

NEWSLETTER

Advocating for Change | Fall, 2010



In this issue:

Over the past few years, At The Crossroads has begun to devote more time and energy towards advocating for systemic change, not just for homeless youth, but for all disconnected youth and young adults. We want to help prevent young people from becoming homeless, while ensuring that those youth who are on the streets will receive the breadth and quality of support that they deserve. Our advocacy flows directly from the work with our clients, whose experiences inform and direct our efforts to improve systems. In this newsletter, we ask clients, counselors, and professional advocates to weigh in on what is working, what isn't, and what needs to change in order to better meet the needs of both homeless and at-risk youth.

Changing the System

In *Too Big To Ignore*, a recent report on youth homelessness in California, it was estimated that there are 200,000 homeless minors in the state. When it came to quantifying homelessness among 18-24 year olds, it could only state that they are “numerous”, shining the spotlight on a huge quandary; how do you address a problem when you can't even determine the scope of it? This is among the many challenges being faced by the people who are trying to tackle the massive issue of youth homelessness.

We talked with three individuals who started their careers in direct services and have become leading advocates in identifying the needs of disconnected and homeless youth and creating solutions, working to ensure that no young people are without a place to call home.

What works?

One of the biggest successes so far in advocating for disenfranchised youth has been around those who are transitioning out of the child welfare system. California has created the THP-Plus funding stream, which provides resources for housing for youth aging out of foster care. In 2008 the Fostering Connections Act went into effect, which provides federal

funding for states to create services, including housing, case management and other necessities, to former foster youth until they are age 21. California recently passed AB 12, extending transitional foster care services to eligible youth between 18 and 21 years of age.

Amy Lemley, Policy Director for the John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes, has been one of the leaders in changing the system for youth aging out of foster care, and has begun to tackle the challenges facing the much broader population of all homeless young adults. There are a large proportion of disconnected youth who were not in foster care when reaching age 18, but who need services in order to leave behind or avoid homelessness.

In doing advocacy work for these youth, Rachel Antrobus, Director of TAYSF (Transitional Age Youth San Francisco), sees the recipe for success as combining data and feedback from young people and providers to find a solution that brings together funders and government to improve structures of support. Services should be created and prioritized when “young people and providers say that [the service] continues to be important.” This model allows programs

to be more client-centered and for policy to come from the people who are actually in need, rather than from the top down.

In thinking about her own work, Nell Bernstein, one of the lead researchers for the California Research Bureau's report, *Voices from the Street: A Survey of Homeless Youth by Their Peers*, also points to the need for youth to speak for themselves. “They can talk about their own lives, and it's very powerful,” she says. In the process of presenting the research on the youth profiled in the report to California state legislators, she witnessed “that people do respond to hard core research and the actual stories of youth,” and is excited to continue to see what the impact of the research she was a part of will have on creating systemic change for youth on the streets.

What gets in the way?

One of the main obstacles to advocating for youth on the streets is how both the general public and lawmakers perceive them. “There is a lack of awareness that young people, ages 18-24, are struggling to the extent that they are,” says Amy. “People simply don't understand, and ask questions like ‘Why can't these kids just

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“Each person is so different. This is a marginalized population inside of a marginalized population.”

— Rachel Antrobus,
Director, TAYSF



“We don't take collective responsibility for our youth. There is no system that owns them.”

— Nell Bernstein,
Lead researcher for California
Research Bureau



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— Amy Lemley, Policy
Director, John Burton
Foundation for Children
Without Homes



Letter from the Director

Rob Gitin

Imagine that when you tried to join a gym, they put you on a waitlist for two months. Then, when they finally allow you to join, strangers sit down with you and ask intimate details of your life for a couple of hours. After that they then tell you the exact workout regimen that you need to follow, regardless of what you are interested in, and say that if you try to deviate too much, you'll be kicked out of the gym. When you are not at the gym, you can't eat any jelly donuts, and if they find out you did, you get kicked out. Even if you do a great job at going to the gym, getting in shape, and losing weight, they kick you out after a couple of years, because they don't want anyone to become too dependent on the gym, or they need room for new people to join. And if you complain, there's a good chance you'll get kicked out.

Doesn't sound like a gym you'd want to join, does it? Well, unfortunately, all of these are conditions that our clients have experienced at the programs that are trying to help them (although, fortunately, it is rare to find an organization with all of these restrictions). This is why so many of our youth have left programs, been kicked out of them, or don't want to set foot in them in the first place. For the past 13 years, ATC has been listening to clients tell us about these experiences, and we are trying to aggregate their voices into cohesive policy and system recommendations that will improve the continuum of care for all youth.

For ATC, advocacy hasn't meant shouting, protesting, and telling The Man to change his ways (even though many would argue that as a privileged white male, I am, in fact, The Man). Instead, it has meant getting to know the places where decisions get made and funds get allocated, trying to get a seat at the table, and in some cases trying to play a leadership role in the discussions.

