

Solving Transition Age Foster Youth Challenges



SOLUTIONS SUMMIT REPORT

The Junior League of San Diego

The Junior League of San Diego, Inc. is a member of an international organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. The Junior League welcomes all women who value our Mission. We are committed to inclusive environments of diverse individuals, organizations and communities.

The following report details findings and outcomes from the Junior League of San Diego's 2016 Solutions Summit focused on "Creating the Pathway" to success for transition-age foster youth.



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Junior League of San Diego
Solutions Summit 2016
Report Issued June 2016

The materials contained herein represent the opinions of the authors and the Junior League of San Diego 2016 Solutions Summit participants. This material is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

Junior League of San Diego Solutions Summit on “Creating the Pathway”

2015-2016 Solutions Summit Leadership

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Kaaren Nyberg, Solutions Summit Chair

Melina Flanders, Chair-Elect

Emily Pickering, Chair-Elect



(From left to right: Melina Flanders, Emily Pickering, Brandi Cropper and Kaaren Nyberg)

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The Junior League of San Diego would like to thank the following for their commitment and contribution to the 2016 Solutions Summit:

Access, Inc.	New Alternatives, Inc.
County of San Diego – Health and Human Services Agency Extended Care	North County Lifeline Palomar College Pathways to Well Being
Cal State San Marcos Ace Scholars Services	Promises2Kids San Diego Child Protective Services
Casey Family Programs	San Diego Community College District
Dave Roberts, Vice Chairman, San Diego County Board of Supervisors	San Diego County Child Welfare Services
Don Wells, Executive Director, Just In Time	San Diego County Extended Foster Care Unit
Eco ATM – TAY	San Diego Workforce Partnership
Grossmont College	San Diego Youth Services
Guardian Scholars	SD Financial Literacy Center
Judge Sharon Kalemkiarian	SDYS: Independent Living Skills
Junior Achievement of San Diego County	State of CA – Division of Apprenticeship Standards
Junior League of San Diego SPAC, Advocacy and Solutions Summit Committees	Take Wing TAY Academy
Just In Time for Foster Youth	University of San Diego – Children’s Advocacy Institute
Mental Health of America - San Diego County	Voices for Children
MiraCosta College	YMCA Youth & Family Services – Independent Living Skills

Most importantly, the Junior League of San Diego’s Solutions Summit on “Creating the Pathway” would like to thank the former foster youth who dedicated their time, energy, resources and voices to the successful outcomes of the Summit.

Introduction

In March 2016, the Junior League of San Diego convened a two-day Summit on some of the most pressing challenges facing our transition age youth (TAY) population. Solutions Summit brought together 52 attendees from over 25 organizations for two days of discussion and active problem-solving surrounding these challenges. The focus of the Summit was to create solution roadmaps that would “Create the Pathway” to success for these foster youth.

The Junior League of San Diego created a Steering Committee consisting of local San Diego TAY service providers and experts to generate the 2016 Solutions Summit topic. Leveraging the expertise of those involved on the front lines and who experience first-hand the challenges faced by this population was critical to the success of the Summit.

The identified topics of discussion included ways in which legal services can be more accessible to TAY, how the San Diego community can create work opportunities and training for TAY in the private sector, how can the financial literacy of TAY be improved, how can we improve upon pregnancy prevention programs available to TAY, and ways in which the San Diego community can better support male TAY who struggle with mental health.

“When does the story of a challenging life change from predictable to promising?”

- Don Wells, Executive Director of Just In Time

The Junior League of San Diego’s 2016 Solution’s Summit attracted key experts, TAY service providers, and politicians from across California. With 52 participants, the Summit had attendance from community partners that covered the breadth of TAY services: County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, California State University San Marcos, Eco ATM, Grossmont College, Guardian Scholars, Junior Achievement, Just In Time for Foster Youth, Mental Health of America San Diego County, New Alternatives, Inc., North County Lifeline, Palomar College, Pathways to Well Being, Promises2Kids, San Diego Child Protective Services, San Diego County Child Welfare Services, San Diego Community College District, San Diego County Extended Foster Care Unit, San Diego Workforce Partnership, San Diego Youth Services, SD Financial Literacy Center, State of California Division of Apprenticeship Standards, Take Wing, TAY Academy, University of San Diego’s Child Advocacy Institute, Voices for Children, and YMCA Youth and Family Services.

