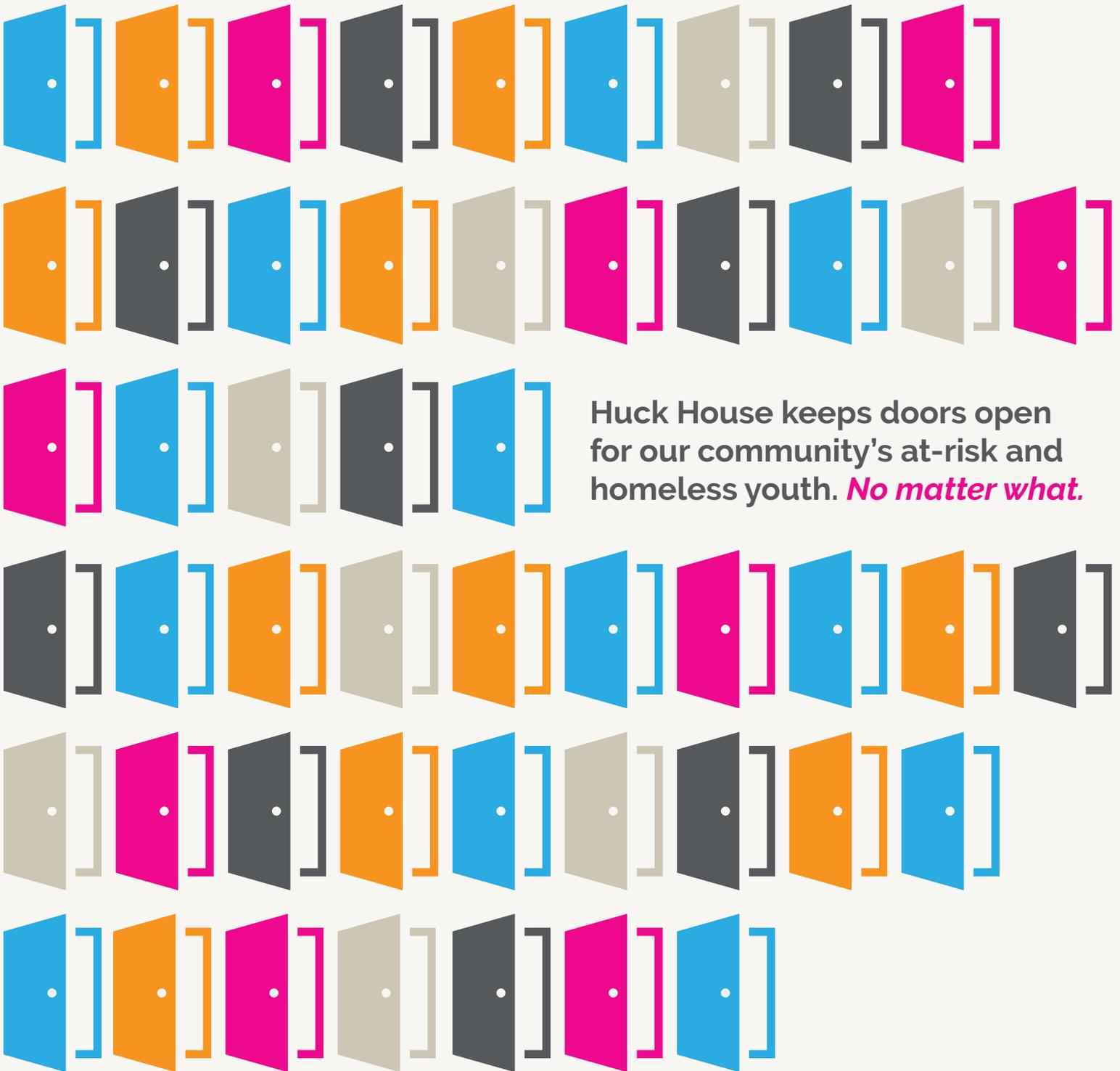




50 years. Thousands of youth.
Countless open doors.



Huck House keeps doors open for our community's at-risk and homeless youth. *No matter what.*

Welcome Letter

The key to an open door is an open mind.

When the Huckleberry House youth shelter opened its doors in 1970, youth in crisis situations in our community had a safe alternative to the streets for the first time. In a very literal sense, that open door represented a new opportunity for young people who, up until that point, had the choice between the abuse, neglect, and violence they were facing at home, or the unknown dangers and uncertainty awaiting them on the streets.

While Huck House was innovative in meeting a very real need in the community at the time—offering a safe place where young people in crisis could find shelter, a warm meal, and other basic necessities—the intent was never to stop at being “just” a youth shelter. Thanks to the creative and forward thinking of the founders and of those who have helped chart our course over the past half century, Huckleberry House has evolved to provide comprehensive services that not only address crisis situations, but that also identify and resolve the root causes of the problems young people face at home. We’ve become an organization committed to tackling the whole problem and to helping all youth secure safe and supportive living environments, whether that’s with their families or relatives or on their own.

Through it all, our goal is to keep opening doors, literally and figuratively, so that young people in any situation always have a path forward.

Of course, achieving that goal is more challenging than it sounds. The youth we work with face difficult, dangerous, and even unthinkable challenges. And the support systems that have historically been in place to help often miss the mark when it comes to the unique needs of young people ages 12 to 24. Given the obstacles that never cease to exist, finding ways to keep moving forward can feel impossible at times.

That’s when an open mind really makes the difference.

Huck House’s work over the past 50 years has been not only to support young people and their families, but also to change expectations of what we, as a community, can hope for and ultimately achieve. By uniting against the status quo and working toward more options specifically suited to the cognitive and experiential needs of young people, we have collectively come to expect more for them, and more from them in return. Along the journey, our community has rallied behind us, helping us own the issues and keep rising to the challenges.

Former Executive Director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness Barbara Poppe recently spoke to the efforts and bold vision of Huck House and Becky Westerfelt, our Executive Director from 2002 through December 2019. In Barbara’s words:

“During the 18 years that Becky has served our community, she has forever changed the way we understand and respond to homeless and runaway youth. By re-positioning our collective efforts to be focused on how these young people transition to adulthood, we now have a more positive and unifying frame and vision that is grounded in racial equity and justice. These impacts will be more evident in the future as the young people who benefit from Becky’s vision can better realize their potential.”



And realizing that potential is exactly what we see our young people do every day.

Year after year, this report is filled with personal stories of young people from our community who have had their lives fundamentally changed. And it is always thanks to an open door. Whether that door (or doors, in many cases) led to our Crisis Shelter, our YOP Shop, our Counseling Center, one of our temporary or permanent supportive housing options, or all of the above, it has always represented a positive choice. Not an easy choice—our programs require young people to work hard, make a commitment, set goals, and do things they may never have seen themselves doing before—but a choice for a way out, a path forward, and so much more for their lives.