Most of the time there are very smart, committed people already at the table, including nonprofit leaders, city department heads, and philanthropic representatives. Sometimes, our role is to make sure that our clients needs are understood and represented, and to make sure that the city is accountable to this population. Other times, we play a facilitator role, listening to what others are saying, helping to draw out the ideas of people with expertise with different groups of youth. We aren't wed to any one role. We just want to see things get better.

ATC is able to contribute a unique voice to the dialogue because of who we work with, and how we work with them. What is essential is that no matter what, the actual experiences of young people need to drive changes to the systems.

When trying to improve services, it is vital to hear from the kids that no one wanted to work with, or who took one look and walked away. As mentioned earlier, our clients have left, been kicked out of, or have been uncomfortable walking through the door of most programs.

Also, in 13 years, ATC has worked with more than 5,000 youth, and has never kicked a client out of our program. Not one. With ATC, clients know that nothing they say will push us away. They can speak honestly and openly about their experiences, thoughts, decisions, and the things they like or don't like about the existing service options (including ATC), and still know that we will be there, regardless of their opinions.

We have the privilege of getting to work with young people who have a great deal to add to the conversation, but would otherwise be missed. It is an honor to represent them, and a challenge to try to capture their diverse needs. We are excited to see the changes occurring, slowly but surely.

At The Crossroads is a project of Community Initiatives. If you would like a copy of one of our previous newsletters, send us an email, and we'll send it to you as long as we have some left (we have a limited supply).



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Mission Statement

At The Crossroads reaches out to homeless youth and young adults at their point of need, and works with them to build healthy and fulfilling lives.

Core Values

- Prioritizing meeting the needs of our clients first
- Making services as accessible as possible
- Supporting empowerment
- Respecting individuality

What We Do: The Basics

- ▶ ATC walks the streets three nights a week in two areas of San Francisco: Downtown and the Mission. We hand out basic necessities like food, condoms, and socks, and slowly build counseling relationships.
- ▶ We work with young people whom others have given up on, who would not get help without us.
- ▶ We meet with clients 1-to-1. We listen to them talk about anything they want, with no agenda and no judgment. We help them figure out who they want to be, and how to become that person.
- ▶ We keep working with clients after they leave the streets. We continue to support them for as long as they want, helping them build outstanding lives, not just lives of subsistence.
- ▶ We work closely with other organizations, connecting our clients with services such as jobs, housing, education, health care, and mental health services.
- ▶ We support other programs in their efforts to work with homeless youth through dialogue, trainings, and technical assistance.
- ▶ We work with city government to improve the continuum of support for all young people on the streets in San Francisco.

Get Involved with At The Crossroads



Sarah, one of our stellar weekly office volunteers, in the ATC prep room.

Make a donation to ATC

You'll experience a sense of happiness and fulfillment that you've never known. You'll want to do it again and again. In all seriousness, the future of At The Crossroads depends on the generosity of individuals who believe in our work.

Make a credit card donation at www.atthecrossroads.org.

Or make checks payable to: "At The Crossroads, a project of CI."

Watch our documentary

In 2008, Monica Lam filmed a documentary that takes you into the world of our clients and our work. You can find it at www.atthecrossroads.org. It is 15 minutes long, and we promise you won't regret taking the time to watch it.

Volunteer

Individually

Do you have free time in the afternoon or evening? Come by our office and sort donated clothing, put away food, drive to the Food Bank and go shopping, or pitch in on a number of other tasks that keep us going. Interested? Email getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org.

Collect unused gift cards

Everyone has a gift certificate (or 20) that is sitting around the house, collecting dust. ATC can put them to good use by giving them to our clients or buying items we need. In case you didn't know, most gift certificates in California don't expire. One of our volunteers has already collected thousands of dollars in gift certificates for ATC! And to make it easy, we have an email template you can use to ask friends if they also have gift certificates to donate. Interested? Email getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org.

Email list

Sign up to receive emails twice a month about volunteer opportunities, organizational updates, and ways to get involved. Send an email to getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org, with the subject heading "Join the ATC email list."

Expand our network

Share our documentary

After you watch our documentary, if you like it, invite your friends over for lunch, cocktails or dinner to check it out. An ATC staff member can join you to discuss our work. It's a great way to introduce people to ATC. Email getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org and let us know.

Share our newsletter

Please let others who might be interested in ATC know about our work! If you want us to send people our newsletter, email us their names and addresses, and we'll send them copies. Email getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org.

Be creative

We're open to hearing your ideas for supporting ATC. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us through email (getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org) or phone (415-487-0691 x101).

live with their families?” she adds. On top of that, the federal funding stream for housing assistance doesn’t use a definition that captures homelessness among 18-24 year olds. Youth who are on and off the streets, or unstably housed, do not always fit the current definition of “chronically homeless,” in the same way as adults would who have been on the streets for years. This makes it difficult for developers and providers to find the necessary funding to create and administer age-appropriate housing for youth.

