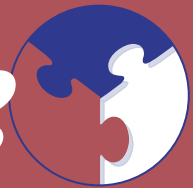


Connections



YFA Connections Helping People Fit the Pieces Together Since 1969

Winter 2005

Cathy Doran, M.A.
President/CEO

Youth & Family
Services

Teresa Wright, M.Ed.
Director

Crisis Residential Center

Peace Mentors

In-Home Family
Counseling

Adult Services

Tom Murphy, M.S.W.
Director

Chemical Dependency
Treatment

Co-Occurring Disorders
Treatment

Intimate Partner
Violence Perpetrator
Treatment

CRC alum looks back after almost 20 years The Crisis Residential Center was the "pivotal point" in Spokane woman's life



The Crisis Residential Center has provided shelter and counseling services for local homeless, runaway, and at-risk teens since the doors opened in the mid-1970s. Over the course of 30 years, the CRC has helped thousands of local teens and their families. Whether the teen is a runaway; or the family is homeless; or there is so much conflict at home that the teen is temporarily safer somewhere else, CRC staff work with each teen, each family and each situation to end the conflict and find a safe and healthy solution that all family members can live with.



Brenda Anderson calls her time at the CRC the "pivotal point" in her life. She was 16 when her home situation spun out of control. Pushed down a flight of stairs, Brenda fled to a friend's where she stayed until her welcome ran out.

Her high school counselor saw the bruises, alerted CPS and made the call to the CRC. **"Naturally, I was reluctant at first but I felt so welcome from the moment I walked in," says Brenda. Looking back, I am so grateful; going to the CRC was a gift.**

Because of her unsafe and unstructured homelife, Brenda had not had much adult guidance or support at home. At the CRC, she had both. "I totally dug the rules and even the chores. There was a big emphasis on personal responsibility and I really needed the structure." With the structure came a sense of safety and security for the first time in Brenda's life, **"I remember waking up one morning to the smell of breakfast cooking and thinking that I could stay here forever."**

Brenda stayed at the CRC for almost one month commuting to high school on public transit. She remembers working hard with the other CRC kids during group counseling sessions. "Group was so powerful," she says. "There were kids who had been molested; kids who were dealing with drug issues. I realized that it could have been so much worse for me."

Brenda also confronted issues with her mother and stepfather in family counseling sessions. Her CRC counselor helped forge the decision that Brenda would move to Montana to live with her biological father after leaving the CRC. "It was the best thing that could have happened to me."

Today, almost 20 years later, Brenda is a mother of two, a Financial Management Counselor for the Arc of Spokane, and part-time college student with plans to attend law school. **"Life isn't perfect," she says, "but there are gifts to be had everywhere."**

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Open House at Crisis Residential Center

YFA hosts luncheon for community partners at CRC and welcomes new Youth and Family Services Director



On Tuesday October 18th at the Crisis Residential Center, YFA Connections hosted an open house for our many community partners. Having operated through an almost yearlong renovation project, the CRC staff was proud to show off the new kitchen, new carpet and flooring, new boys' bathroom, new living room and bedroom furniture and fresh paint. The long overdue renovation and repair project was made possible by grant funding from Spokane Affordable Housing Trust Fund along with hours and hours of donated labor from our many dedicated volunteers.

The CRC open house was also a welcome ceremony for Teresa Wright who was recently named Director of Youth and Family Services—a position she previously held from 1990 to 2001. Teresa has “come home” to YFA from Spokane County Community Services where she was a Mental Health Planner/Evaluator for 4 years during which time she also traveled the country as a Peer Reviewer of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs for the Federal Office of Health and Human Services Family & Youth Services Bureau. Teresa is a licensed mental health counselor and has almost 25 years experience working with youth and youth programs. YFA is thrilled to have Teresa back!



Teresa Wright, M.Ed.