Not even escalating racial tensions and a global pandemic can shut the door on 50 years of momentum.

The tumultuous events that will forever define 2020 have hit us—and the young people we serve—hard in many ways. At the same time, they have renewed our commitment to expecting more and being deliberate about what we hope to change and accomplish for the young people we serve.

In 2020, Huck House launched five anti-racism management initiatives and established work groups to address each one:

1. We will work to optimize agency interactions with police.
2. We will work to resolve the under-representation of racial and ethnic minority staff in professional, managerial and directorial roles.
3. We will engage in agency-wide conversations about racism with a goal of learning at every level of the organization from client youth to directors.
4. We will evaluate our benefits program with a goal of providing better benefits to more employees.
5. We will be intentional about hiring black-owned businesses for contract work.

We did this even as we saw our traditional ways of working with and in the community change. The circumstances of the pandemic didn’t shut us down or stop our services. Rather, they sharpened our perspective and gave us the perfect opportunity to practice what we preach: Every day, we ask young people in tough situations to rise above the chaos, find and leverage their strengths, and do whatever they can do to keep moving forward. It’s what we’ve all had to do in the heat of the crisis—keep fighting to find new options and open new doors, even while others were literally closing all around us.

It’s not the way we imagined celebrating 50 years of service to our community. But, if nothing else, 2020 has renewed our resolve and given us an even greater sense of purpose moving into our next 50 years.

We invite you to learn more about our work this year, hear personal stories from our youth and our supporters, and see the difference we’re making with the community’s help. And we invite you to join us in continuing to keep doors open for at-risk youth in our community—no matter what the next 50 years has in store.



Sonya Thesing
Sonya Thesing,
Executive Director

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Huckleberry House Programs at a Glance

HUCK HOUSE HELPS AT-RISK YOUTH DISCOVER ALL THEIR OPTIONS FOR SUCCESS.

Sometimes, an open door means a safe place to stay for a night or two, access to a computer, or just someone who will listen. Other times, young people need longer-term housing support while they work toward their goals and building independent living skills. Every young person's situation is unique. But no matter the challenges—homelessness, substance abuse, poverty, or violence—there are ways through the issues. Huck House works to identify all the options for each youth and to provide the right combination of services and support that will empower each young person to move toward the future they want and deserve.

THE CRISIS SHELTER

- 24/7/365 shelter
- Serving young people ages 12-17
- 5-7 day average length of stay
- 136 Safe Place Sites to help young people get safely to Huck House
- Connections to ongoing individual and family counseling

HOUSING PROGRAM

- 46 Transitional Living Program apartments for youth ages 17-21 participating in the 18-month TLP program
- 62 additional youth housing apartments served by Huck House staff; representing partnerships with Community Housing Network, Kaleidoscope Youth Center, The Center for Healthy Families, and Homeless Families Foundation
- 6 additional apartment units rented to Homeless Families Foundation for parenting youth

THE COUNSELING CENTER AT HUCKLEBERRY HOUSE

- Ongoing counseling for young people ages 12-22 and their families
- 10 unique teen and young adult care curriculums offered to youth-serving professionals throughout Ohio
- Parenting support for young people with children of their own
- Victim services support for young people and families who have been victims of violence

YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAM

- Street-based counseling and support for at-risk young people ages 12-24 who are dealing with education, employment, and housing problems
- YOP Shop located in the Linden community to offer young people easy access to YOP workers
- Serves as the Coordinated Access & Rapid Resolution Services (CARR) team to connect young people with housing services in the community

Fiscal Year 2020 Successes

While 2020 presented everyone with new hardships, it also motivated the Huck House staff to find new ways to open doors and meet the emerging and ongoing needs of at-risk and in-crisis young people in our community. Below are the key strides made this year toward increasing and improving the options for our most vulnerable residents.



68 new supportive housing units made available to homeless youth in our community



482 crisis episodes addressed



19,529 nights of shelter provided



10 professional development trainings for professionals who serve adolescents and transition-age youth



2,458 hours of counseling and support



1,073 new youth contacts made

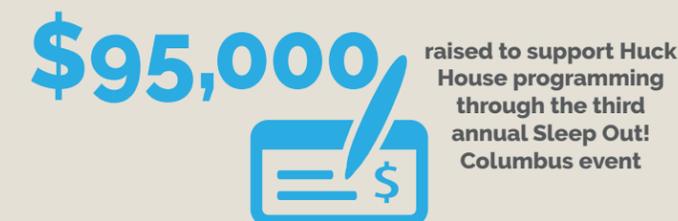


661 new adult contacts made

5 new anti-racism initiatives launched



\$15,000 in scholarship funds awarded to Huck House program graduates seeking to further their education



\$95,000 raised to support Huck House programming through the third annual Sleep Out! Columbus event

WE DENOUNCE POLICE BRUTALITY
WE EXPECT MORE.
WE STAND WITH OUR YOUTH,
STAFF, AND COMMUNITY AGAINST
SYSTEMIC RACISM.
WE EXPECT MORE.
WE RECOGNIZE RACISM AS A PUBLIC
HEALTH CRISIS.
WE EXPECT MORE.
WE SUPPORT THOSE PEACEFULLY
PROTESTING TO MAKE OUR SOCIETY
MORE JUST AND EQUITABLE.
WE EXPECT MORE.

For 50 years, Huck House has served the most vulnerable youth and families in our community. Not only will we continue this work, but we will fight for and alongside our youth to demand change because we

EXPECT MORE

93% of teens visiting the Crisis Shelter returned to safe and appropriate housing.

The Crisis Shelter at Huckleberry House provides young people in crisis with a safe alternative to the streets. The program meets a young person's immediate needs for shelter, food, and personal care. Just as importantly, it gives youth a safe environment to begin working with our counselors, and often with their family members, toward long-term family, education, employment, and personal goals. During their time in the shelter, youth participate in a variety of activities, have opportunities to engage with the community, and receive support with school and employment goals. The ultimate purpose of the program is to reunite young people with their families whenever possible and to help youth and families develop skills for dealing with their problems in a healthy way.

March 2020

Columbus Police and Fire Stations stepped up to help youth around the Central Ohio area safely get to Huck House when COVID precautions shut down many of our 136 Safe Place Partners.

April 2020

Groups led by community organizations on topics ranging from sex education and human trafficking to college life and yoga have always been a key component of the daily experience at the Crisis Shelter. When the pandemic made in-person sessions unsafe, our partners, including Gracehaven and Syntero (Healthy Bodies, Healthy Futures), responded by hosting Zoom meetings for the youth giving young people the chance to continue asking important questions and learn more about critical subjects.