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The outcomes of the Junior League of San Diego Solutions Summit are six roadmaps and a collective way to move forward in key areas affecting the success of TAY. A Junior League of San Diego committee will focus solely on advancing these roadmaps to continue the momentum of active problem-solving that occurred during those two days. With the continued participation of Solution Summit attendees, these roadmaps will be further developed, assessed, and implemented in phases over an appropriate timeline. The Steering Committee for the third annual Junior League of San Diego Solution's Summit is already exploring the topic for the 2017 Solutions Summit. We are proud to be a part of this dialogue and a driver of change for the TAY population.

Junior League of San Diego
June 2016

Summit Structure

The 2016 Junior League of San Diego Solutions Summit was structured as a two-day, small team, active problem-solving summit among key TAY experts from across California. During registration, attendees ranked their top two choices for breakout topic areas and were assigned to their topic area before the Summit began. The experts were broken into the following topic areas:

- Topic 1 - Legal Services: Identify the legal resources that are currently available to TAY. How can legal services be created to be more accessible to TAY?
- Topic 2 - Work Experience & Education: Identify how youth are currently accessing work/trade programs. Identify how youth are currently accessing education programs. How can the San Diego community create work opportunities and trainings for TAY in private industry?
- Topic 3 - Financial Literacy: Identify any innovative financial literacy programs that are currently established. How can the financial literacy of San Diego County's TAY population be improved? How can web-based technology be utilized to educate TAY on financial literacy?
- Topic 4 - Pregnancy Prevention: Identify the innovative pregnancy prevention programs. How do we incorporate pregnancy prevention programs within existing San Diego TAY programs and services? At what age should pregnancy prevention programs begin? What does the curriculum look like at each age and stage? How comfortable are you, as the provider, to speak to the TAY on sexual health?
- Topic 5 - Creating Resiliency with Young Men and Mental Health: Identify the innovative mental health programs that are specific to at-risk male population. Identify any trauma-informed services available to at-risk male populations. How can the San Diego community better support male TAY who are struggling with mental health?

Each working group contained a mixture of experts on TAY, including attorneys, social workers, service providers, group home leaders, and transition-age foster youth themselves. The working groups were led by facilitators who are leaders in the Junior League of San Diego. There was also a designated note taker assigned to each team who was to ensure all ideas, feedback,

"All types of organizations have come together to help the Junior League figure out what can we do as a community [and] as a county..."

-Supervisor Dave Roberts

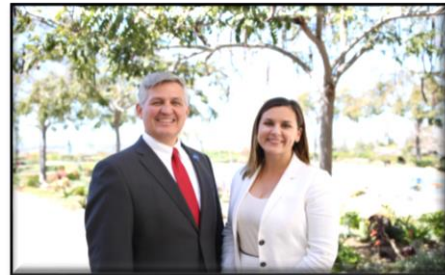
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progress, and roadmap decisions were properly documented.

The first day of the Summit was kicked off by the Junior League of San Diego President, Liza Pinard, followed by two keynote speakers: Judge Sharon Kalemkarian, San Diego County Superior Court, Juvenile Dependency; and Don Wells, Executive Director of Just in Time for Foster Youth. After the plenary opening, attendees met with their working groups and spent the first day discussing their specific challenge, strategies that are working in San Diego relative to this specific challenge and why, brainstorming potential solutions, and narrowing the list down to focus on one solution.

On the second day of the Summit the teams constructed specific roadmaps for the phased implementation of efforts to alleviate the challenges in their focus area and then presented the solution roadmap to the entire Summit. The presentation period was a time for collaboration as other teams asked questions, discussed potential resources, and had the opportunity to understand the work of the other attendees.

San Diego County Supervisor, Dave Roberts, was the guest speaker during day two. Dave Roberts is an adoptive parent of six former foster youth. His legislative priorities include the California Well-Being Project, which worked to strengthen relationships between Child Welfare Services and foster parents, and the Exceptional Families Adoption Campaign, which expanded recruitment of adoptive families.