Rachel agrees with Amy’s assessment of the perception of street youth, and feels that there will “continue to be a problem creating effective systemic change for these youth without serious thought being brought to marketing and outreach.” “These young people are invisible,” she says, and are difficult to reach and hard to find, and it’s “hard to get compassionate support for youth that are [generally] seen as dirty, drug-addicted and violent.”

In addition, Rachel feels that one of the limiting factors in reaching youth, and properly advocating for them, is the complexity of their needs. “Each person is so different,” she says, “and this is a marginalized population inside of a marginalized population.”

Policies for change

There is much work yet to be done in envisioning, let alone implementing, solutions that would effectively meet the needs of these youth. “We are still at the stage of building a collective will, answering why youth voice is so important, combined with debunking the notion that they are freedom-seeking runaways,” says Nell. “We don’t take collective responsibility for our youth,” she says. “There is no system that owns them.” This makes it difficult to advocate at the policy level.

Much of Amy’s work focuses on advocating for statewide policy to address youth homelessness. The John Burton Foundation has prioritized four objectives to better meet the needs of these youth, including creating a permanent source of funding for permanent housing for transition aged youth.

In San Francisco, Rachel is working with a coalition of providers and city departments to work on the issues of transition aged youth. “Ultimately, we have to come together [as providers and lawmakers] to agree on what we are going to enact, to have a community-wide goal.”

Services that make a difference

When youth living on the streets are ready to accept assistance, many obstacles remain to getting the help they desire. When asked what services they would like to see provided for these youth, these three women offered valuable ideas.

“Permanent relationships tied with permanent housing; something to grow up within,” says Nell. “Housing you don’t have to get out of, because it can be retraumatizing being put out of the place you are staying.”

Providing youth with creative outlets for their energy is important to Rachel. Being able to channel the vigor of this group, and “engage young people back into productive ways to spend their time,” is key. It would “require sophisticated partnerships to tap the energy that young people have without being restrictive,” she says, empowering youth to feel more useful and valuable.

Amy sees the biggest gaps in the continuum of care around housing and drug treatment. “I would like to see treatment on demand that is age-appropriate for youth, and affordable housing with supportive services for as long as they need it.”

Reasons for optimism

“Young people are the most inspiring; even in their darkest times there is a fight or spark that they are going to figure it out, even if the systems fail them,” says Rachel.

Nell is also confident in the youth. “These kids have a strong drive towards security,” she says. “That’s a resource for those of us who are working with them, they are not in despair, they have goals and they have hope. If we can step up and meet them halfway, I think we could get our kids home.” §

San Francisco Steps Forward

In 2006, the Mayor’s office created the Task Force on Transitional Age Youth, charged with improving the outcomes for the city’s most vulnerable 16-24 year olds. The Task Force came out with its recommendations in 2008. **Over the past three years, despite a declining budget, San Francisco has been able to take some important steps in improving the systems of support for these youth.** ATC has felt privileged to play a leadership or supportive role in many of these efforts, and is excited to grow this component of our mission. Some of the initiatives of the Task Force include:

- Created TAYSF (The Transitional Age Youth Initiative), the first permanent body in San Francisco to specifically and exclusively focus on improving the city’s outcomes for disconnected 16-24 year olds.
- The Mayor’s Office of Housing adopted the Task Force’s recommendation to develop 400 new units of housing for this population. To date, 178 of the units have been created, or are under development.
- Created the Emergency Housing Fund for youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, which has helped numerous youth get off of the streets or avoid falling back onto them.
- Adult Probation has put a new emphasis on 18-24 year olds, giving them more support to help reduce rates of recidivism.
- “Gateway to College” has come to San Francisco. It is a program at City College of San Francisco that serves students between 16-20 who have dropped out of high school or may not graduate. It helps them get their high school diplomas and college degrees.
- SF received a Gates Foundation grant to implement the Communities Learning In Partnership (CLIP) grant, which aims to double the number of low-income students receiving post-secondary credentials by age 25.

Our Youth Are the True Experts

For years, we have listened to our clients discuss the challenges in the system of care that is supposed to be helping them. It can be such a battle for them to get to the point where they are ready and able to make major life changes, but they cannot do it alone. Those who are truly disconnected from their families and friends rely on services to fill the void that a strong community ideally would play. They had a great deal to say when talking about their various experiences trying to get help.

People matter the most

As you will see later in this article, our clients discussed many factors that affect whether or not they have successful experiences with support services. However, the primary issue that they raised again and again was the quality of the people providing services. More than anything else, this determined how they felt about the programs that they worked with.

Youth want to know that the people helping them truly care, and want to hear what they have to say. “A good service is them being there for you when you make that call. You know, you call them and they’re there to listen to your problems or whatever it is,” says Keya, a client with ATC for the past five and a half years. Homeless youth have rarely known what it means to have someone who is truly there for them. When they experience it, it creates a feeling of safety and comfort with a program.

Our clients talked about the importance of people who showed them respect and patience. Kim, an ATC client for seven years, still remembers the phlebotomists (folks who take your blood) at a service she used to access, and how they treated her. “They were so well-trained to deal with people who

were not exactly in the best health. They were very gentle, they explained things to you. You know, when you’re a kid and you’re on the street, nobody explains anything to you. Things just happen to you,” she says. Organizations can have great resources, philosophies, and strategies, but ultimately they depend on having the right people to create the relationships.