May 2020

The pandemic made regular social outings a challenge. The shelter's neighbor generously allowed us access to a basketball court and young people spent as much time as possible outdoors exercising and soaking up the fresh air.

May 2020

In response to the tragic death of George Floyd, youth staying in the Crisis Shelter were encouraged to share their feelings through conversations as well as through artwork.

June 2020

In solidarity with the nationwide movement, Huck House youth and staff collectively joined the larger Columbus community in protest that Black Lives Matter, by spearheading mini protests in our neighborhoods. Space was created to be heard, supported, and uplifted as we let the larger community know, "WE EXPECT MORE!"

June 2020

To celebrate Juneteenth, Volunteer Professor and doctoral candidate Allen S. Coleman provided a presentation about the holiday for youth and staff on the historical background, cultural importance, and relevant impact of Juneteenth on our country today. After the presentation, the staff and Professor Coleman joined the youth in a Juneteenth barbecue including traditional red drinks and dessert, games, and sparklers!



50 Year Timeline

1970

Huckleberry House, an outgrowth of a two-year street ministry of the University Area Council of Churches, is founded in March. In July, with Douglas W. McCoard as executive director, Huck House opens the door to its first home, a house located at the corner of 17th Avenue and Summit Street, owned by Indianola United Methodist Church.



1971

Huck House receives a \$5,000 contribution from the Columbus Foundation.

1973

Huck House receives its first United Way Grant.

HOUSING PROGRAM

IN FY 2020

Housing units for young people struggling with homelessness expanded from 46 Transitional Living Program apartments to 114 units dedicated to a variety of housing needs

Serving transitional age youth (17-24) at risk of or struggling with homelessness has always been a priority for Huckleberry House. Because of the unique needs of this group—they don't just need a roof over their heads, they need help learning independent living skills as well as support for coping with years of trauma, abuse, neglect, or other challenges—we created the Transitional Living Program to provide young people with access to a fully furnished apartment for 18 months along with a dedicated team of counselors and support staff to help them learn how to thrive on their own. With the program always at capacity and often a long waiting list, we knew the need was much greater than we could meet alone. And we knew many like-minded organizations in the community that serve youth struggle to find suitable housing options. Through community partnerships and with the support of several funding sources, we played a part in more than doubling the number of supportive housing options available to youth in the community in 2020.



1976

Huck House moves to "The Castle" at 1421 Hamlet Street. The new, larger space allows for Crisis Shelter dorm rooms, counseling space, and administrative offices.

1982

Parents Plus, an eight-week program for parents of teens, begins.

1988

The Safe Place Partner program begins with four Columbus-area fire stations, four White Castle restaurants, Katzinger's Deli, University Hospital Emergency Room, and the Department of Human Services joining with Huck House to provide youth with a safe place to turn for support getting to the Crisis Shelter. Today the network has 136 sites including fire stations, libraries, White Castle and Donatos restaurants, and community centers.



December 2020

The Crisis Shelter hosted HUD Secretary Ben Carson, Governor Mike DeWine, Congressman Steve Stivers, representatives from Congresswoman Joyce Beatty's office, and several members of Governor DeWine's cabinet for the annual announcement of HUD's Continuum of Care grants across the nation. TLP is part of Franklin County's Continuum of Care.



March 2020

Huckleberry House purchased Kenmore Square, a 56-unit apartment complex in the Linden neighborhood, to create a dedicated campus for youth housing. Half of the units are used for the TLP program. The other half are rented to organizations including Homeless Families Foundation, the Center for Healthy Families, and Kaleidoscope. Youth in these homes receive counseling and support services directly through Huck House or have access to supportive activities and groups held on campus.



June 2020

In support of the Black Lives Matter movement, young people in the Huck House programs joined Huck House staff in mini protests at each location. Some residents at Jefferson Place walked with staff to a silent protest at the Statehouse on June 3. All Huck House clients were offered Expect More: Black Lives Matter t-shirts.



June 2020

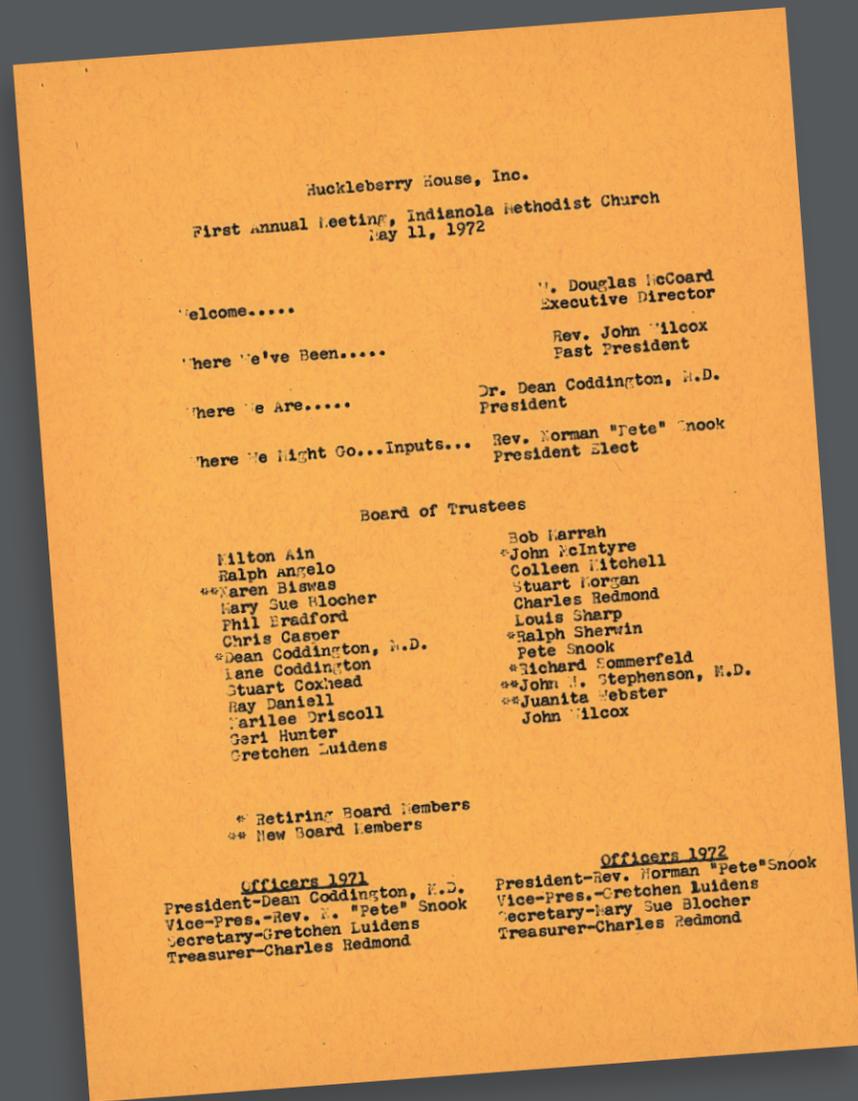
The finishing touches were put on Marsh Brook Place, located at 5981 Chatterton Road, and staff were hired and trained. The building provides 40 long-term units for young people in need of ongoing, intensive support and services. TLP services and counseling are offered to residents of all 40 apartments.