(Dave Roberts and Liza Pinard)

While actively problem-solving to develop a recommended solution and roadmap, each work group was asked to focus on the following:

- What successful programming currently exists? Why is it successful?
- What could be done to leverage, change, or improve what exists today?
- How will success be measured? What would be the impacts of successful implementation?
- What will a timeline for implementation look like?
- What is the timeline for reporting on the progress and success of the initiative?
- How much would implementation cost? What are potential sources of funding?
- What barriers are there for implementation of this solution?
- Who will manage the collaboration?
- Who will manage the progress of the roadmap? Who will own the final project or initiative?
- What roles and responsibilities are involved for project owners?

Chapter One

SUMMARY of SOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In an effort to identify ways in which the members of San Diego County can “Create the Pathway” to success for our Transition Age Foster Youth, the 2016 Solutions Summit participants developed the following solutions and recommendations:

- Training offered to pro bono lawyers so they are better informed on issues facing TAY. A legal clinic to educate TAY on the role of a lawyer and how to work with a lawyer.
- A one-day career convention (Career Con) designed to connect TAY with available apprenticeships and job opportunities in various in-demand fields. Career Con will also include workshops on various career skills such as interviewing and networking.
- A financial literacy program (Be the Bo\$\$) specifically customized for TAY. One module would be completed each year over the course of four years with a focus of debt prevention.
- A Sexual Health Fair Summit to provide education for TAY and care providers. The Summit will empower youth to make more informed decisions about their sexual health.
- A marketing and education campaign to redefine mental health to eliminate the stigma associated with mental health so that young men are more likely to access services.
- A male mentorship Journeymen retreat directed by men for men in order to better allow for male transition age youth to meet their full potential through healing and leadership.

“We are coming together to try to identify some areas and solutions where we can all work together to make improvements.”

- Liza Pinard, JLSD President

Chapter Two

Challenge #1: Legal Services

How can legal services be created to be more accessible to TAY?

The first work group discussed the legal services currently available to TAY and solutions to make legal services more easily accessible.

Problem: Lack of knowledge of which legal services are available for TAY and how the youth can get access to the resources they need.

Evaluation of Current Situation

Each year, approximately 20,000 of the 542,000 children (4%) in foster care nationwide are discharged to live on their own.¹ An important component to help foster youth ages 14-21 develop and mature is comprehensive services that are tailored to the youth. Services must be regularly and consistently available. Foster youth in San Diego between the ages of 14-21 years cannot easily access legal information or receive legal advice regarding different areas of the law. There is currently a lack of available resources and services for foster youth. Competent legal advocacy and satisfactory representation in the courts for any civil issues such as housing, credit, identity theft, disability, and domestic violence issues, are virtually unattainable for TAY.

At Solutions Summit, the group identified The Alliance for Children's Rights as a program that is currently working. The Alliance for Children's Rights is based in Los Angeles County, and provides free legal services and advocacy for children in poverty and in foster care.

In Los Angeles County, The Alliance for Children's Rights provides free legal services and advocacy for children in poverty and in foster care. They also provide training and education for those who work with or care for children. These pro bono attorneys are available to assist foster youth in Los Angeles County by providing free consultation and legal services, and helping to educate the youth about their legal rights. At Solutions

¹ *Aging Out of Foster Care: Youth Aging out of Foster Care Face Poverty, Homelessness, and the Criminal Justice System* [PDF]. (n.d.). New York: The Children's Aid Society.

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Summit, they discussed how pro bono attorneys helped a great deal in the past by providing legal services from several organizations and programs:

- San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program (SDVLP)
- Catholic Charities
- California Children's Services
- San Diego Family Justice Center
- Family Law Facilitator's Office

There is a long waitlist for the services provided and the youth are not always certain what to do when legal issues arise. Other programs the TAY are accessing are Dual Unit, Expected Family Contribution and Continuum of Care Reform; however, there are issues and problems that arise when using the programs.