The staff’s cultural competency is also an important component in clients feeling that services are accessible. Having employees who are knowledgeable about the issues that truly matter to clients enables youth to make meaningful connections. Kim talks about the best programs having people who are “better educated, I mean streetwise.”

Unfortunately, clients cited examples where the people who were charged with supporting them did not live up to the standards we would hope for. Keya has felt as if she was treated more like a statistic than a person. “A lot of people just aren’t into their job and they really don’t care about the person they are talking to,” she says. For her a personal interaction is crucial. “At least you should sit down and see where I’m at. And see what type of person I am.”

Accessibility is a complicated issue

Even if every program had great people, that would not solve every problem. Services have numerous barriers that make them difficult to get started with, or to maintain. Obstacles can be created by limited resources, excessive bureaucracy, or the reality of trying to get help when you are poor, overwhelmed, and have a past that interferes with your future.

Readiness to ask for help and the ability to actually find the desired assistance sometimes do not coincide for youth on the street. “It’s just finding the services,” says Kim, “that’s the hard part.” Many youth are completely isolated, and have no one to steer them in the right direction.

Then, once youth find programs, the services are often operating beyond capacity, and struggle to provide the personal attention that our clients want. “Unfortunately, you are getting good care, but it’s oftentimes very overcrowded,” Kim says.



“How can you criminalize someone’s behavior when you’re not providing them with an alternative? And you are criminalizing people who haven’t fully developed all of the skills they need to get off the streets.”

—Kim

For many of our youth, navigating the layers of rules and applications required by some programs can prove to be too overwhelming, and they can simply give up. Ramondo, a client ATC has worked with for one year, would like to attend school to get an education in Construction Management. “When I went to apply, I was like, wow, it’s like pages and pages and pages of stuff. It’s kind of stressful,” he recounts. Even young people in the best of circumstances get frustrated having to deal with the requirements of some programs. For homeless youth who live in a culture that is so present-focused, where the future is often an afterthought, too much paperwork, long-waitlists or seemingly needless rules can become insurmountable challenges.

It is incredibly unfortunate that when our clients reach the point when they are ready to make changes, the realities of their past and present can still interfere with their ability to create a better future. A common problem

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“A good service is them being there for you when you make that call.

You call them and they’re there to listen to your problems.”

—Keya

clients cite is transportation. Without money to pay even for public transit, actually getting to a service can be out of the question. For Keya, who has five children and is currently homeless, being able to access services is a catch-22. As she says, “we wouldn’t even be coming to these programs, if we didn’t need the help,” so when services can’t reimburse for travel, they can end up excluding those who are most in need.

Having a felony on your record makes it impossible for you to access many services, including housing, jobs, and education assistance. Keya has been plagued by this for years. Earlier this year she was enrolled in a peer-mentoring program that promised to be a good fit for her, and she felt that she was quite successful at the role she was given. Unfortunately she was let go when her record came back with an old felony charge from 1999. “It’s not fair, if a person has changed their life, has done everything, like end their probation. I think they should give that person some slack,” she says. “I think

“It was just specifically targeted at the homeless, cause you’d see people sitting out front of their work, and as long as they weren’t dirty or whatever, they didn’t get messed with.”

—Anthony

that needs to really, really change.” When you are arrested, you end up “paying your debt to society” again, and again, and again, making it so difficult for people who want to leave their old lives behind to do so.

You can’t sit there!

The entanglements that come along with involvement in the criminal justice system are among the reasons that our clients are so against the proposed sit/lie law, which would

criminalize lying down or sitting on public sidewalks. Often these laws create cycles where youth get ticketed and are unable to pay the fines, which first result in the tickets having hundreds of dollars of late fees tacked on; then the unpaid tickets get turned into arrest warrants, which ensure that our clients remain stuck in their situations. Kim sums it up when she says, “How can you criminalize someone’s behavior when you’re not providing them with an alternative? And you are criminalizing people who haven’t fully developed all of the skills they need to get off the streets.”

It is yet another instance where our clients feel targeted because they are homeless. Anthony, ATC client with his girlfriend Megan for the past 6 months, has had experiences with a similar law in Oregon, where he used to live. There he found that the police were inconsistent in how they applied it. “It was just specifically targeted at the homeless,” he says, “cause you’d see people sitting out front of their work, and as long as they weren’t dirty or whatever, they didn’t get messed with.”

Meet the youth that speak up for change • • • • •



Keya

What age did you end up on the streets? 19 or 20.

Are you currently housed? No, I’m homeless.

Services that you currently access, other than ATC:

Homeless Prenatal, Connecting Point, Welfare to Work.

What’s the most important service to you, besides ATC?

Homeless Prenatal. They have transitional housing or you can share housing. I just became homeless last month, as I was in my own place for three years.