For Every Door We Open, Lives Are Forever Changed

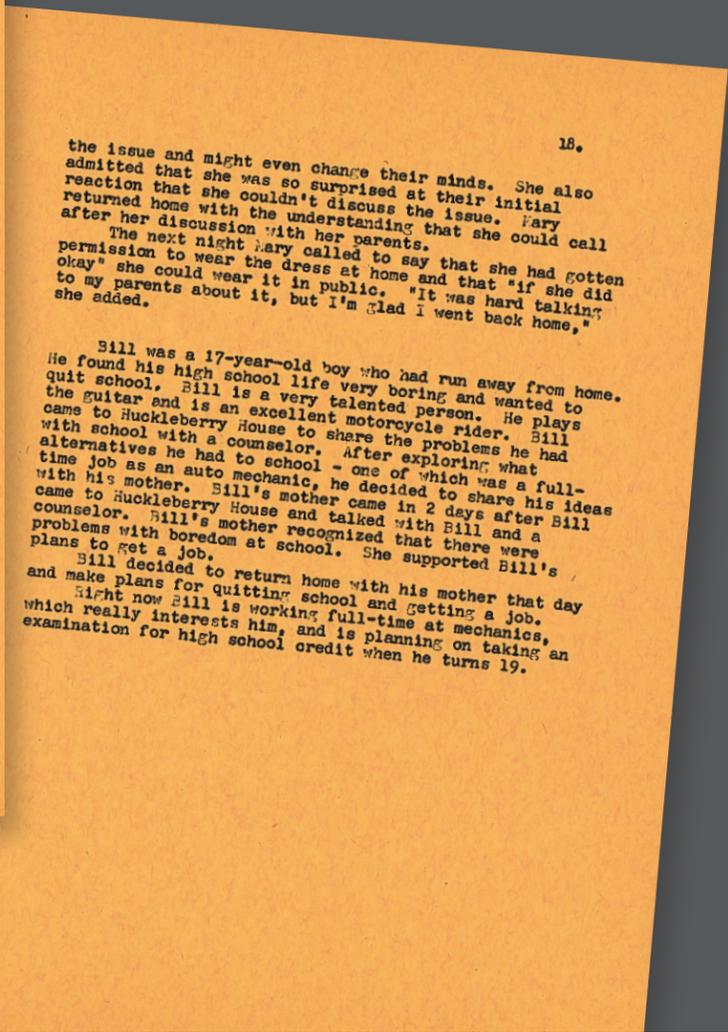
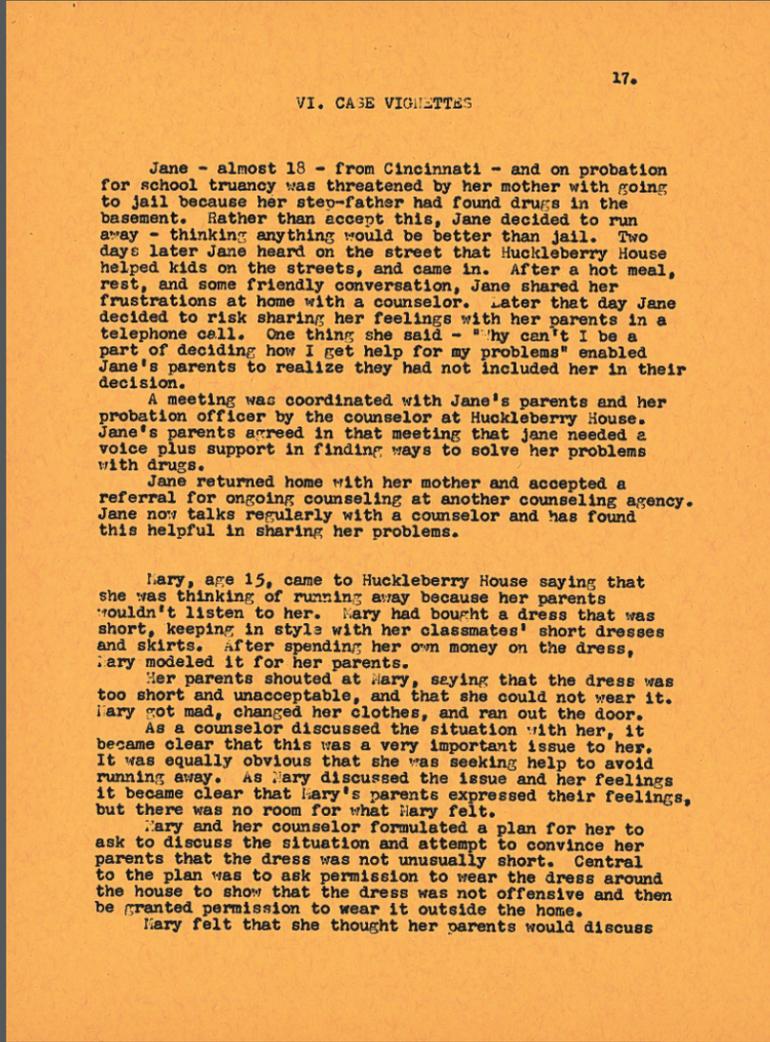
Numbers can help paint a picture of a community's need or an organization's success in addressing that need. But numbers only tell part of the story. The true impact is woven into the personal stories of each young person and family member whose life has been touched by Huckleberry House and our supporters. Every door we open, phone call we answer, and connection we make is the start of a new chapter and a new opportunity for people in our community to heal, move forward, and make strides toward a happier, healthier, more meaningful future.

Huckleberry House has been helping to write these success stories for 50 years. While times have changed and every story is unique, the need for young people and families to have access to positive options and choices will never go away.



Some of Our First Success Stories

These stories come from the pages of the Huckleberry House First Annual Meeting Report, dated May 11, 1972.



1990

The Transitional Living Program begins, a four-stage, 18-month program to help older adolescents build the skills and confidence they need to live successfully on their own.



1998

The first Huck House Youth Awards, titled *Turn Around Columbus*, recognizes youth and business owners who have put their lives on the right path. Hundreds of youth have been recognized to date.