Final Recommendation

The group identified a final recommendation: to provide legal services workshops and trainings for the youth regarding legal services and the professionals who are serving them. Initially, there would be a Legal 101 workshop that teaches the youth how to work with attorneys as well as a resource training or the attorneys specific to topics relating to TAY legal needs. This would be similar to the structure of Solutions Summit.

The outline and timeline of the workshop is provided below:

This workshop will provide:

- Service providers the information and where to access legal services
- Youth the ability to utilize pro bono legal services
- Organizations the ability to track legal services provided
- Youth the ability to seek out attorneys and understand attorney's roles in a non-courtroom environment

Organizations that should be involved are:

- South Bay Community Service; Access
- Independent Legal Skills providers
- Just in Time
- Counseling Cove
- San Diego Youth Services
- Voices for Children

Presenters:

- Dependent Legal Group
- District Attorney
- Public Defenders
- Private attorneys for bankruptcy, family law, education, criminal, and immigration



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Resources Needed:

- Pro bono attorneys
- Funding for online resources such as a website
- Funding for food, facility, transportation, brochures, application fees, etc.
- Venue can be at no cost (such as Offices of Education)

Frequency for Professionals:

- Half-day program
 - Start in the morning, ideally twice per year, with evaluation for full day program necessity

Frequency for Youth

- Mid-day program or afternoon 4 pm - 8 pm
- Quarterly, if not every other month

Requirements of TAY age group:

- Ages: 16-25 (similar to ILS)

Benefit:

- Educating service providers helps youth
- Youth become knowledgeable and empowered as they have access to resources

Timeline:

- By May 16th meet to identify the committee
- By January 2017 hold the first Service Provider Clinic
- By July 2017 hold the first TAY Clinic

Chapter Three

Task Force #2: Education and Work Experience

The second group discussed supporting youth in finding their desired career path and bridging the gap to the necessary resources.

How can youth be supported in finding a passion for a career path of their choice, and how can we bridge the gap to resources that can make that happen?

Problem: Youth are having difficulties accessing the resources that could lead them to a desired career path, and the consortium of foster youth providers to support in these pathways is low.

Evaluation of Current Situation:

According to a study performed by The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative transition age foster youth have difficulty finding employment, retaining employment, and earning a livable wage. By age 24, only 50% of foster youth are were employed. Research also suggests foster youth are leaving foster care underprepared for adulthood as they are lacking skills to live independently, as well as the essential skills for securing and retaining employment.²

The team of experts identified what is working locally to support education and work experience. Additionally, the team identified ways to provide greater access to community resources that would bridge the gap to meaningful work experiences and careers that align with a youth's particular employment interests.

² Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (2015). "Early and Consistent Work Experience." Retrieved from <http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/early-consistent-work-experience>

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What is working?

- The California State Universities and Universities of California have seen increased financial resources, through Guardian Scholars grants and Chafee loans that support foster youth participation and access to college.
- The California State Universities and Universities of California have also seen the growth of support programs for foster youth. California State University San Marcos now offers guaranteed enrollment for foster youth who meet minimum requirements. Additionally, efforts to support transfers from community colleges to four-year colleges is in place.
- The community college system has seen growth in campus resources, particularly over the past year. Palomar hired a full-time counselor dedicated to assisting former foster youth.
- Educational systems have seen the need for greater accountability and now must account for the number of former foster youth served and track service outcomes.
- Paid work experience programs now exist locally to support youth between the ages of 16 and 24 in an employment environment that aligns with their career interests through Connect 2 Careers.
- Workforce initiatives include the expansion of apprenticeships in in-demand industries such as technology, manufacturing, and health.
- San Diego Workforce Partnership will be promoting the 100k Initiative, which is an employer-led initiative targeting 100,000 at-risk youth between the ages of 16 and 24. On a local level, this initiative will aim to support youth with systemic barriers to education and employment opportunities through outreach to local Fortune 500 companies with a goal to increase employment opportunities for these youth.
- Programs, such as Career Horizon and Bridges to Success, exist to support career pathing and aid in the youth's self-discovery.

Final Recommendations

The team identified solutions that would provide greater access to community resources, which would bridge the gap to meaningful work experience and to careers that align with a youth's particular employment interests.

