



Finding Home

**A Study of Homeless and At-Risk Youth
In the East Bay of California**

**Prepared for
Covenant House of California**

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Introduction

Americans are deeply touched by the plight of street children living in third world countries. Our televisions show us images of homeless children, children poorly fed and clothed, children who are ill and in need of medical attention. We think of these tragedies in far-away places and feel saddened, yet remain secure in the knowledge that these things are not part of our own reality.

And yet we hear stories and see evidence of children and youth living in our own communities who are not doing very well. The latest report card from the organization *Children Now* states that one out of every four children in American lives in poverty. Many of these children and youth can be classified as *at-risk--* for becoming victims of crime, for failing in school, for teen pregnancy and for homelessness.

At-risk youth are also young people who find themselves in unsafe or threatening situations that hinder opportunities for normal growth and development. These youth are robbed of the hope for healthy and productive lives. High-risk situations include dysfunctional family life, abuse, neglect, alcohol or drug abuse, dangerous sexual activity, crime and homelessness. In this definition we include runaway youth under the age of 18 who are away from home at least overnight, youth who lack parental care and supervision, children and youth who receive foster parenting or institutional care, “throwaway” youth who have been ejected from their homes, and youth who live with friends or other non-relatives and move often from household to household.

Some of these youth may live in a house, or a variety of houses, but do not have a home. Many are facing grim futures due to the failure of our school systems to teach them to read and write. Some have suffered traumatic experiences from family or neighborhood violence. Still others cope with the difficulties of their lives by becoming caught up in alcohol or drug use.

At 11:00 at night in West Oakland or the flatlands of Richmond, young girls

A shelter service provider stated that while they were not supposed to take in people under the age of 18, they saw young people in increasing numbers coming into their shelter. He stated that these clients seldom remained for very long since the shelter's services were geared for older people.

can be seen on street corners caring for their younger siblings who are parked in strollers facing dark buildings. A visit to an evening homework center for elementary school children who otherwise would not have an adult to assist them with their homework finds several third and fourth graders who can not yet read. A late night visit to a park reveals youth bedded down in sleeping bags. Other children of all ages wait alone in substandard housing for a parent or parents who may not appear before dawn.

Why is it then that the faces of children on television in far away countries may move us, and yet we do not notice these problems in our own communities? Perhaps it is because we have not grown eyes necessary to see what we prefer to think only happens elsewhere.

The purpose of this report is to examine the need for services for at-risk and homeless youth in the Eastern San Francisco Bay region of California—Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Our research work from July through December of 1997 has found ample evidence to suggest that there are large numbers of youth in the East Bay who fit the category of at-risk.

The sad truth is that in the East Bay Region there are many at-risk youth because there are too many families who are unable to provide the nurturing stability that helps young people grow into healthy and successful adults. Whether it is the stress weathered by a single female-headed household, the conditions created by poverty or the ravages that families experience as a result of the crack epidemic, family dysfunction is at the heart of the problem of at-risk youth.

A staff member from a non-profit youth serving organization recounts the experience she had last summer of getting to know several 16 year olds who were employed by the city's summer youth program. Of the eight youth, five were not living with their immediate families.

Because of these fragile and failing family conditions, we find significant numbers of unsupervised youth who are living on a provisional basis with people who are not their immediate families. Perhaps they live with a grandmother for a while and then an older brother or sister. Others may wear out their welcome with an assortment of peers and their relatives. This situation is often referred to as “couch hopping” or “couch surfing”. These youth are at high risk for incurring all of the ills that accompany the lack of adequate permanent homes.

Throughout this report we will hear the voices of at-risk and homeless youth themselves and recount their stories. These stories come from youth that have experienced couch hopping, who have run away or have been thrown out of their homes by their parents.

Many of these youth have been involved in street crimes.

We will also listen to the voices of youth who have lived in foster care homes or group homes and are faced, at the age of 18, with entering society as independent adults. Their chances for becoming successful adults by all standards of our society are particularly low. The common denominator in all these stories is that the future of these young people is at-risk because the primary support systems provided by living in a nurturing and stable family have been absent, and society has not adequately fulfilled its obligation to care for them when their family systems have failed.

Our research has convinced us that the East Bay problem of at-risk and homeless youth is homegrown. Except for Berkeley, the East Bay is not a destination for youth migrating from elsewhere. In large part, the problems faced by youth arise from the disintegration of families, the alienation of youth, and the failure of local social systems to provide youth with the protection, care, and guidance that is their right.

Initial Program Discussions

In June of 1996 Covenant House California began to discuss the possibility of locating a program in the East Bay. These discussions occurred as a result of invitations from concerned citizens and financial supporters of Covenant House

who believed that program services were needed. Over the next 12 months, the Executive Director and Associate Executive Director of Covenant House met with a variety of individuals and institutions, including people from the Oakland Mayor's office, Alameda County Public Health Department, Urban Strategies Council, Alameda County Social Services, Oakland Sharing the Vision, Fred Finch Youth Center, Xanthos Inc. and BOSS (Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency).

Of particular importance were the meetings held with the Diocese of Oakland and Catholic Charities of the East Bay. After several discussions it was agreed that Covenant House would move forward with a formal needs assessment focusing on at-risk youth and continue to communicate with both Catholic Charities and the Diocese throughout the process. Both the Diocese and Catholic Charities worked with Covenant House in developing the needs assessment.

In each of the meetings held by Covenant House during this first year, there was widespread agreement that additional services for at-risk and homeless youth were badly needed in the East Bay. Covenant House was encouraged to consider program development in the area. Based on the advice received from a number of service providers, Covenant House engaged Resource Development Associates to conduct a needs assessment. RDA was directed to consult with service providers, youth and other interested parties throughout the process. Covenant House remains committed to the development of collaborative approaches to providing services to at-risk and homeless youth in the East Bay.

Overview of the Needs Assessment Process

In order to assess the need for Covenant House services in the East Bay Region, our study employed the following primary methods for collecting information:

1. Interviews with Key Informants

An effective system of services for at-risk and homeless youth must be based, in part, upon the input of those who are currently working with the population in the area. We spoke with government officials, non-profit service providers, teachers, policy makers and many other stakeholders. These interviews sought to examine responses to questions related to the existence of at-risk and homeless youth, the extent of the problem and the history of providing services in the area.

Another primary purpose of the key informant interviews was to assess the reaction of service providers, community leaders and other stakeholders to the possibility of Covenant House coming to the area. The overwhelming response was extremely positive. Many service providers have taken time from their busy schedules to talk with us, tour us through their programs and neighborhoods and answer our questions. Some were instrumental in helping us talk directly to youth by hosting focus groups. We held interviews with 48 key informants. These individuals gave of their time and spoke from their personal and organizational experiences about the existence of at-risk and homeless youth in the region.

2. Focus Groups with Key Constituencies

The purpose of holding focus groups was to take a snapshot of perceptions of youth living within the community regarding at-risk and homeless youth—the causes and possible solutions—in the East Bay. In preparing this needs assessment we talked with 125 youth from different parts of the East Bay community.

We also drew from the results of other focus groups conducted prior to this study, which were held with over 500 youth in the region concerning their perceptions of the quality of life in their community, street violence, and preventive measures. A large number of the youth in these focus groups had engaged in the phenomena of “couch hopping”, were at-risk for being homeless and/or were in the juvenile justice system. The focus groups sampled a cross-section of youth including youth who were doing well in school and were looked upon as leaders in their communities as well as youth who had consistently failed in school and were attending alternative county operated schools.

3. Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

Throughout the nation, efforts to address social and economic problems generally operate in an information-poor environment. At the present time, however, new computer technologies provide the possibility of greatly enriching the information content of public discourse. This can give service providers access to high quality information about a wide variety of social problems that can inform their decision-making processes regarding allocation of resources and the impact of service delivery.