2000

Huck House establishes the William R. McNamara Scholarship to provide two scholarships per year to teens participating in Huck House programs to help remove the financial barriers to post-secondary education. To date, 46 recipients have received scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$6,000 to help turn their dreams into realities.

2020 Client Success Stories

Fifty years later, young people continue to find the support they need at Huck House. Here's a look at how open doors have made all the difference in the lives of four youth we currently serve:

CHESTER'S STORY

Finding the Right Door

Life can be messy. That means that not all young people dealing with challenging and difficult situations have an off-the-shelf solution that's ready and waiting to meet all their needs. Identifying the right path forward can be tricky and take some time, even for people who work at finding options, navigating support systems, and opening doors every day. Too often, young people that don't have a clear next step can fall through the cracks. That's something Huck House works hard to prevent.

We first learned about Chester when our Crisis Team received a call from Children's Hospital. Chester had been hospitalized with pneumonia, and during his time in treatment, he revealed that his current home with his sister was not a safe, supportive environment. At 18, Chester was legally an adult. He did not have to return to his sister's home. However, as the victim of years of abuse at the hands of his now-incarcerated mother, Chester was dealing with physical and mental challenges and not ready to live on his own, either.

Chester began counseling with Huck House staff. With the Transitional Living Program at full capacity, the Youth Outreach Program team got involved and worked with Chester to explore all available options including other community resources that might be able to help. Unfortunately, no ideal solution materialized quickly. But that didn't deter Huck House staff. Chester's team stayed committed and remained flexible, continuing to support and work with Chester while knocking on more doors and thinking creatively about his best opportunities for future success.

Ultimately, Chester's Huck House team helped him move into his own apartment at Marsh Brook Place, a new permanent supportive living community for youth. As a resident, Chester receives Transitional Living Program services, including life skills training and counseling. His team has helped him access other essentials such as food assistance, bus and library cards, and Social Security income.

Chester is now safe, supported, and, perhaps most importantly, happy. For the first time, he has been given the opportunity to develop skills he needs to care for himself. The staff threw him a birthday party. "I have some friends I trust," he says.

While he is mostly looking forward to the next *Sonic The Hedgehog* movie and breaking his own personal speed record, he's also thinking about what's next. "I want to get married and start my own business selling Sonic and Shadow the Hedgehog stuff," he says. For now, with his feet on solid ground thanks to his team's tenacity, Chester is in a good place to keep building the skills he needs to achieve the future he wants.



SHANIYA'S STORY

Moving Beyond Trauma

When Shaniya traveled from South Carolina to Columbus with her adoptive mother and sister last summer, she thought she was coming for a visit. She had no idea she would not be going back to the only home she knew. But when the time came for her to return, she realized her family had already gone without her. It was a shock that left Shaniya reeling and wondering what she was going to do next.

"I didn't have anything. I was stranded in a state that I didn't know anything about. I was left behind," she says. While Shaniya's biological mom lives in town, she wasn't in a position to take Shaniya in. At 21 years old, Shaniya was homeless, terrified of the shelters, and feeling like she had very few options beyond couch surfing when she could, and facing a life on the streets.

While she was trying to get her life together, she found herself in an abusive and violent relationship. Again, feeling like there was no way out, Shaniya finally found the opportunity she needed. She learned about Huckleberry House from her mother's caseworker. Shaniya was first connected with The Counseling Center and then enrolled in the Transitional Living Program.

With her counselors' support, Shaniya was able to end the abusive relationship and begin working through her past traumas. She has since graduated from TLP and moved into the permanent supportive housing building at Marsh Brook Place, where she continues to work with The Counseling Center on defining and taking the next steps in her life.

"Huckleberry House has helped me become self-sufficient for the first time in my life. I now know that I can set goals and be successful at reaching them," Shaniya says. "I learned about boundaries and gained confidence in myself. And I'm learning to have the right mindset and a better outlook for my future."

Right now, Shaniya is working hard on her education, something she has struggled with for years, even before her fateful trip to Columbus. She is enrolled in a career training program where she can earn her high school diploma while preparing for nursing school and a future career in healthcare.

"I have perfect attendance so far and it's been a great experience for me," she says of her schooling. It is also the key to achieving her next major life goals: becoming financially stable and owning her own home.

Since finding herself homeless one year ago to currently being in a position where she is prioritizing her mental health and working every day toward her dreams, Shaniya has come a long way. But she knows that, without Huck House, things would be much different. "I'd probably be in the shelters and struggling to help myself," she says. "I'm so glad Huck House gave me the chance for something better. I took advantage of it. And I can say I'm doing pretty well."



JERRY'S STORY

The Third Time Is A Charm

When you're young and fending for yourself, getting your life headed in the right direction can be tough. This is especially true for young people who have grown up in challenging circumstances or who lack support from caring adults. It can be difficult for them to build trust and accept help, especially if much of their energy is concentrated on just trying to survive.

When Jerry first came to the YOP Shop, he was 18 and sleeping in a bus shelter at Columbus State where he was enrolled as a student. Before Huck House was able to connect him with The Counseling Center or find him a suitable housing option, Jerry was gone. He appeared at the YOP Shop months later, but again he disappeared before his team could get him set up in the right programs. Fortunately, Jerry came back one more time. And that third time was the key.

"There was so much going on in my life that I just kept leaving. But every time I came back, my caseworker was there for me. She was worried about me while I was gone. And she still had my back. It was kind of like coming home in a way," Jerry says.

And that third time, Jerry did stay connected long enough to move into a home of his own. He is now a resident of the permanent supportive housing community at Marsh Brook Place, where he benefits from counseling and transitional living services provided by the Huck House staff.

"This is the first time in my life I have housing that is all my own," he says proudly. "It's a new opportunity. But it's hard work, too. You have to keep it clean and do laundry and basically take care of it yourself. But it's teaching me responsibility, and I'm very grateful for that."

It's also given Jerry the chance to explore his many strengths and even give back to others. He's the first to pitch in and help with things around the community, like organizing the pantry or helping other residents learn to use the bus system. He's learning how to cook, holding down a job, saving money for his future, and even reestablishing his relationship with his parents.

Setting goals and working toward achieving them has become a positive new way of life for Jerry. Thanks to the door that was always open to him at Huck House, he has come leaps and bounds from living off the land just a few short years ago.

"I'm pretty sure I'd still be struggling with homelessness if it weren't for Huck House. I never thought I'd have a place of my own. There are so many others out there that could use the resources, and I'm just hoping that they can hear my story and get the help they need."