How long have you been in the Bay Area? I’m from here.

Who has helped you become the person you are today? My mom.

Where do you hope to be in the next couple of years? Hopefully settled in our own place again. Maybe in a position or doing training, a trade or something like that.



Anthony

What age did you end up on the streets? 13, but I started traveling when I was 15.

Are you currently housed? Yes, we’ve both been for the past few months.

Services that you currently access, other than ATC: Healthy San Francisco, Homeless Youth Alliance, Needle Exchange, Homeless Outreach Team.

How long have you been in the Bay Area? Since February of this year.

Who has helped you become the person you are today? My mom & Megan.

Where do you hope to be in the next couple of years? Continue my sobriety, a huge house with a blacksmith out back. That and go to school, get off of food stamps, get a bank account, all that white picket stuff.

Megan

What age did you end up on the streets? 18.

Services that you currently access, other than ATC: Homeless Youth Alliance, UFO Study, Needle Exchange, Homeless Outreach Team.

Who has helped you become the person you are today? Anthony.

Where do you hope to be in the next couple of years? Going to school, working, being domestic for a change.

“When I went to apply, I was like wow, it’s like pages and pages and pages of stuff. It’s kind of stressful.”

—Ramondo

And beyond the legal issues, our clients talked about how sit/lie is just plain uncompassionate. “It’s a messed up rule. I slept on buses, park benches, everything,” says Ramondo, “it’s kind of hard when you get tired if you’ve been walking all day, you get tired and so you’ve gotta sit down.”

So what does work for youth?

At the end of the day, our clients want to know that if they are going to make the

effort to get support, there is something concrete that will come out of it. Jeff, an ATC client for two and a half years, talks about how services feel worth his time, “if you felt like you got something out of it, you learn something, or you got some hookup or some kind of referral.” Too often, youth have to deal with intakes, waitlists, and multiple meetings before they get anything that feels of value to them.

Sometimes, in order to get what they want, youth have to be comfortable being their own best advocates. This can be hard for young people who have received the message that it is their fault that they are struggling, and that they don’t deserve better. Megan recently got placed in housing, but, as she says, she found that it was necessary to really have to push for it. “Sometimes you have to go after them, like with the housing - I just had to keep bugging them.” Not all of our clients have the confidence to do this, and those who don’t often get left behind when trying to access support.

The overall continuum of support can be more effective if feedback from young people drives the models of services. While there have been great strides forward in incorporating youth voices into program design, there is still much room for improvement. “I think that the people being helped need to be heard a lot more,” Kim says. “You know, as good a job as you guys [ATC] do advocating for us, I think that we can advocate for ourselves also.” We couldn’t agree more, and are excited to see young people like Kim who are moving into positions in their lives where they are speaking up and working to change the system for others. \$



Jeff

What age did you end up on the streets? 22.

Are you currently housed? No.

Services that you currently access, other than ATC: None.

How long have you been in the Bay Area?
I’ve been here all my life, I was born in Palo Alto.

Who has helped you become the person you are today? My grandmother.

Where do you hope to be in the next couple of years? I would really like in five years from now to have my daughter live with me, have one more kid, and to live in Tracy and have a job.



Kim

What age did you end up on the streets? 14.

Are you currently housed? Yes.

Services that you currently access, other than ATC: Tenderloin Neighborhood Development for housing

How long have you been in the Bay Area?
12 years, since I moved here from Maine.

Who has helped you become the person you are today? Rob, Kelly, Naomi (from ATC), the people at UFO.

Where do you hope to be in the next couple of years? I definitely want to finish my EMT program. More specifically I want to be able to give medical treatment and caring in an appropriate way with dignity to people who aren’t treated that way.



Ramondo

What age did you end up on the streets? 16

Are you currently housed? Yes, since February, I live with my girlfriend.

Services that you currently access, other than ATC: None.

How long have you been in the Bay Area?
I am originally from San Francisco.

Who has helped you become the person you are today? Me!

Where do you hope to be in the next couple of years? Better established in my job, on my own, not so much living with my girlfriend, able to do for me and her. A better environment for my children, just somewhere comfortable, basically.

ATC Counselors Speak About Helping Youth Navigate Services

As they work daily to help our clients navigate the systems designed to help them get off the streets, At The Crossroads counselors get to see firsthand how these programs are set up and implemented, and the way these decisions impact how helpful they are for our clients. Given this unique insight, we wanted to find out from our counselors what works and what doesn't when it comes to services and policies, as well as their specific opinions about what is lacking when it comes to resources for our clients.

What gets in the way

Several of the counselors mentioned that budget cuts have hurt many programs that our youth access, including ATC, making already scarce services even harder to find. Shawn Garety, ATC's program manager and a staff member for six years, notes that "things do seem better for 18-24 year olds," but that even for them, "there are still more needs than there are resources. For example, the Section 8 housing waitlist just closed, and for those who got on it, the wait is 10 years long."