In planning this needs assessment, we agreed to assemble data that would help Covenant House not only answer questions related to assessing the need for services for at-risk and homeless youth in the area, but also to inform them about the broader conditions of the community they were considering for service delivery. This information would serve Covenant House not only in the planning phase of the effort, but also in helping to shape the types of services provided well beyond the initial planning stages. Having a command of data relevant to the region and the target population would also enhance Covenant House's capacity to raise and leverage resources in the area.

There are simply no databases that exist to measure the phenomena of homeless youth or youth at-risk for homelessness in the East Bay. During this needs assessment process we queried every individual and group that we spoke with regarding their experience and perceptions of the existence of at-risk youth and youth homelessness. The response was unanimous that indeed there were at-risk and homeless youth in the East Bay and a need for a variety of services.

While we could not document the numbers of youth who may be either ill-housed or not housed at all, we can document the occurrence of school drop out rates, the occurrence of juvenile arrest by neighborhood, the incidence of teen pregnancy, the infection rate for HIV/AIDS and a host of other problems that foretell a poor future for the youth of this region.

Since it is against the law for a minor to run away from home, many youth choose to try to remain hidden for as long as they can. This frustrates attempts to

Public Health homeless service providers reported that they often served youth 18 years or older. Many of these youth did not realize that they were eligible for other types of public service. They stated that they sometimes saw youth that they suspected of being younger, but preferred not to ask since they would have to report them.

quantify the phenomena. Since there are no homeless shelters dedicated to youth of any age in the region, we did not have traditional information regarding requests for services, bed nights that exist in other social service delivery systems. **Therefore, we realized that we would have to ascertain the existence and the extent of the problem indirectly by looking at other data that correlated to profiles of at-risk and homeless youth. These data elements include, but are not limited to, such factors as high school drop out rates, juvenile crime, poverty, truancy, the rates of HIV/AIDS infection, drug use and other data.**

In addition, two other and sometimes overlapping populations of youth thought to be at-risk for homelessness are youth who are HIV positive or who have AIDS, and youth who identify themselves as gay, lesbian or transsexual.

As well as collecting and analyzing data on the majority of the risk indicators listed above, we have also included data on community assets and resources that would provide support to Covenant House in establishing services in the area.

Early on in the process of collecting and examining this data, we realized that while many at-risk youth do experience a high level of instability in their living situations, the real focus of our work was to examine the need for services for at-risk youth regardless of whether they are homeless or not. This data analysis takes us into an in-depth examination that will assist Covenant House in developing an array of services in the East Bay Region.

4. Neighborhood Drive By Survey

Nothing revealed need for services more than taking a drive through the most depressed areas of Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond. The specific neighborhoods that we toured all held in common the display of dilapidated, boarded-up housing, isolation from other areas of their community as witnessed by the lack of public transportation systems, and large numbers of youth hanging out on the streets during school hours and at night. Within each of these neighborhoods there was a lack of commercial retail stores, especially grocery stores.

As were toured these sections of the neighborhoods with community organizers and outreach workers from these communities, they would point out hot spots for drug sales, places where gun shots were frequently heard and gang territories.

I. The East Bay Region

As seen by most of the world, the San Francisco Bay Area is one of the most dynamic and desirable places to live within the United States. This six county region includes the North Bay area of Marin County, known for its environmental beauty; the world famous City of San Francisco; the south bay region of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, where the Silicon Valley brought the computer revolution to the world; and the East Bay, home to the University of California, mother of progressive causes, and seedbed for urban social problem solving.

Comprising Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, the East Bay Area is a region of great scope and complexity. With 46 cities, a surface area of 1,545 square miles, and a population of over 2.1 million, this geographical region reaches from Fremont in the southwest to Crockett in the northeast and from Silicon Valley to the rural hinterland of Sacramento. Socially and economically the region ranges from the blighted urban areas of Oakland and Richmond and the dispersed rural poverty of Oakley and Brentwood, to the suburban professional affluence of Blackhawk and the I-680 corridor. In the eastern communities, issues revolve around managing growth and preserving open space, while the communities along the Bay to the west struggle with the mirror-image issues of reversing economic decline and returning land to productive use that has been poisoned by a legacy of environmental contamination.

Within this two-county region lies the East Bay Corridor. This stretch of communities running along San Francisco Bay comprises parts of Contra Costa County and runs through the most western sections of Alameda County. This area contains 24 cities, of which the largest are Oakland and Richmond. Tied together by the I-880 and I-80 freeways and linked by the BART train system, it is home to approximately 1.5 million people-more than half of the entire population of the East Bay region. These cities stand in contrast to their neighboring eastern cities as they are home to some of the poorest families in the nation.

The Corridor Region is tied together by more than a transportation system and a waterfront area. These jurisdictions share common problems of urban crime, ethnic diversity, and social malaise that distinguish them from the affluent eastern hinterlands of each county. Taken as a whole, they represent a coherent socioeconomic unit at odds with the political geography of the region. Leadership within the East Bay Corridor area has recognized that crime, violence and other social and economic problems do not stop at city or county boundaries, but that this entire urban area represents a single region.¹

¹ In the past three years 24 cities, 16 school districts and numerous law enforcement agencies have banded together to create the East Bay Public Safety Corridor Partnership. Efforts are also underway to look at creating similar partnerships to address health issues throughout the region.

Insert corridor of poverty map

III. Narrowing the Field for Study

The results of our focus groups and interviews revealed a great need for additional services for at-risk and homeless youth in the East Bay Region. There are a range of opinions regarding what type of services are needed. These differing perspectives seem to be primarily a product of one's experience, agency focus, geographical location within the region and philosophy of service delivery.

A service provider in the Tenderloin area of San Francisco expressed frustration at the numbers of street youth they were serving from Alameda County. Their funding sources were categorical for serving San Francisco youth but they felt morally obliged to serve youth from Alameda County because they knew of no programs to send them to in Alameda.

Several key informants mentioned that many at-risk and homeless youth, particularly those that engage in prostitution, go to San Francisco. This was verified in our focus groups with youth who attested to the fact that some youth do go to San Francisco, partially because it is well known that services and supports were available in that city and not in the East Bay.

The preponderance of our fact-finding and focus was directed on the cities of Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond-with a particular emphasis on Oakland. Our reasons for this were as follows:

- The largest cities along the East Bay Corridor are Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond. Each visibly manifest problems with at-risk and homeless/runaway youth, and each have a clear youth "street culture."

A twenty-year-old from Richmond who reported that he had spent a lot of time on the streets said "They (young people) go where the drugs are. If that means finding the money for a BART ticket to go to Oakland, you do it."

- The cities of Oakland and Richmond are the most economically depressed and report the highest incidents of victimization of youth and crimes committed by youth.

- While Berkeley is a city that is doing well economically, it is known throughout the region as a hangout for street youth. Berkeley's street youth population may be unique to the region as it is "home" to runaway youth from all over California and the nation.

- There is a high rate of mobility of youth facilitated by the BART system throughout the East Bay region. Youth seeking drugs easily move in and out of these three cities where drugs are readily available in many neighborhoods and can be purchased on the streets.

It is important to note that while we will focus on these cities, other communities within the East Bay region also suffer from a lack of services for at-risk youth and homeless youth. Of particular note is the growing problem of at-risk and homeless youth in the southern regions of Alameda County, one of the fastest growing areas of Northern California.

We believe that, if strategically located, the establishment of Covenant House services in the East Bay will serve youth from the entire region. Outreach to youth throughout the East Bay Corridor area by Covenant House is not only feasible but also enormously desirable in order to begin to satisfy the need for services.

IV. Previous Studies of At-risk and Homeless Youth in the East Bay

To our knowledge, the problem of at-risk and homeless youth within the East Bay has never been adequately studied. Certainly, there has never been a regional plan to address at-risk or homeless youth that compares to the attention given to street crime, HIV/AIDS, drunk driving, regional transportation, dredging the port, downtown high-rise development or, a myriad other issues.

During the preparation of this report, we discovered several attempts on a very local level to document the problems of youth homeless in the East Bay Region. Other information must be extrapolated from studies on related subjects.