SRIJANA'S STORY

A Home of Her Own

Srijana's dad left her family when she was just seven years old. A few years later, she traveled to the U.S. with her mom and younger sister. For a while, it was just the three of them, trying to cope with the hurts of the past and make their way in a new country. Srijana found herself taking on much of the responsibility for her family, stepping up to do the cooking and housework and help care for his sister when her mother couldn't.

Then, Srijana's mom remarried. And Srijana, who wanted nothing more than to protect her mother, soon became the victim of ongoing verbal and emotional abuse from her new step dad. She started believing the things he would tell her, that she wasn't good enough. That she would never amount to much. That she was a 'bad' person. Srijana became depressed and even tried to end her own life more than once. She ended up living out of her car, just trying to make it through the next day.

"Finally, a high school counselor told me about Huck House," she says. "I was so scared. I didn't want to be alone and I wanted to help my mom. But the people at Huck House gave me confidence in myself, something I never had before. They made me feel I would be okay."

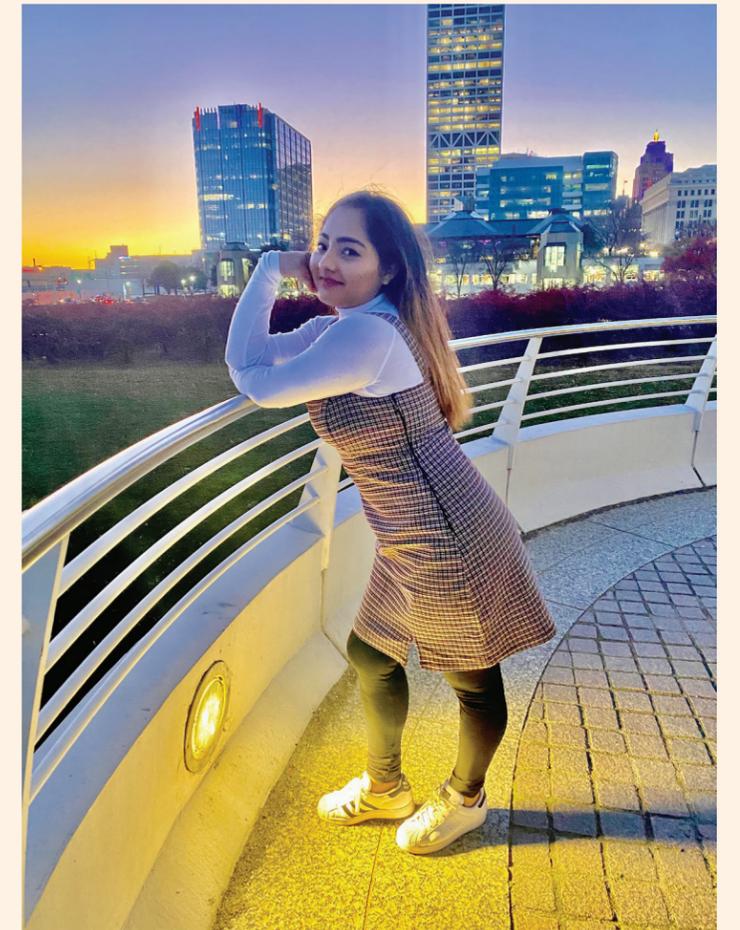
Srijana enrolled in the Transitional Living Program. She finished high school, secured a job at Amazon, learned how to stick to a budget, and worked diligently with her counselors on her own mental health. "Being at Huck House allowed me to express my feelings and talk about my goals and really just gain independence to lead my own life," she says.

For Srijana, one of her biggest accomplishments was enrolling at Columbus State. During her time in TLP, she also saved enough money to put a down payment on a house of her own. The savings check she received at the end of her 18 months in TLP was the biggest the program has ever written.

Things have come full circle for Srijana and she's also made amazing progress on another life-long goal: helping her mother. Srijana's mom and step dad both currently live in the house she owns. "TLP has helped me learn how to face my problems and not to run away from them," she says. "Every time I face my step dad, I'm so proud of myself."

And proud she should be. Srijana has come such a long way, she is working hard to rebuild relationships, and she is literally living the dream of home ownership. She has even bigger dreams for her future. Short term, she's working on a promotion to manager at her current job. And further down the road, she has plans to own her own business, something that will allow her to travel internationally and help others.

"If it weren't for Huck House, I would not be where I am today," she says. Srijana is living proof that, given the opportunity, young people can move beyond even the most challenging circumstance and move toward the future they deserve.



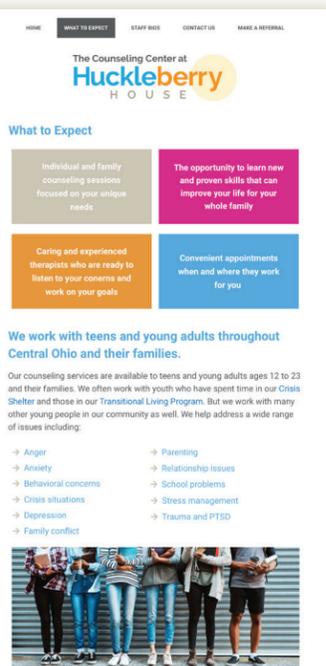
COUNSELING PROGRAM

IN FY 2020

213 youth and families received ongoing support for tackling tough challenges at The Counseling Center at Huckleberry House.

Young people and families who are struggling can often avoid a crisis situation if they can learn to use their strengths and work on their problems in healthy ways. The Counseling Center at Huckleberry House exists to help young people, ages 12 to 24, and their families do just that. We work with clients from other Huck House programs as well as those in our community that need someone to listen and to help tackle tough issues including anger, anxiety, depression, school problems, relationship issues, trauma, and PTSD. As the experts in supporting youth and their unique needs, our goal is to provide services to as many young people and families as possible through convenient appointments and sessions that are often available at no-cost to our clients. In addition, we also provide professional development training to other professionals who serve youth.

CounselingCenterAtHuckHouse.com



May-June 2020

Professional Development offered 10 unique trainings focused on working with adolescents and transition aged youth. Many of the trainings were offered multiple times. Topics included Crisis Intervention & De-escalation with Youth, Cultural Humility & Ethics in Mental Health Assessments, Engaging Teens Around Sexuality, Goal Setting with Youth, Mental Health, Teen Dating Violence, Trauma Informed Care, and Unhealthy Relationships.



November 2020

While counseling services are free to many clients through Medicaid or the Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Board of Franklin County, The Counseling Center began accepting self pay clients to open the door to more youth and families in need of our specialized services.



March 2020

We completed renovations on our former training space, located just steps from our Crisis Shelter and administrative buildings. The transformed space serves as the new home to The Counseling Center at Huckleberry House, providing a comfortable, confidential setting for individual and family counseling sessions as well as space for group meetings that can be used by clients in all Huck House programs. Huck House counselors continue to provide services at clients' homes, at schools, and even at community spaces and parks depending on each client's preferences.



