially when you have to fend for yourself." Without Huck House, Judayza says she may very well have lost her drive to succeed. At the least, it would have taken her a lot longer to get where she is today. "Having the stability of a place to call your own and people you know you can turn to makes all the difference. I hope that every young person who is struggling gets to have the chance I did."

What To Expect Next:

The Huck House board of directors endowed a fund to provide scholarships in perpetuity, allowing us to give awards each year to help our youth continue to go beyond expectation. We look forward to recognizing future scholarship recipients and to following our past winners and sharing their success stories with the community.



Sleep Out! Columbus

2019

What Our
Community
Can Expect:

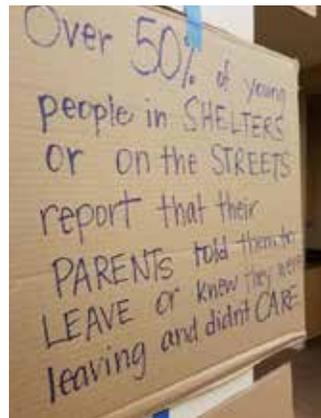
Increased awareness of youth homelessness

Huckleberry House and its supporters are so passionate about ending youth homelessness, that we literally work on it in our sleep. Our second annual Sleep Out!, held April 12, 2019 on the plaza at COSI, gave community members the opportunity to experience what it's like for homeless youth in our area. Sleep Out! participants spent a full night in the elements to raise funds for Huck House programs and raise awareness of the issues facing so many youth in our communities.



\$100,440.60

raised to support Huck House that
provide shelter and support to homeless
and at-risk young people



100 people spent **8** hours on the plaza at COSI in **40** degree weather



What Homeless and At-Risk Youth Can Expect:

A community that recognizes them and their needs

The Sleep Out! opened hundreds of eyes to the difficulties that homeless young people experience and strengthened the community's commitment to find long-term, sustainable solutions.



“I can’t imagine doing this for more than one night.”



“I recognize that I was here by choice. Too many young people are living this way and not by choice.”

What to Expect Next:

Plans are in the works for Sleep Out! Columbus 2020. Scheduled for April 24–25, we are setting our goals even higher and looking forward to another record-breaking night. To learn more, register yourself or a team, or find out about corporate sponsorship opportunities, please visit our Sleep Out! page at www.huckleberryhouse.org/sleep-out.

Huckleberry House Supporters

**What Our
Community
Can Expect:**

**Meaningful ways for anyone
and everyone to get involved in
supporting our community's youth**

Huckleberry House could not achieve the results in this report or change so many young lives without the compassion, generosity, time, and talents of so many individuals, corporations, and organizations in our community. Year after year, we're humbled by those who continue to rise to the occasion, whether for the first time or the hundredth, to lend their support to our efforts and help raise the expectation for all young people in our community.

1,300+

community members, volunteers, and corporations supported Huck House in 2019



814

donors became first-time Huck House supporters

208

United Way donors designated their gifts to support Huck House programs

\$525,903

contributed via The Columbus Foundation's Critical Need Alert: Our Kids, including grants from the Central Benefits Health Care Foundation and the Siemer Family Foundation.

\$139,000

raised from

1,360

donors to Next Level VIP19's campaign

**What
Youth Can
Expect:**

An ear to listen, a word of encouragement, or the gift of time with someone who cares

1,065

volunteers donated

2,322

hours to support Huck House programs



Access to the things they need and, sometimes, a little something extra, too

519

in-kind donations of goods such as school supplies, toiletries, household items, baby items, and gift cards

\$43,000

in gifts and goodies contributed through the 2018 holiday drive



Rebecca's story

Rebecca works as a project coordinator at American Electric Power. She participates in AEP's Employee Resource Groups, which give workers opportunities to volunteer and share their talents in ways that will help the community. When she first received an email about a potential project to provide holiday lighting for the Huckleberry House, she was intrigued.

"I wasn't familiar with Huck House, but I love Christmas lights. So I looked up the organization, and felt an instant connection to their mission."

Rebecca faced homelessness herself as a young person. When she learned she was pregnant at 18, her stepfather kicked her out of the family home. "At the time, I didn't know about places like Huck House," she says. "It would have been nice to have options for support back then."

The project became very personal for Rebecca and she was committed to making it a success. She visited the shelter several times, bringing her husband and daughter along, to take pictures and measurements. She met with the shelter's maintenance staff to make sure the outlets could support the lights. Then, using the trigonometry and calculus she's currently learning in her pursuit of an engineering degree, Rebecca devised a plan to light up all three stories of the house in grand fashion, including the angled roof and columns on the porch. It would take 8,900 lights to do it right. And, she determined, it would take bucket trucks to safely get the lights up on the third floor. "I didn't want anybody climbing a ladder that high to hang the lights," she said. Of course, given the busy time of year for the energy industry, getting those trucks proved to be a challenge.

"But when I showed up on the morning of the lighting, there were four bucket trucks ready to go along with a small army of volunteers" she says. "It was great to see so much support for this project, and many hands make light work."

Three and a half hours later, all the lights were up. "It was cold," Rebecca says. "And it even started snowing, which was kind of appropriate, considering what we were doing. But it was a really awesome and rewarding experience."