□ The most recent and notable was the study conducted by the Tri-City Health Center Youth Action Project in April 1997 of “Street” youth in Southern Alameda County. The report, entitled *Dark Side of the Moon*,² anonymously surveyed 677 youth who either skipped school on a regular basis or did not attend school at all and/or who lived somewhere other than with a parent or legal guardian. Of the total population surveyed, 16.1% reported not having a place to stay.

While reviewing the application of a homeless woman for services, the social worker noted that she had two children, the infant that she held in her arms and a 15 year-old daughter. The social worker inquired where the 15 year-old daughter was at the time of the interview. The mother replied that the daughter had been staying with a friend but that the friend's family had moved and she, the mother, did not know how or where to reach her daughter. The social worker accompanied the mother to the daughter's school so that she could make contact with her. The school reported that the child had not been seen for several weeks.

□ According to Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS), a nonprofit organization that provides services to homeless and low income people in Alameda County, there are 360-600 unaccompanied youth nightly on the streets in Alameda County. They further claim that 60% to 75% of homeless youth report being physically abused prior to leaving home.

□ In 1990, a survey of Fremont High School Students in Oakland discovered that 46% of those youth responding had either experienced homelessness or felt as though they were not welcome in the house in which they were living.

□ In 1995 the *Oakland Consolidated Plan* estimated that at any point in time approximately 3,544 people were homeless and that annually 10,632 people received help. This report does not speculate on what happens to the older children of those families since in most shelters children over 12 are not permitted.

□ In its 1994 report the Emergency Services Network (ESN) of Alameda County, a coalition of 200 organizations that provide emergency food and shelter, reported that a total of 4,884 people of all ages used emergency services that year. Of this number, a total of 1179 young people between the ages of 13-29 were served. According to ESN, this number is underreported.

V. RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

Over the course of two months we conducted 48 one-on-one interviews and held focus groups with 125 youth ages 14 to 23. While the subject matter of the one-on-one interviews related in part to the primary work of the organization or individual, the focus groups drew from people's personal experience and used a standard set of questions.

We asked the following questions in each focus group:

- Have you ever known a youth who was homeless?
- Have you ever been homeless yourself?
- Where do kids go when they become homeless?
- What causes kids to become homeless?
- What kinds of services or programs would help?
- Where should the services be located?

Have you or other youth who you know ever been homeless?

One 19-year-old who was currently paying rent for living in his mother's basement reported that he had allowed a friend of his who was homeless to live with him for awhile. After several months he had to throw him out because he wasn't able to contribute to living expenses.

In every group meeting that we held at least one person, usually more than one, admitted to having been homeless, while most knew of another young person who had been homeless. We asked this question in many different ways to uncover the many different ways in which a youth can be at-risk for homelessness. Youth with whom we spoke ranged from being very high-risk youth who were attending a probation-sponsored alternative school to youth who were doing very well in school and were seen as leaders in their communities.

What causes youth to be at-risk or to become homeless?

We asked this question of every individual and group that we encountered throughout this needs assessment process. The answers were many and varied:

A 16-year-old girl reported that she had runaway from her family when they became homeless because she was too embarrassed to stay with them. She lived with several of her friends for awhile and then went to live with her grandmother.

- Abnormally high expectations of immigrant parents of their children;
- Being thrown out of home by parents for being gay or lesbian, for being HIV/AIDS positive, or for alcohol and drug use;
- Child abuse and neglect;
- Dysfunctional families-particularly the use of alcohol and other drugs by a parent or parents;
- Eviction;
- Family violence;
- Homelessness of the entire family;

- Lack of job opportunity, lack of job training;
- Lack of affordable housing;
- Loss of job, or a relationship;
- Not getting along with a step parent;
- Overcrowded living conditions;
- Poor communication between parents and youth;
- Poverty-inability of family to provide ongoing support;
- Running away from a group home or foster care placement;
- Sexual abuse;
- Termination from foster care.

What happens to youth who are homeless?

Many of the young people who participated in focus groups described their experience with homelessness as beginning when they left their family and moved in with another relative or friend. Some soon moved on to live with others-another relative or friend-but pretty soon they felt as though they had worn out their welcome or decided that they felt out of place in someone else's home. This phenomena known as "sofa hopping" or "couch hopping" often ends with the youth returning to his or her family home where they may remain for a while and then repeat the cycle. Others may not choose to or may not be able to return home and they may spend some time on the streets. For others, jail or juvenile hall becomes the next step.

For those who graduate to actually living on the street, their means of existence is usually engaging in some form of illegal activity. At first a youth may try to hustle \$25 - \$50 to pay for a night in a motel and some food. Youth who we spoke with disclosed that as their competency in selling drugs or hustling increased they could take in anywhere from \$50.00 to \$500.00 a day or beyond.

Several of these youth had graduated from living with friends to living on their own. They described their initial attempts to stay in school while living on the street. But soon they stopped going to school as they struggled with their self-image from wearing dirty clothes and were increasingly enticed by their "street friends" who were involved in making money.

What types of services would be most helpful for at-risk, runaway and homeless youth?

There are differing opinions on this matter. There is a belief by some youth and family service professionals that runaway behavior is a problem that can only be addressed and solved through family counseling and family reunification efforts. They believe that the establishment of a youth runaway

One 21-year-old first became homeless at the age of 14 because of his troubled relationship with his stepfather and his mother's drug abuse. When asked about his experience being homeless he said "Nowadays there is sometimes more love on the streets than there is at home."

shelter might discourage family reunification. **All agree, however, that services for at-risk youth, particularly youth ages 18-23 are needed.**

Some professional service providers feel that many youth have very legitimate reasons for running away from home and doing so is a sign of health on the part of the youth. A young person who is escaping a violent environment, or who is no longer able to tolerate parents who are using drugs may need to run away from home in order to survive. The need to escape an abusive, neglectful or violent environment by running away is not a long-term solution but may be the only immediate step that a youth can take. However, these service providers are quick to point out that currently there are few services to respond to the many needs of these youth.

Others will argue that family services and counseling will simply not work for everyone because in some cases there is no family to reunify. Parents may be dead, in prison, or have relocated.

Yet other youth-serving professionals disclosed to us that within the child protective services system, the emphasis is placed on infants and very young children. Older children, particularly if they consistently run away from placement, are left to fend for themselves.

The majority of responses to the question concerning the types of services that would best serve at-risk and homeless youth can be grouped into the following subjects:

- **Jobs:** Employment, employment preparation, training, and help with school were seen as the ticket out of their problems. The lack of employment opportunities was viewed as the primary force that propelled young people into resorting to street crime. It is important to note that focus groups that were held on the subject of youth violence and community safety revealed the same emphasis on employment.
- **Comprehensive Services:** Many service providers indicated that while youth, especially at-risk youth, needed jobs and job training, they needed many other types of services as well. Service providers pointed to mental health services, alcohol and drug treatment and life skills training as being fundamental needs of these youth.
- **A Better Education:** Some parents described the disservice that was done to themselves and their children by having their children continually promoted with failing grades. These youth proceed through the public school system without being able to read or write adequately. Youth spoke of their alienation from school and from teachers who did not care about their achievements. Still others felt that school was a boring and degrading experience. All agreed that without adequate education their chances for an economically secure future were greatly hindered.

- **People Who Care:** Many of the youth experienced loneliness and not being cared for by members of their family. They spoke of having felt suicidal or even attempting suicide. Youth stated that they needed to be able to talk to people who cared about them, and understood them. Some presented this in the stated need for counseling services or a place where they could go and feel welcomed. They spoke about counselors who they felt had been uncaring, or insensitive to their needs or downright insulting to them and members of their family. Many spoke of the need to have counselors or mentors who had shared their experiences.

A 16-year-old female told us the story of how her parents would regularly throw her out of the house and then call the police and have her picked up for being a runaway. She would often try and hang out in the back yard of her home. This cycle of being thrown out and then picked up by the police had occurred six times since she had revealed to her parents that she was a lesbian

A community needs assessment which focused on services to youth in the Bay Area, found that homeless and runaway youth were one of the populations with whom service providers felt least comfortable working.