March 2020

In preparation for the COVID crisis, The Counseling Center opened its Zoom account and began training staff on how to conduct counseling sessions and do intake paperwork remotely, either via phone or video. We ensured internet access for counseling clients in our housing programs so we could continue to provide essential services when it wasn't safe to meet in person.

May 2020

Huck House purchased tents and camp chairs to move many counseling services outside and offer in-person support to the young people in our programs in a COVID-friendly manner. By ensuring all of our housing units had internet access, we were also able to offer many services remotely through Zoom.



2005

The Family Support Program launches to provide young people and their families with ongoing support for developing strengths and tackling a wide range of family issues. Every year, hundreds of youth in our community find outgoing support at The Counseling Center at Huckleberry House.

2007

The Carriage House adjacent to the Crisis Shelter expands to hold administrative and counseling offices.

2008

Thanks to a generous donation, Huck House establishes the Soltis-Homer Scholarship Fund, which awards scholarships annually to deserving young women in our programs. To date, 20 young women have benefited from these scholarships.

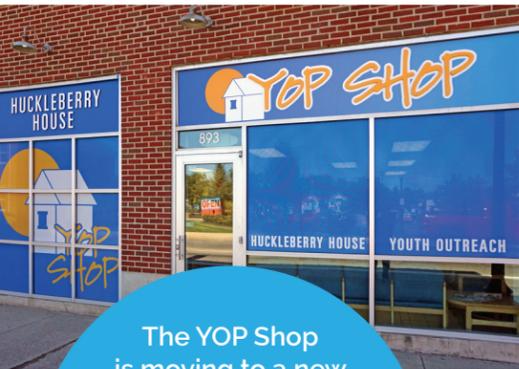
2009

The Transitional Living Program begins its parent mentor program to provide young parents in the program with support for building parenting skills.

YOP PROGRAM

IN FY 2020

84% of youth connecting with Huckleberry House through the YOP Shop were linked to community support services.



The YOP Shop is moving to a new location in 2021. Stay tuned for more information about our new space at **2216 Bancroft Street, Columbus, OH, 43219.**

One of the greatest challenges in serving at-risk and homeless young people is that they often don't know there are resources to help, or where to find them. The Youth Outreach Program at Huckleberry House addresses that problem head on by bringing information and services directly to young people. The only program of its type, YOP uses street-based counseling, school presentations, community connections, and special events to spread the word and make sure youth know they have options for resources and support. In 2016, the YOP Shop opened its door in the Linden community, giving young people easy access to YOP workers and a comfortable environment for learning more about their options and getting help with employment and education needs. In fiscal year 2020, Huck House began leading the community's collective effort to connect homeless youth with available housing resources and now serves as the central access point to all youth-dedicated housing options in the community, making it easier for homeless young people to get connected to safe, stable housing that meets their needs.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

IN FY 2020

Opening the Door to a Brighter Future through Post-Secondary Education

Nothing opens as many doors as a college degree or a professional license or certification. To help deserving young people in our programs pursue their dreams, the Scholarship Program at Huckleberry House awards funds each year to youth who demonstrate the skill, dedication, and desire to take their futures to the next level. Thanks to generous donors who believe all youth should have the chance to achieve their potential and to a scholarship endowment fund established by the Huck House board, we can help remove some of the cost barrier to attending college, technical school, or a career training program.

Congratulations to our 2020 Scholarship Recipients:

- Shainahyla Ayo** \$3,000
William R. McNamara Scholarship
- Daisha Blanch** \$3,000
William R. McNamara Scholarship
- Tanjah Finney** \$2,000
William R. McNamara Scholarship
- Kalani London** \$2,000
William R. McNamara Scholarship
- Ciera Robertson** \$3,000
William R. McNamara Scholarship
- Shainahyla Ayo** \$1,000
Soltis-Homer Scholarship
- Kalani London** \$1,000
Soltis-Homer Scholarship

July 2019

The Youth Outreach Program began working as the Coordinated Access & Rapid Resolution Services (CARR) team, part of the *A Place to Call Home for Youth* community plan, to provide developmentally-appropriate support and services to help homeless young people navigate the adult shelters, access rehousing services, and connect with housing resources.

January 2020

Raqueal (Rae) Toran became the Youth Outreach Specialist at Huckleberry House. Rae works closely with community partners and local schools to spread the word about Huck House, the Crisis Shelter, and the YOP Shop and build awareness among young people ages 12 to 18 about the doors that are always open to them and the support that exists to help them find solutions to family, school, or employment challenges. In Fiscal Year 2021, Rae will take on the additional role of Education Specialist and will work to develop life skills, housing readiness, and housing retention programming and curriculum for young people in Huck House programs.



July 2019– June 2020

The YOP Shop served 235 young people who called or walked into the office—more than a 100% increase from one year ago. Youth came in search of assistance with a wide range of needs, from help applying for a job, to obtaining a copy of a birth certificate, to using a computer, to finding out about other available community resources. YOP counselors opened 23 short-term cases to provide additional support and assistance to young people with ongoing needs.

2011

The bathrooms and kitchen in the Crisis Shelter enjoy much needed renovations and expand to serve more young people.

2014

The Transitional Living Program introduces its domestic violence track, initially dedicating 10 TLP apartments in a secure, alarmed, staffed building to victims of domestic abuse. Currently, a total of 15 apartments are set aside specifically for survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, or other crime.

2016

The YOP Shop opens its doors on the bus line in the heart of the Linden community, giving young people a safe place to call or drop in, talk with a counselor, use the computers and phones, and get connected to other community resources.

2018

Huck House hosts its first annual Sleep Out! Columbus event to give community members the opportunity to experience what it's like for young people in Central Ohio who have no place to sleep at night. The annual event has raised more than \$270,000 to date for Huck House programs.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

These are our kids. This is our collective success story.

When Huckleberry House opened the door to the youth shelter on Hamlet Street 50 years ago, it was with the intent of giving runaway young people in our community a safer alternative to the streets. This idea—that young people facing difficult circumstances at home should have options and choices that can improve their lives instead of leading them down an even darker path—has fueled our commitment to finding and developing every opportunity for at-risk young people to rise above their challenges and achieve their full potential.

Of course, we could not keep opening doors and changing lives without the help of countless individuals, organizations, and partners in our community. Over the past half century, we have been surrounded by thousands of supporters who have contributed their time, financial resources, and talents to our programs and efforts. And despite unprecedented hardships, this year has been no different.