- Create Career Con, an engaging one day event designed to connect foster youth and those who serve them to existing resources through direct exposure to career professionals and interactive workshops.
- Connect foster youth and those who help them to existing resources, through direct exposure with career professionals and interactive workshops within an engaging one day event: Career Con!

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- The team identified essential partners: military, probation, mental health services, corporations, scholarship representatives, county and local businesses, county welfare, and TAY organizations.
- Career Con could include workshops, information panels, interviews, career exploration and exposure, and speed networking.
- Career Con will provide the opportunity for youth to meet with and sign up for apprenticeship programs in a vast number of trades including electricity and plumbing.
- The team discussed financial resources necessary to support such an event and explored how grants and in-kind contributions would aid in its success.
- Support from local officials, community based organizations, and JLSD was explored.
- The team explored media outreach and social media efforts needed to promote efforts.
- Further research is needed to identify local and/or national events similar to Career Con so successful programs can be replicated.



Chapter Four

Challenge #3: FINANCIAL LITERACY

The third group discussed the financial issues TAY currently face and what can be done to improve the financial literacy of TAY.

How can the financial literacy of San Diego County's TAY population be improved? How can web-based technology be utilized to educate TAY on financial literacy?

What Is the Problem?

The Financial Literacy Task Force team identified the following problems preventing TAY from being financially literate:

- TAY do not invest in themselves
- Focus is on living in the “now” rather than the “future”
- Identity theft
- Scarcity vs. abundance
- Behaviors learned in foster care about financial wellbeing
- Lack of knowledge as to how to stretch the dollar or avoid debt in the first place
- Large sums of money are provided post-graduation, but they do not know how to manage

The vast majority of TAY youth do not invest in themselves, and they lack future planning. They do not think of where they will be in a year, six months, or even one month from now, but rather are concerned with how to survive on a day-to-day basis. There are physical and emotional factors, such as their environment and relationships with relatives and friends, which may hinder or prevent TAY from shifting their attention to financial literacy and the future.³

³ Edelstein, S., & Lowenstein, C. (2014). Financial Literacy and Asset Building Programs. *Supporting Youth Transitioning out of Foster Care*, 2014-69(2). Retrieved from www.urban.org.

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Evaluation of Current Situation

The Financial Literacy Task Force team identified the following available programs that are currently working in San Diego:

- Junior Achievement's Finance Park
- San Diego Financial Literacy Center
- Mind Treasures
- Jump\$tart

The services listed above are not reaching TAY because TAY are unaware of these resources. There are also beliefs that these organizations are part of the foster care system and therefore lack legitimacy with the TAY. Additionally, these services are offered in a piecemeal fashion, rather than in a standardized form.

Final Recommendations:

The group identified a final recommendation: Be the Bo\$\$, a debt prevention designed specifically for TAY. Be the Bo\$\$ will teach TAY the financial literacy skills necessary to get out of debt and stay out of debt.

Be the Bo\$\$: *Blueprint*

- Who would manage and run?
 - An existing non-profit agency (such as Junior Achievement of San Diego)
- Who would fund?
 - A local financial institution would deposit funds to bank staff who have been trained on the program and participants
 - Grants
 - County dollars
 - State funding for long term stability for the program
- How would it work?
 - Curriculum
 - Preexisting standardized financial literacy curriculum to be customized to meet the specific needs of TAY
 - Taught by volunteers who have been trained to work with the TAY population
 - Internship based
 - Mentor Program
 - TAY would be assigned mentors who have been specifically trained to guide the youth through the program

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- Incentive
 - Students to receive a stipend for participation
 - The funds are to be deposited into an interest bearing account as youth completes each modular
 - Funds to be available to TAY when they turn eighteen

Be the Bo\$\$: *Program*

- A debt prevention program to empower TAY to manage money and to educate TAY on financial literacy
- Creating self-esteem by developing young professionals to match today's workforce
- Target audience: 9th through 12th grade
- Designed for four-year program where each module is completed within a school year and continues to provide education to 19-24 year olds through existing programs in the community and by being peer mentors
- Students complete program with a modular based curriculum that provides different levels consistent to the student's aptitude
- Curriculum unifies and standardizes the approach to the youth
- Curriculum based upon specific demographic

Be the Bo\$\$: *Transition*

- How would it be different?
 - It is preventive and gives the youth power and ownership of their own finances
 - Get out of debt by age 18 and stay out of debt
 - Program helps to transition into adulthood by specifically targeting ages 18-24
- How would it be marketed to TAY?
 - Social workers
 - Case managers
 - CASA volunteers
 - Facility managers, etc.