- **A Safe Place:** Youth overwhelmingly do not feel safe in their schools, in their neighborhoods and some even some in their families. Many youth stated that they needed a safe place to sleep while they attempted to get their lives together. Others mentioned the need for a safe place to hang out.

REOCCURRING THEMES

Throughout the needs assessment process several key issues and themes emerged from key informant interviews and focus groups.

- **There is a need for services for at-risk, runaway and homeless youth throughout the East Bay Corridor region.** The phenomenon of at-risk, runaway and homeless youth exists throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Participants stated that all areas, even suburban areas, need services for at-risk and homeless youth. Youth advocates and service providers from South and Central Alameda County felt that even though the absolute number of youth who are in crisis are fewer than the number in North County, the need is greater because there are fewer available human services in their communities.
- **Youth who are being terminated, emancipated or who run away from foster care, group homes or other institutions are at risk of becoming homeless.** In general, these youth, especially ages 18-23, were viewed as being particularly high-risk and lacking sufficient services and programs.
- **The communities of East and West Oakland, Richmond and certain sections of Berkeley contain large numbers of at-risk youth who are living in high-risk conditions and need services.** The data demonstrates a number of at-risk factors that are endemic to their communities. In addition, there are several communities that are known for being gathering places for at-risk and homeless street youth: Telegraph Ave. in Berkeley, downtown Oakland, and the Coronado area in Richmond.
- **People identified youth that were gay, lesbian or transgender as being at-risk and in particular need of services.** Factors that complicate the situation

for sexually diverse youth include family rejection, harassment by peers at school and a lack of supportive services.

- **HIV/AIDS infected youth were also frequently mentioned as being at risk for homelessness.**
- **Youth are very mobile within the East Bay Corridor region.** Unlike their neighboring eastern sections within each county, cities are not spread out and the BART system serves to permit young people to freely move throughout the area.

Underlying Conditions and Trends

There is little if any direct data readily available to indicate the numbers of at-risk or homeless youth in the East Bay area. In order to quantitatively describe the extent of at-risk and homeless youth we have analyzed and mapped a variety of risk factor indicators. The following pages of maps should be viewed as indicators of the problems that at-risk youth struggle with and may give some indication of the hidden population of youth who are homeless or at-risk for homelessness. These indicators include:

1. **“Survival Crimes” Involving Youth: City of Oakland 1995** – This data is taken from individual police reports of crimes that are often committed by homeless youth. We collected and analyzed police records of prostitution by a youth under 18, drug sales by a youth under 18 and crimes where adults were charged with involving or recruiting a youth to commit a crime for economic gain.
2. **Crimes Against Youth:** Any person, especially a youth, who is homeless, is at greater risk for being a victim of a crime. We looked at several sets of data to describe the victimization of youth including:
 - ***Hotspots for Crimes Against Youth*** in the cities of Oakland and Richmond. Many of these hotspots are places that were mentioned in our focus groups as being areas where street youth congregate.
 - ***Assault and Battery Incidents with Youth Victims: City of Oakland 1995***
 - ***Rates of Teen Victimization: City of Oakland 1994***
 - ***Crimes Against Youth by Time of Day: City of Oakland*** – We noted that even in the early morning hours between 1:00 AM and 6:00 AM there are a substantial number of youth and children between the ages of 10 and 19 who are victimized. We are not able to discern from this data whether or not the victimization is occurring on the streets or in their homes.

Insert survival crimes

Insert hot spots for crimes against youth

Assault and battery incidents

Crimes against youth by time

Rate of teen victimization

3. **Domestic Violence** – For some youth, being out on the streets for a night or longer may follow an episode of violence in the family. The following chart gives evidence of the problems of domestic violence. As the chart on the following page indicates, Oakland has nearly twice the rate of domestic violence reports as compared to the next highest city in Alameda County. The East Bay Corridor neighboring cities of Richmond and San Pablo taken together represent the highest rates in Contra Costa County. This data can certainly also be seen as indicators of high levels of at-risk youth.
4. **Poverty** – Families who are struggling for economic survival may be hard pressed to provide the necessary emotional and physical support that their children need. Young people in poor families may be encouraged to get out on their own or they may feel that they are a burden to their families. The following maps describe the places where families and individuals are suffering from poverty.

Chart domestic violence

Unemployment rate by census

City of oakland per capita

Composite quality

Composite Quality of Life - Explanation

We analyzed 17 indicators of community conditions presenting a composite assessment of the overall state of each census tract within the city of Oakland. These indicators are:

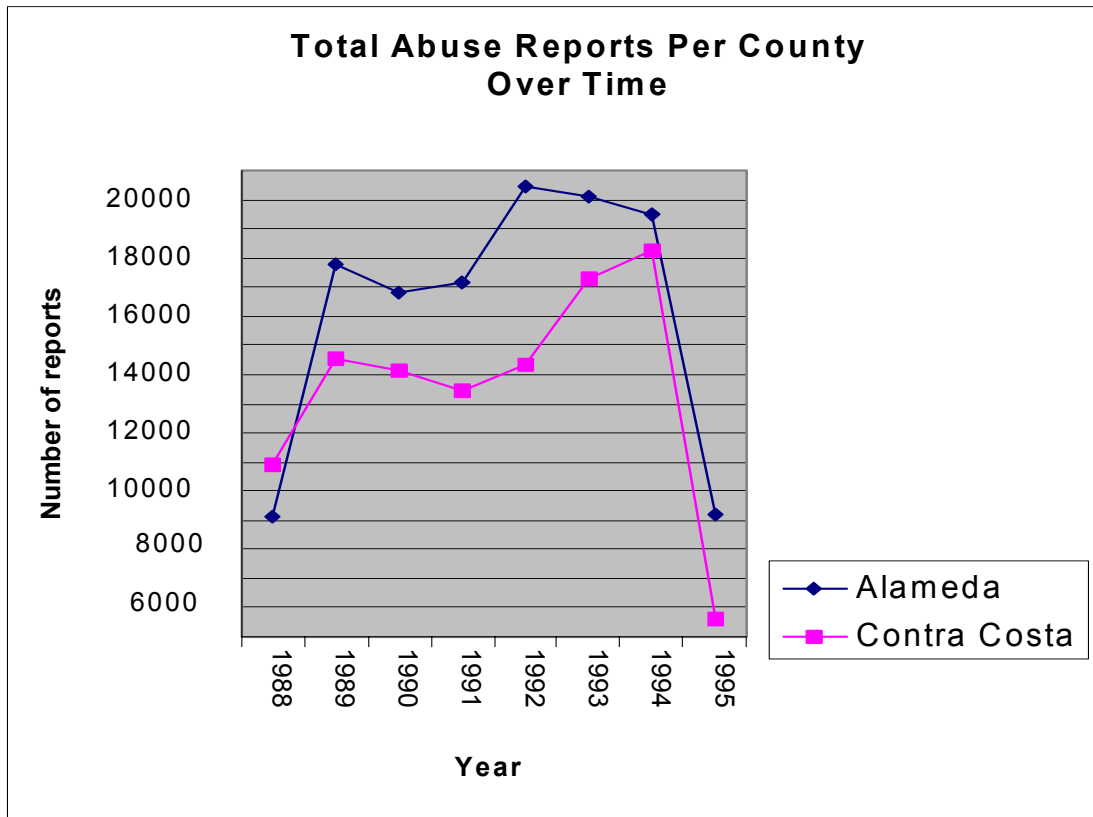
1. *Economic Resources*
 - 1.1 Per Capita Income
 - 1.2 Unemployment Rate
 - 1.3 Families with incomes below the poverty level
2. *Community Infrastructure*
 - 2.1 Number of Churches per 1000 Population
 - 2.2 Number of Community Organizations per 1000 Population
 - 2.3 Number of Liquor Stores per 1000 Population
3. *Education*
 - 3.1 High School Graduation Rate
 - 3.2 Elementary School Truancy Rate
 - 3.3 Elementary School CLAS Scores
4. *Youth and Family*
 - 4.1 Youth on Probation per 1000 youth ages 10-17
 - 4.2 Teen Pregnancy Rate
 - 4.3 Percentage of families with children who have two adults residing in the home
5. *Safety*
 - 5.1 Crime rate per 1000 population
 - 5.2 Domestic Violence Rate per 1000 families
6. *Health*
 - 4.4 Low birth weight (<2500g) rate per 1000 live births
 - 4.5 Age adjusted five year death rates

Each of these indicators is mapped separately in the appendix. The way that the composite was derived is as follows:

- a. The value of each variable was calculated for each census tract.
- b. Each census tract's value for that variable was expressed as a percentage of the Oakland average. (100=Oakland average)
- c. For each census tract, the value of all the indicators within each dimension was averaged to produce a score for that dimension.