Whether you donated for the first or fiftieth time, slept out, conducted a Zoom meeting with our youth, baked cookies, brought a gift to our holiday or housewarming drive, or wore your *Expect More* t-shirt around town, thank you for standing with us. And thank you for embracing the most vulnerable members of our community so they, too, can have the opportunities they so need and deserve.

October 2019

The 22nd annual Huck House Youth Awards recognized 14 youth for their commitment and courage in choosing better paths for their lives.

December 2019

More than \$135,000 worth of holiday gifts were donated to provide Christmas to 161 individuals.

March 2020

Volunteers met outside Kenmore Square—the 56-unit apartment complex purchased by Huck House to provide a supportive youth housing campus—to help clean up the space. Donors dropped off housewarming items to help make youth feel at home in their new apartments.

April 2020

The clothing company Homage announced raising more than \$50,000 for Huck House through the sale of its "Not All Heroes Wear Capes" shirts, inspired by the work of Dr. Amy Acton, former director of the Ohio Department of Health.



April 2020

Huck House hosted its third annual Sleep Out! Columbus event to raise awareness of the youth homelessness crisis in our community. While the event was virtual this year, 70 people participated, many sleeping outside at their own homes, raising \$95,000 to support Huck House programming.

Looking for ways to support Huck House during the pandemic?



The best way to support Huckleberry House during these challenging times is with a monetary donation or by shopping from [Huck House's Amazon Wish List](#). In addition, we will continue to host several drive-by events to collect essential supplies for the youth in our programs. Please watch your emails for additional information.

2019

Jefferson Place opens with 20 newly renovated TLP apartments providing a unique and supportive community nestled within the city's dynamic nonprofit district.

2019

Huckleberry House Executive Director Becky Westerfelt chairs a Community Shelter Board initiative, bringing together 250 stakeholders and 65 community organizations to plan comprehensive new approaches and strategies to reduce youth homelessness, resulting in the comprehensive plan, *A Place to Call Home for Youth*.

DAVE'S STORY

Supporting Huck House with his time, talent, and treasury—and even his sleeping bag.

Philanthropy has always been important to Dave Presper and his family. Specifically, the Prespers prioritize supporting causes and efforts dedicated to meeting a person's basic needs for housing, food, and education. "You need to have the basics to have a chance at successfully pulling yourself out of poverty, so that's where we focus our giving of treasury, talent, and time," Dave says. While he and his wife are long-time supporters of organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Homeless Families Foundation, and Mid-Ohio Foodbank, it wasn't until attending the 2018 house lighting ceremony at the Huckleberry House Crisis Shelter that they learned about Huck House's role in the lives of some of our community's most vulnerable members.



"Attending that special event was the first step in opening our eyes to the unique challenges that Huck House faces in its mission and how special the organization really is," Dave explains. "There are not any other groups in Columbus or nationally that focus specifically on kids' issues. Yet, youth homelessness is a big problem across the country. And these young people have unique needs from a mental health and housing perspective that need to be met."

At the event, Dave learned that there was an opening on the Huckleberry House Board of Directors for treasurer. "That's not a role I've filled before," he says. "I was really interested in being involved in that capacity, especially for an organization that is doing such critical work."

Dave joined the board in the spring of 2019. In addition to his oversight role, he and his family began donating financially. They also became interested in the annual Sleep Out. While the pandemic changed the nature of the event for 2020, Dave's entire family decided to still participate however they could. Dave, his wife, and their four daughters formed a team, the Presperettes. Everyone pitched in with fundraising, encouraging other family and friends to become sponsors, and the team raised close to \$5,000. Dave and his wife also made several personal donations through the Big Give and throughout the year. All told, the Prespers raised and contributed more than \$30,000 in fiscal year 2020 to support Huck House programming, much of which was matched through Big Give funding. Each member of the family also gained a better perspective on the challenges homeless youth face every day: All six Prespers spent the entire night sleeping outside on the patio of their home.



"We had blankets and sleeping bags, supplies that many homeless young people probably don't have. Still, it was not comfortable, and it was a pretty chilly night. It really gave us a taste of what some young people have to deal with on a regular basis," says Dave.

His family's generous giving and his personal dedication to the board is driven, in part, by one of Dave's biggest aspirations for Huck House: Dave would like to see the programs become a model for other communities. "We can give them a road map, show them how we've been there and done that, and point to the things that really work," he says. "This problem isn't unique to Central Ohio. But we are unique in that we've been addressing it for years. We know how to go about making a difference. If we can help other organizations do that on a national scale, we can really make progress in helping young people rise out of poverty."

Thank you, Dave and the Presper family, for helping us open doors that change lives.



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

We look forward to welcoming volunteers and volunteer groups back to Huck House when it is safe for all of us to be together again. Please watch your email and social media for specific volunteer opportunities. Or, share your ideas by emailing volunteers@huck-house.org. Discover just how much good you can do!

Huckleberry House Financials

REVENUE

Programs and Grants	\$ 2,311,770
United Way	\$ 121,000
Medicaid—Title XIX	\$ 530,058
Purchase of Services and Discretionary Funding	\$ 305,583
Contributions	\$ 476,825
Rental and Utilities Income	\$ 51,279
Special Events	\$ 98,189
Interest and Dividend Income	\$ 40,517
Net Loss on Marketable Securities	\$ (66,715)
Total Revenue	\$ 3,868,506

EXPENSES

Transitional Living Program	\$ 1,575,323
Crisis Shelter	\$ 1,111,219
Permanent Supportive Housing	\$ 30,961
Youth Outreach	\$ 333,148
The Counseling Center at Huckleberry House	\$ 474,605
Scholarships	\$ 12,961
Kenmore	\$ 123,971
Fundraising	\$ 141,444
Administration	\$ 412,776
Total Expenses	\$ 4,216,408

2020 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

William R. McNamara Scholarship

Shainahyla Ayo	\$ 3,000
Daisha Blanch	\$ 3,000
Tanijah Finney	\$ 2,000
Kalani London	\$ 2,000
Ciera Robertson	\$ 3,000

Soltis-Homer Scholarship

Tanijah Finney	\$ 1,000
Kalani London	\$ 1,000

2020 Board of Directors

(On June 30, 2020)

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Chaz Hixen

Hixen Search Group

Vice President

Pete Shuler

Crowe LLP

Secretary

Jessica Barwell

Columbus Hospitality Management

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Huckleberry
HOUSE



Huckleberry House, Inc.

1421 Hamlet Street
Columbus, Ohio 43201

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Administration: (614) 294-8097

Fax: (614) 294-6109

24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (614) 294-5553

YOP Shop: Moving to a new location for 2021!

2216 Bancroft Street
Columbus, Ohio 43219
(614) 826-3630

[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.