While Rebecca enjoyed every aspect of the project, the best part, of course, was the night of the lighting itself. "People were laughing, and crying, and hugging each other," she recalls. "Seeing that reaction was a great feeling. I know, from personal experience, how tough life can be. Putting some light into these kids' hearts for the holidays and taking their minds off the struggles, even for one night, made my Christmas last year."

Rebecca's passion for the project not only inspired others in her company to help with the holiday lighting project, it spurred an ongoing commitment from the organization to support Huck House and the community's youth.

"Rebecca worked tirelessly to make the shelter shine for Christmas," says Huckleberry House Development Director Sonya Thesing. "And her efforts paved the way to further engagement from her company. AEP Ohio's Energy Efficiency team has taken a very active role in helping us with lighting in the shelter, which is a big deal given the 24-hour nature of our work. I don't think Rebecca had any idea how much of a difference this project could make. But we'll always be grateful that she chose to get involved."

Do you have time and talents you'd like to contribute to supporting our community's youth?

Visit huckhouse.org/volunteer to learn more about current volunteer opportunities at Huckleberry House. Or contact the Development Office at 614-294-8097 or volunteers@huck-house.org to share your ideas for volunteer events. And discover just how much good you can do!

What To Expect Next:

Join Huck House in Celebrating 50 Years of Community Support and Care for Our Youth

Huck House opened its doors for the first time in 1970. It was a different time with different problems to solve. As we approach our 50th anniversary, we are proud of our evolution and where we stand today: We still give teens a safe place to stay while they figure out how to improve their situation. We also help homeless youth transition to independent living and give families the communication skills they need to succeed.

In 2020, Huck House is planning a series of special events to celebrate the successes of the youth we have served while laying out our plans for the decades to come. Please mark your calendars and follow us on social media for more event news and details.

ANNIVERSARY YEAR SIGNATURE EVENT

HUCK HOUSE BLOCK PARTY
June 6, 2020 in the afternoon

We will close down Hamlet Street and celebrate five decades with music, kids' activities, food trucks, a VIP tent, and tours of the Crisis Shelter.

MORE THAN SHELTER FILM FESTIVAL

June, July, August 2020
Gateway Film Center

Three documentaries that investigate youth homelessness and what it takes to end it. The festival will take place over a three-week period and feature post-screening discussions.

COME HOME TO HUCK HOUSE ALUMNI EVENT

May 2020, date and location TBD

An after-hours event for all former Huck House employees and volunteers.

A New Chapter in Our Leadership Story

After 17 years of exemplary service to the youth of central Ohio, Executive Director Becky Westerfelt retired on December 1, 2019. Huck House will forever be grateful for the strong legacy of program innovation she is leaving behind, including the Transitional Living Program domestic violence track, parent mentor program, and Permanent Supportive housing project for youth (only the second in the United States) that were established under her leadership. Becky's impact reaches beyond Huck House programming, and she is well known as a leader in central Ohio's non-profit community and a passionate advocate for youth. Becky will continue to serve Huck House in a consultancy role for the first quarter of 2020. Her contributions will continue to make a life-changing difference for our community's young people for many years to come.



Huck House's previous Development Director, Sonya Thesing, is our new Executive Director. Since joining the Huck House team in January 2017, Sonya has been instrumental in raising awareness of Huck House's contract with the community and "translating Huckleberry House to the rest of the world." She helped successfully launch Sleep Out! Columbus and has been instrumental in building our media presence and spreading the word about Huck House. As a result, during her time with us, corporate and individual giving has more than doubled. Before joining Huck House, Sonya was a founder of The Columbus Nanny Agency. She has over a decade of non-profit development experience as a board member and development committee chair for several central Ohio organizations. Her favorite part of development work is connecting people with causes that matter to them.

Please join us in welcoming Sonya to her new role while thanking Becky for her years of service and wishing her a wonderful retirement. With the strength of our past and present leadership, we look forward to another 50 years of building up expectations for what all young people can accomplish when given the chance.

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Donors in bold have supported Huckleberry House for five or more consecutive years.

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Wesp Barwell, LLC

Worthington Libraries

Huckleberry House Financials

Revenue

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Programs and Grants | 2,186,665 |
| United Way | 122,210 |
| Medicaid | 572,421 |
| Purchase of Services and Discretionary Funding | 348,044 |
| Contributions | 1,088,895 |
| Special Events | 115,524 |
| Interest and Dividend Income | 49,600 |
| Net Gain on Marketable Securities | (1,160) |
| Total Revenue | 4,482,199 |

Expenses

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Transitional Living Program | 1,674,624 |
| Crisis Shelter | 1,126,794 |
| The Counseling Center at Huckleberry House | 434,592 |
| Youth Outreach Program | 297,264 |
| Scholarships | 12,247 |
| Fundraising | 148,008 |
| Administration | 339,431 |
| Total Expenses | 4,032,960 |

2020 Scholarship Recipients

William R. McNamara Scholarship

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Jamyah Cooper | \$3,000 |
| Katelynn Spencer | \$3,000 |
| Rose Cunningham | \$3,000 |

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| | |
|---------------|---------|
| Keely Shorter | \$4,000 |
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1421 Hamlet Street
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 Huckleberry House, Inc.

Administration: (614) 294-8097
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www.HuckHouse.org

Huckleberry House is accredited by the Council on Accreditation and is licensed by the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services. Funding agencies include ADAMH, City of Columbus, Franklin County Children Services, United Way of Central Ohio, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, U.S. Department of HUD, Community Shelter Board, Ohio Department of Justice.