Be the Bo\$\$: *Benefits*

- Early exposure
- Empowerment
- Relationships and community
- Abundance
- Independence and self-reliance



Chapter Five

Challenge #4: Pregnancy Prevention

The fourth group discussed the issue of pregnancy prevention within the transition age foster youth community as well as what would be an effective method to teach pregnancy prevention to TAY.

Why are transition aged youth becoming pregnant at a higher rate than the general population? What can we provide to our at-risk youth to educate them about sexual health and pregnancy in an approachable and effective way?

Problem: Transition aged foster youth are at a higher risk for pregnancy and lack access to approachable information, support, and services needed to prevent pregnancy.

Evaluation of Current Situation

Foster teens are more likely to become pregnant than the general population. A study completed by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancies found that nearly half (48%) of teen girls in foster care had been pregnant by age 19, compared to 27% of all teen girls.⁴ Some of the factors leading to higher rates of teen pregnancy are low self-esteem, lack of guidance, lack of consistent relationships with trusting adults, a history of abuse and neglect, the desire to have someone to love, and the lack of opportunity to experience healthy relationships.⁵

The group discussing this topic identified some approaches and concepts they felt were important to reaching the TAY community about sexual health and pregnancy prevention. It was agreed that a multifaceted approach is imperative to reaching this community. They believe it's important to not only provide information and services to the foster youth, but to

⁴ Ng, A. S., & Kaye, K. (2013). *Why It Matters: Teen Childbearing and Child Welfare*. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 1-5.

⁵ Leonard, S., Dixon, D., Fantroy, J. D., & Lafferty, K. (2013). *Help Me to Succeed: A Guide for Supporting Youth in Foster Care to Prevent Teen Pregnancy*. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 1-14.

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their foster parents and caregivers as well. Additionally, by having peer-driven sex education classes that incorporate real life scenarios while simultaneously engaging them in a fun and non-intimidating way, TAY would be open to learning more about sexual health and pregnancy prevention. The group believes an emphasis on emotional support is very important when discussing this topic. By providing peer-to-peer discussions in support groups, connecting teens with peer mentors, and emphasizing continuing education and career development, the youth will be better equipped to make good sexual and life decisions. Educating foster youth about the alternative options to parenthood can be very effective in breaking the cycle of early parenthood that is common among the TAY community. By having access to health care, engaged adult and peer mentors, and information that has been made fun and relatable, this community is much more likely to be engaged in discussing this often difficult and embarrassing topic.

The group believes a current challenge facing TAY is accessing these services easily and not feeling intimidated to do so. The group decided that having an Annual Sexual Health Summit would be a great way to provide a multitude of services simultaneously in a fun, comfortable, and engaging environment for the foster youth.

Final Recommendations:

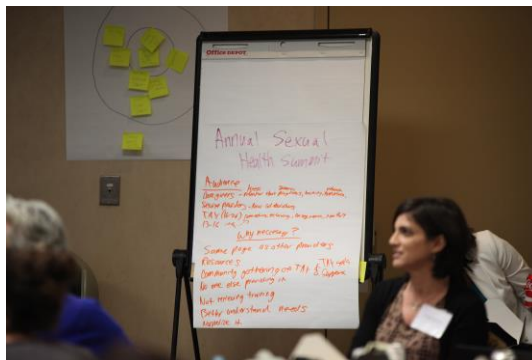
The group will work towards developing an Annual Sexual Health Summit beginning in 2017. The goal of this summit is to empower foster youth to make better decisions about their sexual health by having access to better education about sexual health from a multitude of service providers and educators available in our community.