The dimension scores were averaged for each census tract to produce an overall score.

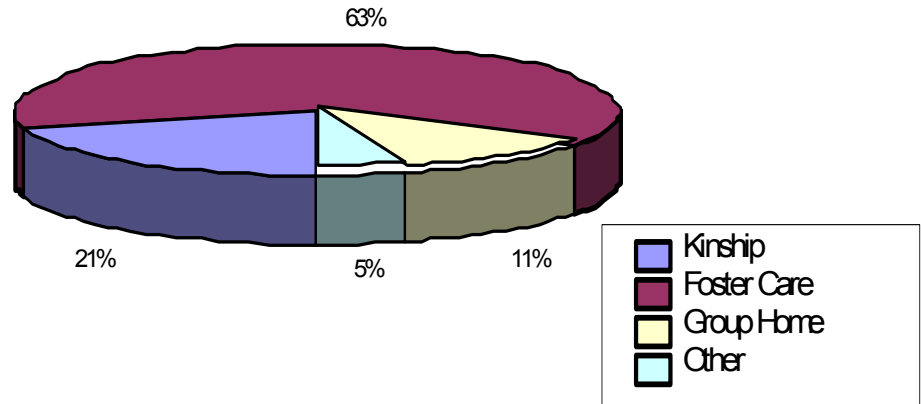
5. **Child Abuse and Neglect:** As evidenced in the following charts, the incidents of referrals of child protective services nearly doubled in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties over the past decade.



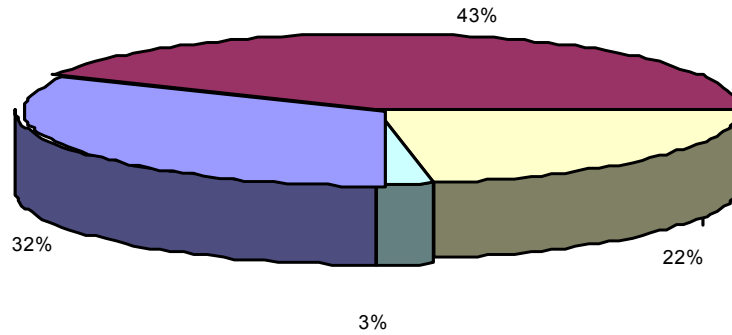
According to Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (BOSS) 60% to 75% of homeless youth report being physically abused prior to leaving home, while up to 80% are sexually abused at home. Those who have been sexually abused tend to be alienated from their families and are more likely to leave home permanently.

Survivors of sexual abuse are at high risk of further sexual exploitation, unintended pregnancy and infection from HIV, hepatitis and other STDs. Not surprisingly, this population is prone to depression, suicidal ideation and attempts, psychosis and a variety of other psychiatric disorders which may worsen as youth enter adulthood.

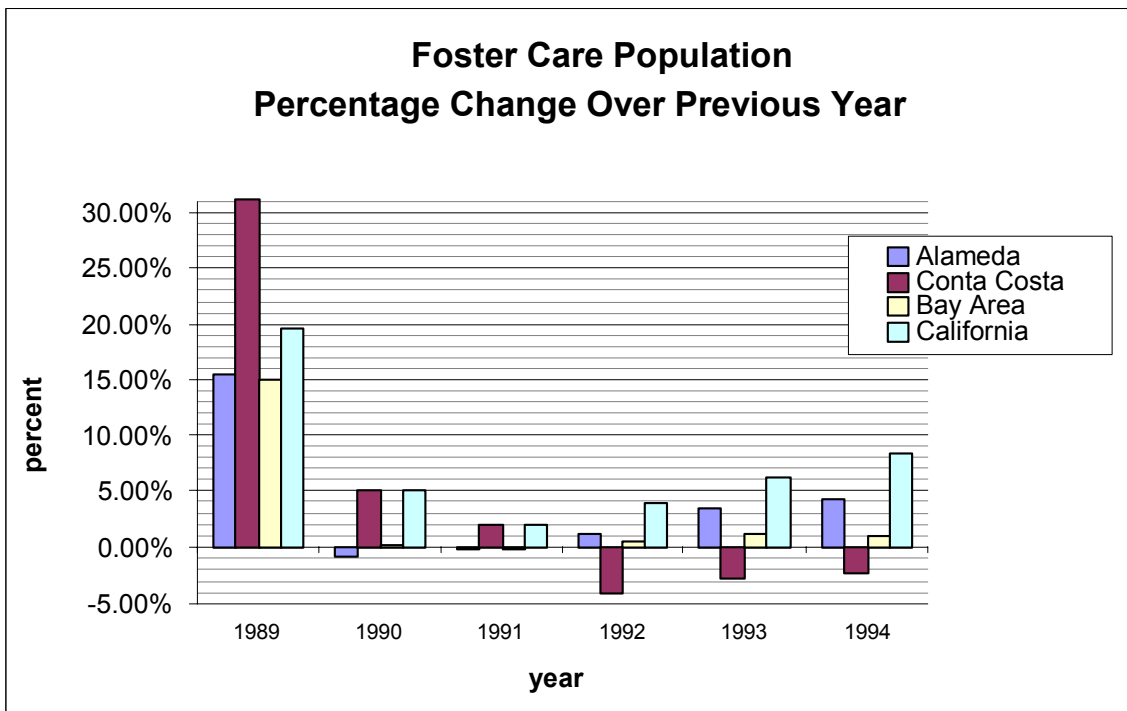
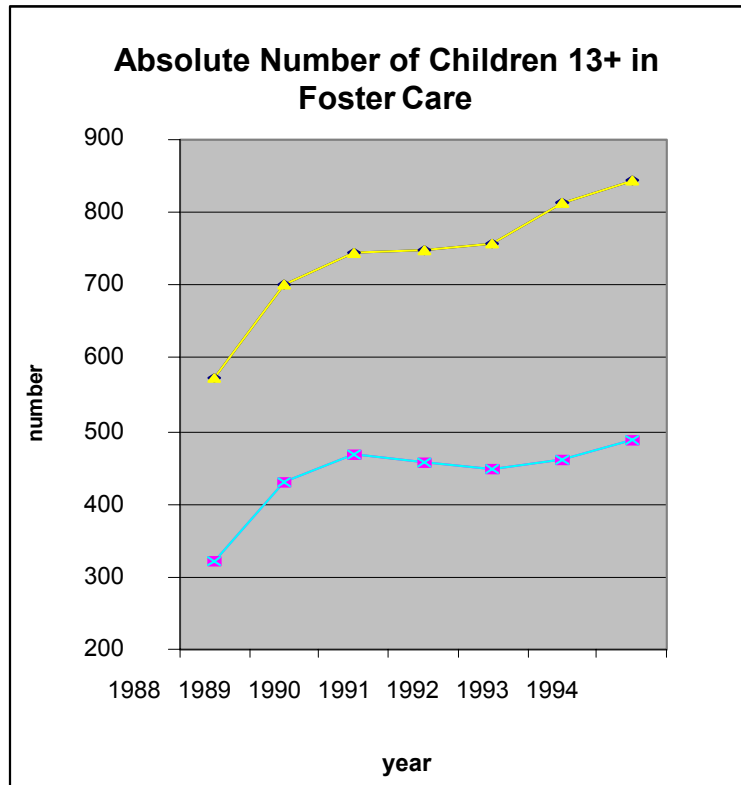
1995 Alameda County Placements

