

Continued from front Out of Ashes: Chloe's Story

journal allows her to see both the mistakes and the progress she's made. "When I look back, I feel stupid about some things I did. I was confused and angry at the world in general. I realize now that there were people there to help me. No one was plotting

"It's not institutional like most of the other places. It's like a home. It is a home." She continues, "These doors are always open to you. They're never going to turn you away and that's the most awesome thing."

against me. I know that now." Violence, malicious mischief, and juvenile detention are all part of Chloe's past and the reasons many of her foster placements didn't last. Between placements, Chloe would come to the CRC. "It's not institutional like most of the other places. It's like a home. It is a home." She continues, "These doors are always open to you. They're never going to turn you away and that's the most awesome thing."

While the CRC programs that YFA operates are designed for short-term stays and crisis counseling for families, Chloe's situation is not uncommon. Washington State and Spokane in particular has a scarcity of programs for teens like Chloe. "Our program is here to help at-risk, runaway, and homeless kids with temporary shelter and crisis counseling," says CRC Program Co-Manager, Jeff Reiman, "whatever the crisis, we adapt to help each individual who comes through our door and ideally

we help the whole family, too."

It doesn't always work that way. In some cases, the family doesn't want to participate in counseling or doesn't want the child to come home. In some cases the child runs rather than returns home. In some cases, there is no home. "When family reunification isn't a possibility," says Reiman, "our goal becomes helping the kids deal with their personal issues in a safe productive way. We try to give them the tools and the resources they'll need to deal with whatever situation they find themselves in."

Chloe hasn't been in trouble for well over a year but has no home, no biological family, no foster family, and no adoptive family to go home to. The CRC staff may be the closest Chloe ever has to the continuous presence of adult role models in her life. Audrea Marshall, Program Co-Manager of the CRC, says Chloe is one of those very special kids who has grown up in the system but thrived. "She came into the system so young and learned to deal with all the losses in her life by internalizing them and then acting out to keep people at a distance. But here at the CRC, Chloe gets unconditional acceptance. Every one does." Marshall goes on to say that in her experience at the CRC, she's never met "a give-up kid."

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At the CRC, they all get unconditional acceptance. "There's a street mentality that a lot of kids come in with," says Marshall. "They refer to each other as 'cousin' and find ways to be related to each other." Maybe it's that sense of belonging that everyone needs.

Chloe tells a story that sums it up pretty well: "When I was little, my caseworker told me that there was this perfect family out there for me. I just had to find it. Every time I got placed, I would find something about the family that wasn't perfect. Then I would either cause trouble or run away so that I could go to another family. Now I know that there is no perfect family." Chloe pauses and then adds, "Well really there is. A perfect family is one that loves you."

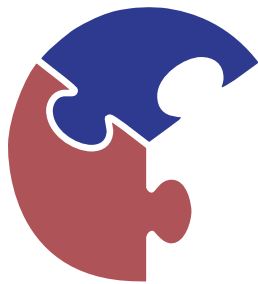
My Life

by "Chloe"

All my life, I've been confused
not knowing where I belong
I try to fit in
Don't know where I go wrong
At times life seems so easy
and pleasantly happy
But then things go wrong
and it all gets crappy
I try to make the best
out of life and my past
You can't hold back
you gotta make it last
Things happen in life
I don't always understand
But there are people in my life
willing to lend a helping hand
My future is my choice
Only I can make it happen
I gotta keep my head up
I gotta keep on mappin'



Bob has dedicated more than 10 years to the Crisis Residential Center where he works with youth who are struggling with conflict or crisis and helps reconnect them to their families.



What is the CRC?

The Crisis Residential Center (CRC) is a voluntary program for youth ages 13-17 who are in conflict or in crisis. In a grand old house on the South Hill, we provide temporary shelter and counseling services that are individualized for each participant and designed to help alleviate the crisis. While family reunification is a goal of service, we realize that it's not always possible and will assist youth in finding safe alternative living situations after discharge. The CRC is not a lock-down facility. Youth and families who use our services **want** help addressing the conflicts in their lives.

24-hour crisis hotline 624-2868

CRC staff member goes the distance for kids and families



Bob's got a great sense of humor and a story for every occasion.

There's the one about the life-size stuffed gorilla that a new staff member mistook for a client....

Bob's knack for telling stories helps in his chosen field of family counseling. He has dedicated more than 10 years to the Crisis Residential Center where he works with youth who are struggling with conflict or crisis and helps reconnect them to their families.

Working at a residential facility can be draining and burn-out is a common problem. Not for Bob. Asked what keeps him at the CRC, he says simply, "job satisfaction." Bob gets great personal fulfillment from helping the families he works with and feels he is serving an important need in Spokane. "We don't baby sit," he said. "We have an impact on families and can direct them in the right way."

The CRC itself is like a family. Residential care creates a close working relationship among staff. All this involvement in troubled kids' lives can be very exhausting and the staff leans on each other for support. "Like a family, you become comfortable with each other," Bob says. "When there's a crisis, you have each other's back." Bob can tell stories about practical jokes he's played to help relieve the stress and build up spirit among the staff. These fun moments go a long way during a tough shift

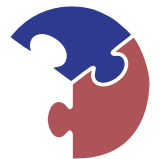
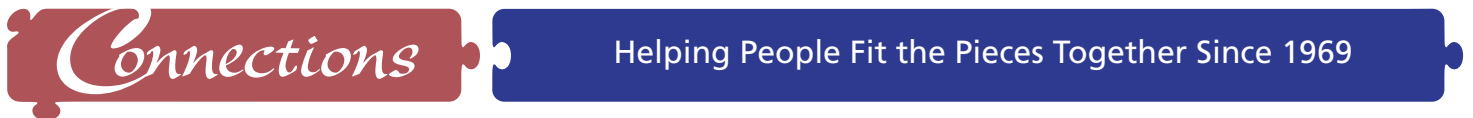
As he talks about his experiences at the CRC, one thing is crystal clear; Bob wants to help families and he loves his work. He has no illusions that he is saving the world, no expectation of a gold medal or big salary for his efforts. He is simply a man committed to making a difference one family at a time.





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Yard Sale July 29-31

Shop for bargains and help YFA Connections help the community

Chairs Tables Couches Appliances Bookcases Bureaus

Yard Sale will be held on the grounds of the
Crisis Residential Center (CRC)
201 W 6th Ave (corner 6th & McClellan)

2pm to 6pm on Friday
9am to 6pm on Saturday
9am to 6pm on Sunday

All proceeds will benefit the youth, adults and families served by YFA Connections, a 501(c) 3 nonprofit serving Spokane since 1969