The group developed four phases to develop the Summit:

- Phase 1: Information Gathering
 - Attend Solution Summit Health Summit 2016 (June 11th, 2016) and Education Summit 2016 (June 29th, 2016) to gather information, learn what is working, possibly introduce sexual health component at Health Summit to see how it is received.
 - Find service providers that are working with TAY sexual health in the area.
 - Find TAY who can participate in planning summit or join committee.
 - Implement rough schedule; secure date and location.
- Phase 2: Collaboration
 - Reach out to local service providers working in TAY sexual health; see what is working well, what is needed or currently lacking.
 - Find service provider who can educate on domestic violence/consent.
 - Find sponsorships and donations for Summit.
 - Locate clinics providing sexual health services, stores with emphasis on sex, and other nontraditional service providers that could be involved.
 - Look into local funding, available grants, and inclusion of Planned Parenthood.
 - Brainstorm potential speakers and workshops.
 - Discuss security at event.

- Reach out to service and care providers, including Storefront and TAY Academy, use TAY network to reach as many service providers and organizations that work with this population as possible.
- Contact youth courts to provide information/hang flyers or possibly provide education credit to youth for attending the Summit.
- Reach out to San Diego County Department of Education.
- Market event: create website and flyers about Summit.
- Create and finalize schedule.
- Create application for workshops, speakers, participants; process applications.
- Finalize presenters, speakers and participants.
- Secure vendors and donors; book entertainment.
- Get clearance from Dependency Legal Group of San Diego.
- Finalize security for Summit.
- Create content for informational packets.

- Potentially collaborate with Solution Summit Health Fair 2017
- Do location walk-through.
- Finalize transportation for TAY to access summit easily.
- Make gift bags.
- Finalize and confirm food and catering, entertainment.
- Confirm and collect raffle prizes, donations.
- Set up location, take down location.



The taskforce believes the Annual Sexual Health Summit could be a fantastic way to reach many TAY at once while simultaneously educating them about pregnancy prevention.

It is the hope of this group that this will be an annual event and which continues to have a positive effect on this community helping them to achieve their highest potential.

Chapter Six

Task Force #5: Creating Resiliency in Young Men and Mental Health

The fifth and sixth group discussed the problems the young male population face relative to mental health, the stigma attached to mental health conditions, and how we can make services more approachable for young men.

How can the San Diego community better support male TAY who are struggling with mental health needs? Which innovative mental health programs and trauma-informed services are available to at-risk male populations?

Problem:

For male transition age youth, several barriers have been identified that contribute to low rates of mental health services and program utilization, including stigma and labeling, ineffective communication of services and importance of mental health care, and differences in available programs that speak to men's mental health outside of "traditional" therapy approaches.

Evaluation of Current Situation

Each table group discussed program and support options currently available to male transition age youth. This included discussion around which organizations are in place to provide programs that are (or whose format would be) effective for male youth, and what barriers are preventing male youth from using the programs currently available.

While several organizations with a focus on mental health support exist in San Diego County, few are specifically geared toward the male population, and even fewer are focused on the male transition age youth population specifically. It was noted that there are significant differences in mental health care utilization trends, with males seeking and using support services far less frequently than females even though males have much higher rates of unsheltered homelessness and suicide.⁶

⁶ Winerman, L. (2005) Helping men to help themselves. Monitor on Psychology, American Psychological Association. June, 36(6), p. 57. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun05/helping.aspx>

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Contributing factors to gender differences in utilization were discussed and the following key challenges were identified:

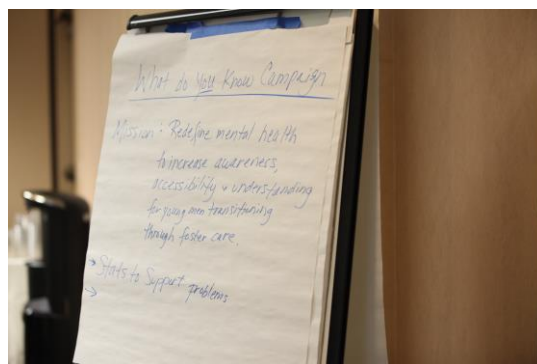
- Labeling and stigma of mental health,
- Ineffective communication to male youth about mental health topics, awareness, and services,⁷
- Challenges to accessing care, including transportation and length of wait time,
- Fewer male professionals delivering program and support services,
- Differences in effective methods of delivery (i.e.: relationship and mentoring approach vs. traditional therapy).