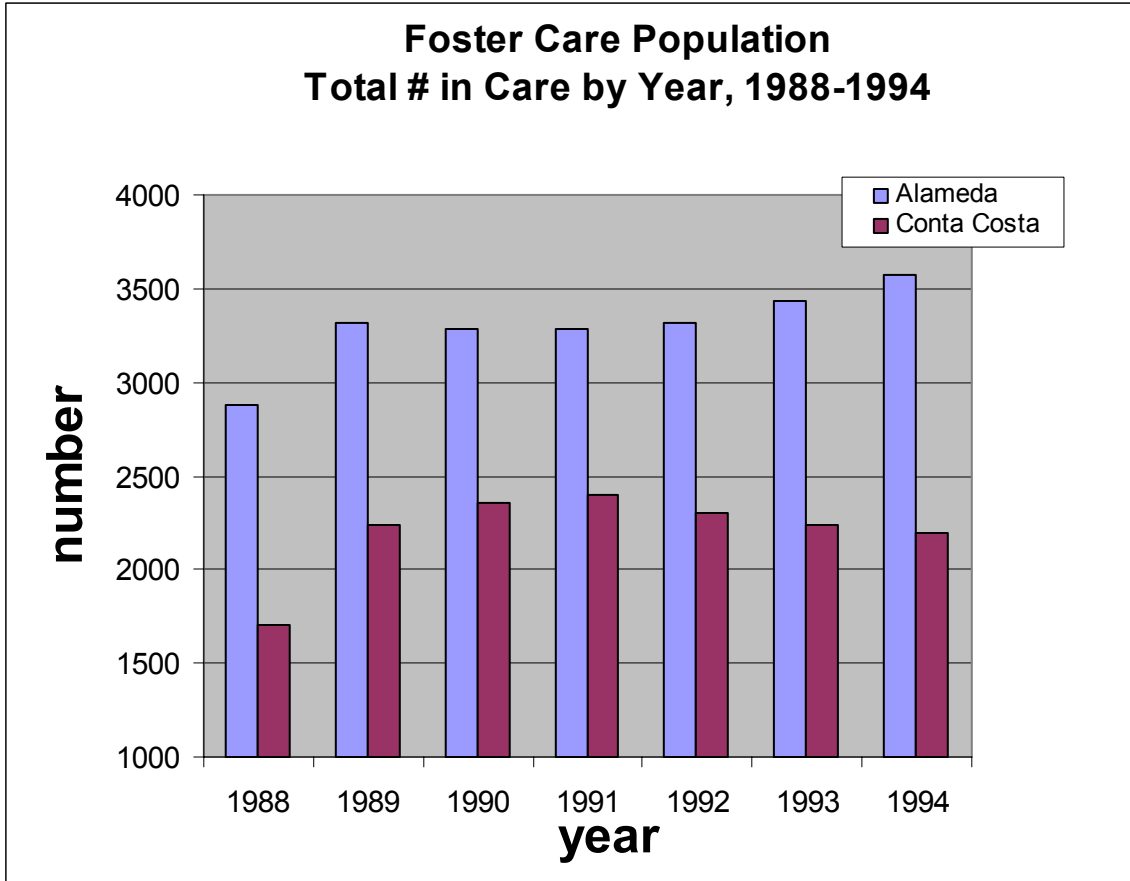


1995 Contra Costa County Placements



Foster Care Placement: Last year, Alameda County terminated 164 18 year olds from foster care. In that same year approximately 250 over the age of 15 were AWOL from foster care. Youth that have been in foster care often have a difficult time adjusting to the adult world when they turn 18 and are at very high risk for homelessness, joblessness and poverty. Many service providers attested to the need for services for this population.





Health, Education and Social Conditions Related to At-Risk and Homeless Youth

❑ HIV/AIDS

Another looming public health crisis facing the East Bay is HIV/AIDS. It is widely recognized that the focus in the AIDS epidemic nationwide is shifting from middle class homosexual/ bisexual males to the broad underclass of males and females who use IV drugs or have sex with those who use IV drugs. In its second annual report on County Health Statistics, the California Department of Health identified East Oakland and West Oakland as among the highest area of concern for AIDS trends in the state.

35% of adolescent heterosexual males surveyed in Alameda County in 1995 stated that they were sure that they will get AIDS and 18% said that they think they might get AIDS.

The *Alameda County HIV Prevention Plan* published in 1995 identified youth as being among the category of highest risk for HIV infection. Teenagers comprise 15% of Alameda's total HIV cases. The report went on to describe homeless women and youth that trade sex for a place to stay as being at especially high risk for sexual transmission of HIV. **This needs assessment, which utilized focus groups surveys and epidemiological data, determined that youth who are also African Americans, Latinos, homosexual and bisexual males, and living in North County (Oakland-Berkeley area) were of special concern, and needed prevention services geared to meet their needs.**

The Alameda County *Multi-Year AIDS Housing Plan* published in December of 1995 states that homelessness is the number one issue for people living with HIV/AIDS in Alameda County. The report found that at least 2,634 people with HIV/AIDS living in Oakland are in need of housing assistance, and another 2,200 are in immediate danger of losing the housing they have. The AIDS housing survey that was conducted for this study found that 10% of people with HIV/AIDS are literally homeless—living on the streets or in a shelter—and that 44% have been homeless at some time.

Since June of 1995, there have been 9 AIDS cases diagnosed among youth aged 13–19 in Alameda County. An additional 611 cases were diagnosed among young adults between the ages of 20 and 29. According the Office of HIV Prevention and Planning Council of Alameda County, the long incubation period for AIDS suggest that most of these young adults were infected as teenagers.

Of the 620 cases diagnosed among 13-29 year-olds, 67% have been reported as transmitted through male-male sex. Eight percent have been through injection drug use, 9% have been through injection drug use among gay/bisexual males, and 7% have been through heterosexual contact. In another study of crack use among adolescents in Oakland and San Francisco, researchers found that one respondent in four reported having exchanged sexual favors for money and/or drugs, either as a recipient of such favors or as a provider.

❑ Alcohol and Other Drugs

A provider of substance abuse treatment services stated that they did not ask youth if they were homeless because they didn't want to embarrass them.

In 1987, a survey conducted of 70 homeless shelter residents and 118 individuals sleeping in the streets of Alameda County found that 67% tested positive for alcohol abuse, 54% for drug abuse, and 82% for either or both substance abuse dependence. In 1990, another survey of homeless people in Alameda County in emergency shelters during a twelve-month period found that 32% had alcohol problems. During that same period agencies providing other support services to homeless individuals and families reported that of 14,500 people served, 42% were either self or staff-identified as having alcohol or other drug problems.

❑ TB

Tuberculosis continues to be a concern throughout Alameda County. The County reported 160 cases of multi-drug resistant TB in 1993 with an increase in TB from West Oakland, particularly among children. Projections state that by the year 2000, 10% of all persons living with HIV/AIDS will also be infected with this highly contagious form of tuberculosis.

❑ Birth to Teens

The incidence of children having children has decreased nationally. However, in the East Bay Region teen pregnancy has persisted and in many communities it has increased. This is particularly true in the Latino and African American low-income neighborhoods and communities.

There is an uneven distribution of teen births across the East Bay, with teen birth rates mirroring the distributions of poverty, unemployment, domestic violence and other indicators of social malaise. While Alameda and Contra Costa Counties as a whole have rates of births to teens below the state average, four zip codes in Oakland (comprising virtually all of East and West Oakland) were among the top 10% of zip codes in the state for births to teen mothers. Two of Richmond's three zip codes were also in the top 15 percent statewide. The maps on the following pages show the geographic distribution of teen birth rates in the East Bay.