Often, the programs that do have space are ones that are most challenging for youth to work with. For example, Naomi, ATC counselor for the past four years, recently took a client to a jobs program. He was interested in seeing what they offered, and is extremely eager to get a job and to find housing. "We went into the place," she reports, "and they required that you have a driver's license, no criminal record,

a clean pee test from drugs, and your GED, and it was just overwhelming for that client to even be able to walk in that door, let alone talk to people about the job program."

Youth and the criminal justice system

Being involved in the criminal justice system has the ability to sabotage our clients' ability to move forward in their lives. Whether they are recently released or haven't been arrested in years, having a prior record makes everything much, much harder. When our clients go to jail, they often end up losing their jobs and their places to stay, and then upon release have no safety net whatsoever. Ivan, a counselor with ATC for the past five years would love to see programs for those being released from jail (re-entry programs), similar to those set up for youth who emancipate from the foster care system. Generally these programs for former foster youth provide housing and support to help youth move out of a system and into living independent lives.

However, when youth are let out of prison or jail, there is little in terms of services and support. They often are released back in to the neighborhoods and communities where they found themselves involved in activities that led to incarceration. As Ivan says, "these youth need a place to take that first step to be able to put their pasts behind them. These clients end up simply going in and out of the criminal justice system."

Having a criminal record means that some of the increasingly scarce resources that exist for the poor or the homeless are no longer an option. "Having a criminal history means that they can't collect certain kinds of public assistance," Shawn says. It can also prohibit them from qualifying for financial aid for school and automatically removes them from certain job opportunities. "In terms of jobs and housing, your criminal history follows you," she says, "but being able to survive on the streets usually requires you to engage in criminal activity." Some of our clients have been able to leave this cycle behind by getting their records expunged after going years without being arrested, but many more are caught in the trap of no longer being eligible to access the services that would eliminate some of the challenges that can lead to committing crimes.

Another issue in terms of the criminal justice system and its impact on our clients are Stay Away (SA) orders. These are specific court orders

that require an individual to literally stay away from specific neighborhoods or blocks, in which they have perhaps repeatedly been hanging out and/or engaging in "criminal activity." The problem, as Kris, an ATC counselor for the past two years, sees is that "many of the programs and services that our clients access are in the areas designated as their SAs." We have heard more than one client mention being arrested for violating their stay away orders when they were coming to our office.

How to really help

For all of our clients, difficulties at home often created the conditions that made it impossible to remain there, and made them turn to a life on the streets. These troubles at home can often cause youth to be delayed in developing the necessary life skills to provide for themselves adequately, let alone to be able to navigate the systems of many services. As Ivan says, services need to take this in to account, and understand that "it's not about age, it's about where the client is in their life," so that they can then provide the most appropriate care and guidance.

It is a fine line between babying clients and making things too difficult for them. Services that work for youth, according to Brenda, an ATC counselor for the past three years, "are not about handholding, nor are they about creating obstacles that only a high functioning person can navigate." In her opinion, services that create an atmosphere that allows clients to advocate for themselves, while simultaneously meeting clients where they are, work the best for the youth we serve.

When thinking about how services are delivered, Kris feels that "services need to pay more attention to the individual and while you can't standardize services, you can have a standard (i.e.- treating people with dignity and respect)." In addition, she also feels it is important to provide a "user friendly centralized source for accessing all the services available that works with the realities of our clients."

Helping our clients wade through sometimes cumbersome systems can get difficult and frustrating for our counselors. But for Shawn this simply spurs her on to work harder and more diligently. "It makes me want to be a better advocate and create services that are needed and give a voice to people who don't have a voice." §



"It makes me want to be a better advocate and create services that are needed and give a voice to people who have don't have a voice."

—Shawn, ATC Program Manager

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Herren, and Bob & Irene Risedorph

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• Salesforce Foundation

• San Francisco Foundation

Employee Matching Program

Bold indicates donors who have

supported us annually, for at least

five years.

Italic indicates donors who have

Welcome to our new staff and Board members

VISTA Americorps Members



Hannah checks out our recently donated staff fridge.

Hannah Yaritz's desk hosts a collection of pictures of friends and family and the only living plant in the office. We think, that this nicely reflects her down to earth and lively presence in the office. Hannah, who hails from the Midwest, having recently moved to San Francisco from Milwaukee, will be focusing on setting up an internship program to keep our I Think I Can Campaign staffed and rolling in the dough.



Ally hard at work securing in-kind donations.

Ally Gibely is ATC's jet setter, earning her title by racking up a long list of countries she has visited. With all that movin' and shakin' we feel excited to have her settle in for the next year as our new Campaign Coordinator in charge of PR and community outreach. This Boston sports teams fan is not new to California, but she certainly has retained her East Coast spirit, and divulges that in her spare time she enjoys trashy magazines.



Alison is excited about our newest snacks in the prep room.

Welcome to **Alison Dagenais**, our other Midwesterner, who recently graduated from Grinnell College with a double major in French and Anthropology. She is excited to be in the city and to "people watch at Dolores Park" and admits to being obsessed with glitter and construction paper. We can't wait to see what she does with our events for the I Think I Can Campaign this year; we expect lots of glitz.