Final Recommendation- A:

What do YOU know Campaign:

In discussing the current mental health needs of male transition age youth in San Diego, this group found that a marketing and educational campaign to redefine mental health and wellness would be beneficial. To promote understanding of the male transition-age youth needs, current programs will be encouraged to focus on both the male transition age youth population and male transition age youth providers in mental/behavioral health services and community partners (such as CASA's, hospitals, colleges, etc.).

To create a successful new approach appealing to young TAY males, the group explored the importance of holding male TAY focus groups so to determine what the youth currently perceive about wellness resources, what defines mental health, and how mental health/wellness information can best be delivered. Once results and findings of the focus groups have been collected, the group plans to move forward with the following implementation steps:



- Create sample messaging based upon findings.
- Confirm accurate assessment of sample messaging with both male transition age youth group and service providers.
- Create marketing plan final message, possibly soliciting outside marketing input.
- Develop marketing multi-media for the different target groups with a holistic perspective.

⁷ Grace, B., Richardson, N., & Carroll, P. (2014, December). *Engaging Young Men Project: A Report on the Mapping Exercise Conducted in Ireland during 2014* [PDF]. Kildare, Ireland: National Office for Suicide Prevention.

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- Debut message at Brand of Brothers event, TAY Academy's Urban Beats, existing forums and events, and at college programs focused on educating future service providers.

By re-branding mental health in a way that increases awareness, accessibility, and understanding for young men transitioning through foster care, it is anticipated that utilization of existing resources would improve, thus allowing male transition age youth to find more support and assistance with self-care. In addition, presenting "mental health" care in association with other wellness behaviors and habits works to remove the stigma of males seeking mental health support, thereby improving the likelihood that male transition age youth will be better able to identify their needs and seek/accept assistance from available resources.

Final Recommendation- B:

Journeyman of San Diego- A Male Mentorship Retreat:

After exploring the need for male-centered support, the group explored an approach to better facilitate a connection between male transition age foster youth and male mentors. Focusing on the importance of community, it was decided that a new “group” setting in the form of a retreat would be the most helpful, as a retreat would create a space to inspire men and boys to reach their full potential through healing opportunities and leadership.

This program “directed by men for men” will focus on developing a support structure from a male perspective to foster mentorship connections and allow young men to build practical skills to take home. Key steps in developing the Journeyman of San Diego project include:

- Reaching out to current organizations to model mentoring components of retreat
- Recruiting male transition age youth males for a Call-to-Action video
- Holding a “Journeyman Challenge” event to recruit passionate mentors
- Facilitating male transition age youth led focus groups to design and implement pathway for event
- Establishing specifics of when/where to hold the Journeyman mentorship retreat



In establishing a male retreat project of this nature, the San Diego community will be able to challenge the stigma around “mental health” from a new perspective. This will change the method of traditional therapy to a council system comprised of male mentors for support, education, and empowerment. In doing so, it is anticipated that this approach will also improve support language with an emphasis in trauma informed care that encourages and empowers young men to seek and utilize mental health care services with more regularity.

Chapter Seven

Solutions Summit Next Steps

The Junior League of San Diego is committed to the assessment and growth of the six roadmaps developed at the 2016 Solutions Summit. With the continued dedication, expertise, and guidance from the workgroups, we will work towards a phased implementation of solutions. To adequately support this goal, the Junior League of San Diego implemented a separate committee, TAY Task Forces, dedicated to the continued facilitation.

The TAY Task Forces committee will collaborate and communicate with prior years' Solutions Summit teams and facilitate ongoing discussion, planning, and implementation of roadmaps. The objective is for the Junior League of San Diego to provide ongoing support to past attendees and community partners in executing one or more sustainable projects generated at Solutions Summit. Progress on the roadmaps will be reported in subsequent Solutions Summit conference reports.

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