Statewide, over half of all births to teens occur in families with annual incomes below \$12,000, while only 17% had incomes over \$25,000. Teenage mothers have frequently experienced foster care, family violence, parental substance abuse, and lower educational achievement. In turn, teenage mothers are very likely to pass on this unhappy legacy to their own children: infants born to teen mothers are at higher risk of prematurity, low birth weight, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, birth defects, developmental delays, injuries, parental neglect and abuse, and a life in poverty.

In 1995, 8.9% of births to teen mothers in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties were low birth weight (under 2500 grams) compared to 6.1% of births to mothers aged 20-34. Teens were also very likely to obtain late and sporadic

prenatal care. In 1995, 33% of mothers under age 18 did not begin prenatal care in the first trimester, compared to 16% of mothers of all ages.

Impregnation of teenage mothers by adult males (18 years and older) is a growing problem. In 1995, 78.05% of births to East Bay mothers under 18 (in which the baby's father's age was recorded) were fathered by a male over 18. Statewide, adults are listed as fathers in two-thirds of births to girls under 18. In 35% of East Bay teen births, the fathers were over 21 years old; in 11%, they were over 25. Moreover, the average age disparity between father and mother increases as the mother's age declines. In 1995, fifty-six percent of girls 15 and under whom gave birth in Alameda or Contra Costa Counties identified a father over 18, in 24% of cases; the father was over 21.

It is critically important for prevention programs to take into account this phenomenon when designing their programs. What we call the "teenage pregnancy problem" might be better described as the "adult-teen sex problem." While school-age boys report a high level of sexual activity, they are actually responsible for a small proportion of teen births. Prevention must focus not only on teens, but also on young adult males whose lack of positive life options places them at risk for irresponsible fatherhood.

Sexual abuse is a risk factor linked to teen pregnancy that is often overlooked. Boyer and Fine's 1992 study of 535 pregnant and parenting teens in the state of Washington showed that two-thirds had been sexually victimized in childhood, primarily by adults.

Insert birth to teens

Insert birth to teens

Education

Oakland

Oakland’s education system is of particular interest in painting a picture related to both economic decay and at-risk youth. Once hailed as one of the finest school districts in the nation, test scores among Oakland Unified School District pupils have plummeted over the past two decades and are now among the lowest in California. In 1989, after a decade of turmoil, the Oakland Unified School District was placed by an act of the California Legislature under a state-appointed conservator. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction called OUSD “the worst school district in California.”

Since 1994, the test scores of Oakland students have continuously dropped. The median Grade Point Average district-wide is a D. As some of the lowest-paid teachers in California, Oakland teachers went out on strike last year demanding higher wages, smaller class sizes and better classroom conditions for themselves and their students. Angered by years of schools that did not serve their children, parents sided with the teachers and held their children out of school.

Children missing school in Oakland is a very common occurrence, so much so that no one seems to notice large numbers of youth who are obviously of school age hanging out on street corners during the day. At McClymonds High School in West Oakland, the truancy rate is often as high as 40% on any given day. The problem of truancy has become so institutionalized in the Oakland Unified School system that some officials will quietly admit that the school system might collapse if suddenly every student started attending school. It was noted by some in our interviews and focus groups that on the first day of the school year there are often not enough desks and chairs for every student. However, teachers do not order more because their experience has taught them that soon the class size will diminish as students stop coming to class.

The chart below is further evidence of the crisis in education. It speaks to the high rate of school dropouts in the OUSD. Notice that McClymonds High School, which also has one of the highest truancy rates, also has the highest drop out rate by a wide margin.

Oakland High School Drop Out Rate: 1992-1996

| | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Castlemont High | 10.9 | 18.7 | 6 | 16.1 | 16.2 |
| Fremont High | 11.5 | 20.9 | 18.2 | 21.2 | 14.5 |
| McClymonds High | 9.2 | 11 | 14.8 | 24.4 | 22.2 |
| Oakland Senior High | 4.2 | 6.5 | 2.9 | 9.8 | 2.8 |
| Oakland Technical High | 3.7 | 9.3 | 7.5 | 8.1 | 10.7 |
| Skyline High | 5.1 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 1.2 | 1.4 |

In addition to these grim figures, the following pages of maps indicate how severe the crisis in Oakland’s schools has become. We have included:

- *Truancy Rates in Oakland Unified School by High Schools and Middle Schools* – The problem of chronic truancy in Oakland has reached systemic proportions. Chronic truancy is both an indicator of a youth being at risk because the reasons for truancy stem from a wide variety of problems including family dysfunction, academic failure, poverty, shame, fear and a host of other problems. However truancy is also a causal factor for putting a youth at risk because a young person who is not in school is not gaining the tools necessary to succeed in life. He or she may also be engaging in high-risk behaviors on the streets during the school day.
- *Crimes Involving Juveniles Occurring During School Hours; City of Oakland*
- *High School Graduation Rates by Census tracts (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties)*

Oakland truancy by grade level

Crimes involving juvs during school hours

Daytime crimes involving youth lowell

High school graduation rates

Richmond

Caught in the confluence of escalating truancy rates, plummeting test scores, and the lack of resources to address these critical problems, the public schools in Richmond have long struggled as one of the most troubled school systems in the State of California. In 1996, unexcused absences in elementary school alone ranged from .15% to 8%, with an average of 1.8%. Unexcused absences in Middle Schools averaged 3.34%, while senior high absences averaged 10%. In 1996 more than 15% of the total student body was designated truant as a result of three or more consecutive unexcused absences.

In 1996, only 41% of students on the county Probation caseload were enrolled in school; 44% had been dropped from school district records entirely, and there were no school records on another 16 %.

While the right to a free public education is understood to be a basic tenet of our society, the ability to access education is often exceedingly difficult in Richmond. Operating under a court mandated desegregation order from the 1960s all of Richmond's Middle schools were closed and the School District began busing students to other cities. At first, students were transported on buses provided by the District; however, budgetary problems forced the elimination of this support system. Now all middle school students living in Richmond must be transported by their parents or take public transportation. Many low-income parents who do not have automobiles, or who work during school hours, find the cost of public transportation an extreme hardship. This is particularly true for single-parent families living on AFDC. At the end of the month, when the welfare check runs out, many children simply do not have the means to pay for bus fare. Ironically, the attempt to racially integrate schools has placed the burden of transportation on minority and low-income students.

Other factors that militate against all children availing themselves of a public education include fear and violence. Recently, the East Bay Public Safety Corridor conducted focus groups of youth both in and out of school in Richmond. Of 100 youth interviewed, 80% revealed that they were fearful of the trip to school, as it forces them to cross the "turf" of hostile gangs and that they often skip school rather than risk violence. More than half of all youth interviewed reported knowing someone, either a close friend or a family member, who had died violently or overdosed on drugs. Other youth reported that they felt humiliated in school because of their lack of reading ability or because they had fallen so far behind in their class work.

One of the most difficult and far-reaching problems in the educational system that greatly impacts workforce preparation is the rate at which students are dropping out of school. In the 1992 school year, 528 students dropped out of high school in the Richmond area.

OPPORTUNITIES, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a demonstrated need for many types of services for at-risk and homeless youth in the East Bay Region of California. We heard this refrain not only from youth, but also from direct service providers who feel that the overwhelming needs of youth in the region require much more than they or any one organization can currently provide. The welcoming attitude of these other organizations indicates an opportunity for Covenant House to build working relationships and joint ventures with a wide variety of service providers. The purpose of this study has been to document both quantitatively and qualitatively the need for services and to shed some light on the types of services needed.

While absolute numbers of at-risk, runaway and homeless youth have still to be documented, other social risk factors regarding families and children living in poverty, experiencing homelessness, suffering from alcohol and drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, crime and a host of other social ills is well documented throughout the region.

The problems of at-risk and homeless youth have many faces. They can take the form of youth who live from place to place, or youth who are chronically truant. Youth who are living on the streets, youth who are earning a living through street crime, or youth living in abusive or otherwise failing family systems also must be included. Regardless of the circumstances the impact on self-esteem and hope for the future are tremendously negative.