Board Members



Alan at the summit of Mt Tam at our Summer SunDay hike.

Alan D'Souza is a librarian at City College of San Francisco. A small-town boy at heart, he finds great joy in building community through volunteering, public service and creating art. His highly inquisitive mind, passion to learn, and flexibility to help out in any way make him a welcome addition to the board!



Frank on one of his epic bike rides for his I Think I Can Campaign.

Frank Petkovich joins the board with 25 years of experience in marketing, working currently as a marketing consultant. Frank is an avid cyclist, and a gourmet cook, and has used both passions in helping ATC. He brings a bottomless reservoir of optimism, enthusiasm and ideas to ATC, and we are the better for it!



Zeb is our first remote Board member!

Zeb Young is an attorney who recently decided to be ridiculously noble and put his Bay Area legal practice on hold to spend the year volunteering full time in Philadelphia for an agency that provides direct services to the homeless community. Zeb's keen legal mind, humility, and strong sense of justice have made an impact on all of us!

A 'Double Feature' for our favorite community groups

San Francisco Skate Club

In case you were wondering who is the coolest youth skate program in SF, look no further. It is the **San Francisco Skate Club**, without a doubt. They thrash like nobody's business, have a diverse, amazing group of young people involved, and are led by Shawn Connolly and Thuy Nguyen, two of the best people you'll ever meet. And, if that wasn't enough, they are quite the philanthropists! For the past two years, they have done two of our favorite I Think I Can Campaigns. In 2009, they raised \$2,200 by holding a Skate-A-Thon for their youth in Golden Gate Park. This year, they raised another \$2,200 by creating a full-length skate video, "Skate Dreams," which premiered at our favorite neighborhood theater, **The Roxie**. It feels like such an honor to be supported by a community group that we hold in such high esteem. Learn more about them, and check out their fantastic Campaign videos at sfskateclub.com.



The Skate Club kids at their world premiere!

Mission Cycling

In 2009, **Rickshaw Bagworks**, one of our favorite local businesses, connected ATC with **Mission Cycling**, which provide's cycling enthusiasts from the Mission district (where ATC works) the opportunity to meet each other, ride together, and create a gear-loving community. This past May, they capped off Bike To Work Day with a movie night (also at the Roxie) showing biking movies, and donated the proceeds to At The Crossroads. Their members have become donors, volunteers, and Campaign participants. When fellow nonprofits choose to get involved to support our cause, it is both humbling and motivating. Thank you Mission Cycling!



Our Hikers Get Fat and Feel Special!

Summer SunDay: A Hike for Homeless Youth (on August 15th) would not have been possible without unbelievable community support. This included the 41 businesses listed below that kept our hikers fed and hydrated, and made them feel properly appreciated. It included **Trish Richman, Kat Cullen, Vic Su, and Arun Bhalla**, whose design and web development skills made the fundraising possible. And special thanks to the 30 volunteers who showed up at Mt. Tam and made our hikers feel so special!



Rickshaw provided the trifecta of financial sponsorship, in-kind donations and employees doing a team hike!

18 Rabbits
7x7 Magazine
Affi's Marin Gourmet
Andante Dairy
Bella Viva
Bi-Rite Market
Boon
Bryan's Market
Charles Chocolates
Clif Bar
Colibri
Della Fattoria
Fayes Video
G.L. Alfieri

Galaxy Granola
Gap
Girl Venture
Hamada Farms
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House Kombucha
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Mariposa Baking
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Mission Mini's
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PacWest Athletics
Peninsula Beauty
Popchips

Real Foods
Rickshaw Bags
Sports Basement
Sukhi's Indian Foods
Susie Cakes
Sweet Dish
Taylor's Tonics
The Sandwich Spot
Trader Joes
Whole Foods
Yerena Farms
You Name It Productions
Zuckerman's Farms

Campaigners and Hikers Rock

During this difficult fundraising environment, ATC is indebted to the amazing people who have raised money for our cause by sharing our work with their communities. Nearly **200 people raised more than \$120,000 for us by participating in the I Think I Can Campaign or Summer SunDay Hike.** They also introduced more than 2,000 new people to our work. We cannot thank them enough!

I Think I Can Participants

Ivan Alomar
Megan Ameduri
Nancy Anding
Naseem Bazargan
Jennifer Bethel
Jennifer Blackman
Jennifer Brightman
Betty Brown
Pasadini Brown
Mateo Burtch
Kimberly Burton-Laurance
Olaitan Callender-Scott
Bayliss Camp
Catherine Camp
Kristina Chance
Alyse Clayman
Jennifer Cogliandro
Abby Conover
Elizabeth Costello
Karin Cotterman
Brenda Covarrubias
Patty Covarrubias
Vanessa Covarrubias
Laura DePalatis
Kimberly DeRoche
Julie Dery
Katie Dougherty
Camille Dungy & Ray Black
Mark Dwight
Allison MacQueen Felder
Violet Ferrante
Rachel Fletcher
Jeff Gillis

Laura Gigliello
Deborah Gitin
Rob Gitin
Anna Greenberg
Mary Gregory
David Guenette
Nova Hammerquist
Melissa Hung
Adam Hunter
Shari Husain
Naomi Irvine
Rena Ivy
Katherine Johnson
Meredith Johnson
Megan Keane
Rebecca Knoll
Evelyn Kuo
Avner Lapovsky
Barbara Lin
Michelle Lin
Emily LoSavio
Risa Malecki
Chelsea Martens
Megan McCarthy
Andrew McClelland
Kevin McCracken
Rachel McLean
Tiffany Moore
Erica Morse
Abigail Nathanson
Josie Ng
Perla Ni
Grace Oakes

Party Corps
Tim Patmont
Dawn Pavli
Frank Perkovich
Arnold Posada
Bonnie Puckett
Fiona Raymond-Cox
Mary Salome
Angelo Santiago
Seth Schneider
SF Skate Club
Sigma Omicron Pi
Lisa Socolow
Roxanne Somboonsiri
Janine Spaulding
David Stassen
John Stassen
Amanda Stein
Ian Stewart
Michelle Stoner
Emily LoSavio
Tori Talavera
Joe Talmadge
Edgar Tamayo
Erica Taylor
Jason Thompson
Christine Valdez
Nic Viox
Dan Walsh
Rebecca Weill
Bess Wohl
Jennifer Yip

Summer SunDay Hikers

Suzanne Abel
Anne Adams
Mason Austin
Kristina Batiste
Marjorie Benz
Tiffany Bryant
Kathryn Cullen
Ellyn Dooley
Alan D'Souza
Laura Gigliello
Laura Guzman
Devon Hayden
Mia Heiman
Sara Hron
Monica Lam
Sam Levin
Anthea Lim
Vanessa Lyons
Rich McNelis
J Mullineaux
Sue Newman
The Ramadashians
Lynne Rodezno
Jerret Schaar
Erica & Loren Taylor

Blue Unicorn's Hike
Doug Irvine

Leslie and Bea's Hike
Leslie Kleinberg
Bea Mallek

Love it, Like it, Help it, Hike it's Hike
Michelle Lin
Debbie Miller
Priscilla Paras-Huerta

No Reason Necessary Hike
Devon Geter
Marcella Licea
Aaron Rui
Bonita Song
Javier Urena
Mike Watson

Slayers Hike
Kurt Manley
Joanna Riedl

Sunshine's Hike
Mercedes Aviles
Angelica Rodriguez

TBD's Hike
Paul Boyer

Team Arriaga
Barbara Arriaga
Michelle Arriaga

Team Awesome
Branwyn Bigglestone
Ritchie Ritch
Maggie Stern

Team O'Neill-Irvine's Hike
Maureen O'Neill-Irvine

Team Rickshaw
Chris Crow
Mark Dwight
Juliet Hoffman
Kati Jackson
Joe Montana
Christopher Schroeder
Lisa Taylor

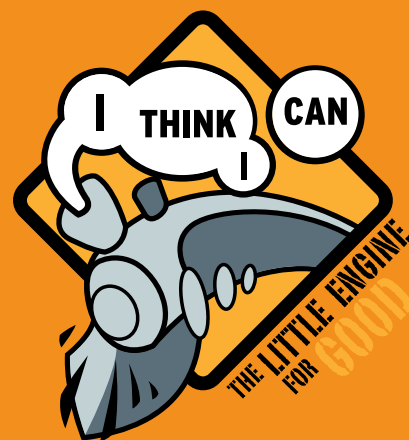
Team Sweet's Hike
Suzanne Ash
Rob Charette
Terry Charette
Eileen Chun
Linda Inderbitzen
Karen Johnson
Jen Rainin
Shannon Reeve
Tricia Wagner

Yay Hiking
Violet Votin

Zach and the Bean's Walk's Hike
Darcy Wheelers

I Think I Can, I Think I Can, I Think I Can

Hop on board to make 2011 an amazing year for yourself and for homeless youth.



SIGN UP AT CAMPAIGN.ATTHECROSSROADS.ORG

MORE TO COME IN DECEMBER

ATC told its community to Take a Hike, and they listened!

On August 15, 75 people joined us on Mt. Tam for our first ever **Summer SunDay: Hike For Homeless Youth**. It couldn't have been more fun!



TOP 5 HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1) Gorgeous sunny weather
- 2) Incredible views of the summit
- 3) Delicious, gourmet post-hike picnic, donated by more than 30 local eateries, stores and restaurants
- 4) Fantastic, custom-made thank you bags, with goodies provided by 10 generous businesses
- 5) And, most importantly, it raised nearly \$20,000 from more than 400 donors to support our work

photos from top to bottom: Team Awesome is psyched to reach the peak; Erica & Kristina reach the peak and show off their ATC love; all the amazing food at our recharge station; Callie Violet shows off her ATC pride in a Summer SunDay onesie!