The issues surrounding the failure of an increasing number of families to adequately care for their young are also complex. While the community grapples with these important issues, the fact remains that children and youth are now without adequate emotional, physical and spiritual support. A young person faced with these enormous deficits has little hope for leading a healthy and successful adult life.

In the inner city neighborhoods of Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond, there are large numbers of youth who are at-risk of not making a successful transition to adulthood. This report documents some of the risk factor indicators and reveals high rates for:

High school drop outs - The drop out rate at McClymond High School in West Oakland is 22% making it the site of one of the highest school drop out rates in the State.

Truancy – The analysis contained in this report found that by using the State definition of chronic truancy, 22,000 of Oakland’s 55,000 students are chronically truant. Shockingly, this affects 1/3 of all elementary school students.

Births to teens – While Alameda and Contra Costa counties as a whole have lower rates of birth to teens than the statewide average, there are four zip codes in Oakland (comprising all of East and West Oakland) and two of Richmond’s three zip codes that have birth to teen rates high enough to be considered teen pregnancy crisis areas by the state.

Families living below the poverty level - In some of the flatland neighborhoods of Richmond and Oakland over 50% of families are living below the federal poverty level.

Crimes Involving Juveniles - While overall crimes among juveniles have remained flat, violent crimes have increased by 50%.

These indicators vary by city and neighborhood but there are clear indications of specific communities that are highly impacted by these risk factors.

Our experiences in gathering information for this report have not only clarified the need for services but also the deep concern and desire on the part of many service providers and community leaders to establish additional services for at-risk and homeless youth in the East Bay area. We believe that Covenant House will find support for their efforts in the East Bay as long as they demonstrate a willingness to collaborate with other service providers.

Findings and Recommendations

1. There is a demonstrated lack of services for youth who are at serious risk of making a successful transition to adulthood. This is particularly true of the 18-23 year old youth population.

Covenant House should establish services for at-risk youth within the East Bay. The initial outreach and service efforts of Covenant House should target youth ages 18-23 who are at risk for homelessness by virtue of their lack of employment, education, job skills and family support systems. Our recommendation is based upon the findings that:

- a. Covenant House would be a welcomed collaborator by most of the current providers of services;
 - b. The age group of 18-23 year old at-risk youth are of particular concern to current service providers in the area, particularly in light of welfare reform efforts.
2. **The proposed target population in the East Bay is to be found mostly in the “flatlands” or inner city neighborhoods of Oakland, Berkeley, and Richmond.** While not typically homeless, youth in these neighborhoods grow up in a climate of chronic and pervasive poverty.

A secondary target population of street youth is to be found in the Telegraph Avenue area of Berkeley, adjacent to the UC campus. The characteristics of these youth are similar to the street youth who Covenant House currently serves in Hollywood, California.

The target population of youth is spread out over a large area consisting of 24 cities within 2 counties.

Covenant House should work towards developing a regionally based service delivery system within the East Bay Corridor Area. Our recommendation is based upon the following findings:

- a. There is demonstrated need throughout the East Bay Corridor for services;
 - b. Youth are very mobile within the East Bay Corridor region and would therefore be willing and able to travel to engage in programs and services if they knew of them.
3. **Using the model of the community service centers that have been developed in other cities such as Detroit, New York and Washington D.C. by Covenant House, an initial program site should be established in East or West Oakland.** Our recommendation is based on the following findings and observations:
- a. Oakland is the hub of the East Bay. It is the largest city in the area and as such produces the greatest need as evidenced by the risk factor data.
 - b. Oakland is also geographically centered in the region. As youth throughout the region are mobile it may be a good middle ground area to attract youth from the outer locations in the region.
 - c. Oakland is home to many youth and family service organizations. The existence of these organizations will serve as an asset for Covenant House to work with, especially in the start up phase.
 - d. All of the quantitative risk factors examined indicated that the highest concentrations of at-risk youth reside in West Oakland, East Oakland, and Central Richmond.
4. **Covenant House should immediately seek membership in one or more working collaboratives of organizations who are working to provide services to youth within the community.** Our recommendation is based on the following findings:
- a. The vast majority of individuals representing government agencies and non-profit organizations that we spoke with in preparing this needs assessment expressed the feeling that it would positively benefit the community to have Covenant House locate services in the area. All of these organizations are working in coalitions or partnerships with others. This would seem to us to signal an opening for Covenant House to work with at least the organizations that we spoke with.
 - b. The community is used to working in collaborations. Any organization not working in collaboration with others is looked upon as suspect.
5. **There are several populations of at-risk and homeless youth with special needs that are currently under served in the East Bay. Covenant House should begin to develop plans either singularly or in partnership with other organizations to include service delivery for the following populations and needs:**
- a. The population of self-identified gay, lesbian, transgender youth as well as those youth who are questioning their sexuality are faced with

- alienation from family and friends. These youth are particularly at risk for homelessness, depression, alcohol and drug abuse and suicide.
- b. Currently, there is only one adolescent outpatient alcohol and drug treatment program in Oakland. There are few alcohol and drug treatment services specifically for adolescents anywhere in Alameda or Contra Costa County.
 - c. In the cities of Oakland and Richmond, there are disproportionately high levels of chronic truancy and school dropout. Youth grow into adulthood ill-equipped to enter the workforce because they lack the basic skills of reading and writing. While these problems have become systemic and will require enormous system changes to correct, efforts are needed to help individual youth get back into school and acquire the necessary skills needed for independent living.
 - d. Teen parents, both males and females, need a wide variety of supportive services to assist them in breaking the generational cycle of poverty. Teen mothers and their infant children are at particular risk.
6. **While it is clear that residential services for homeless youth are needed in the East Bay Region, Covenant House should not begin by providing residential services.** Covenant House will require time to become a working member of the youth serving community and plan for these types of resource-intensive services in collaboration with others. It will also provide the time necessary for Covenant House to become known and trusted on the streets by youth.

Next Steps For Covenant House in the East Bay Region

Covenant House is mindful of the fact that any effort to address the needs of at-risk and homeless youth in the East Bay Region must evolve from a strategy that is based on the particular needs, culture, and characteristics of the area. Beginning July, 1998 Covenant House will hire and train a full-time Program Director from the East Bay region who will be headquartered in Oakland California. The Program Director will:

- Develop personal contacts and relationships with organizations that are concerned with or are serving youth within the community to discuss program plans and opportunities for collaboration.

Based on discussions with existing program operators, key stakeholders and ongoing analysis of need and gaps in service, Covenant House will develop an outreach strategy for at-risk youth within the region. It is assumed that outreach will be conducted on the street and through existing programs for at-risk youth.

As the outreach efforts develop, the development of a Community Service Center program will take place. Community Service Centers are a fast-growing and innovative form of service delivery for Covenant House. In recent years, CSCs have been developed in inner city neighborhoods by Covenant House affiliates in Detroit, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Newark and Washington D.C. CSCs provide a broad range of counseling, crisis intervention and prevention services for kids at-risk in a particular community. One of their primary goals is to prevent the need for residential care. In addition, CSCs provide follow-up and after care for youth leaving residential programs, including foster care.

The CSC envisioned in the East Bay will follow the outreach, case management and prevention model that has been successfully developed by other Covenant House sites. Based on information received during the needs assessment, an emphasis will be placed on developing basic skills, education and employment assistance programs. It is assumed that our ongoing outreach efforts will inform the direction of our program development. Outreach staff will be hired by October 1998 and services will begin thereafter either directly or through referral to other organizations.

By November 1998, Covenant House will identify a location for an East Bay Community Service Center. Every effort will be made to locate the Center in a location that will provide access to the greatest number of targeted youth within the East Bay Corridor. Community Service Center staff will be hired by January, 1999 and program operations will begin.

The development of residential services or other types of services for at-risk and homeless youth will be looked at for future development throughout this start up phase.