Cathy Doran (left), CEO at YFA with MaryAnn Murphy (right) from Partners with Families & Children



Ed Richardson (left) from Secure CRC with Bill Rubright (center) and Mike McDowell (right) from DCFS



Cathy Doran (left) Gerard Fischer, YFA Board Chair Elect Teresa Wright (right)



Cathy Doran (left) with Sara Bigelow (left center) & Vicki Miles from DCFS and Teresa Wright (right)



Everyday Heroes: Dot and Frank Blair

Retired Spokane couple Dot and Frank Blair were looking for a place to “help out.” Jacci Aronow, a friend and board member at YFA suggested volunteering at the Crisis Residential Center. **“You read about problems with kids,” says Frank, “but to see first hand what youth and family counseling can do; we wanted to experience that.”** Their very first tour of duty involved cooking Thanksgiving dinner in 2003. Both admit to being pretty nervous about how the kids would respond to them. Dinner was a success; the rapport was instant; and the Blairs have been volunteering ever since. Program Manager, Jeff Reiman, says that Dot and Frank’s involvement at the CRC has had a lasting impact on many kids. “They are so welcoming and so comforting to the kids. They are able to give kids something they lack and it really makes a difference.”



YFA Board of Directors welcomes 2 new members

YFA Connections is governed by a committed volunteer group of directors who donate their time and talent to help maintain the Agency's long tradition of service to the Spokane community. This board is extremely proud to welcome two new members, Brenda Yates and Percy Watkins.



*Brenda Yates
Joined the
Board in July*

Brenda Yates, who joined the board in July, has served the Spokane Police Department for over 17 years. Currently the Neighborhood Resource Officer for the downtown area, Brenda has firsthand experience with many of our clients, especially the teens. She has worked closely with our Crisis Residential Center and with Crosswalk and understands the kinds of issues and situations that many of our kids face whether they're runaway, throwaway or homeless.

Percy Watkins, who joined the board in September, is currently a Community Advisor for the Going Home Project. In that capacity, Percy provides information and training to individuals and community groups who are involved with the large number of juvenile and young adult offenders returning to Spokane communities from prison. Percy also mentors individual offenders in an effort to assist them in making positive life choices. Percy has a long history of service to the Spokane

community—as a police officer for 10 years and as advisor, counselor, and coordinator for many local nonprofit youth programs including District 81, ESD 101, Project Vision and SpokaneWorks.



*Percy Watkins
Joined the Board
in September*

YFA is extremely proud to welcome these two committed citizens to our board.

Access to Recovery

New federal program helps low-income/indigent addicts succeed in recovery by connecting them to basic services.

At YFA, most of our adult clients are low-income or indigent—sometimes homeless—individuals who are drug or alcohol dependent and mentally ill. Many falter in recovery because they are overwhelmed by poverty and struggle on a daily basis to obtain food, clothing and safe shelter. Many have not seen a dentist or doctor in years.

Access to Recovery (ATR) is a federal program that helps low-income/indigent individuals who are in recovery obtain access to basic services like safe childcare, transitional housing, transportation, employment, clothing, and medical/dental/pharmacy access, among others. Access to services is tied to treatment for chemical dependency so there is both an incentive and a reward for getting clean and staying sober.

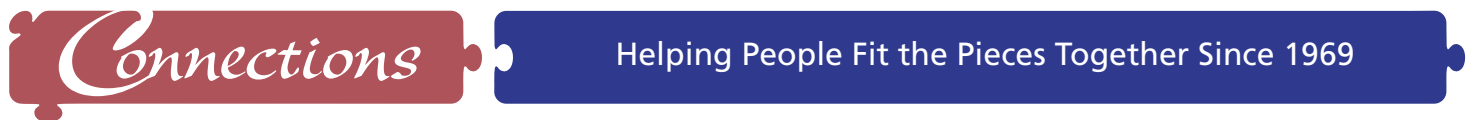
Tom Murphy, Director of Adult Services at YFA, says, "We've connected over 75 clients to ATR services since the program began. Many of these services have been available here in Spokane but ATR brings them all together with a focus on recovery from chemical dependency. When we get in a client who's really motivated to deal with her addiction but lives on the street and lacks the proper clothing to even apply for a job and has no safe childcare for her kids, she's going to have a tougher time dealing with her chemical dependency. Access to all these services can really help a client get on track."

*...there is both an
incentive and a reward
for getting clean and
staying sober.*



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Tree of Sharing opens in 3 malls on November 18th

Tree of Sharing is a Spokane tradition that combines the spirit of the season and the generosity of the community to benefit local children, adults and families in need during the holidays.

For the 23rd year, the Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, KREM-TV 2, Northtown, Riverpark Square and Spokane Valley malls, and over 60 community service agencies, including YFA Connections are working together to create a happier holiday for many less fortunate members of our community. Organized and run entirely by volunteers, the Tree of Sharing will open in all three malls on Friday, November 18. As you shop this holiday season, please visit the Tree of Sharing and fill a request for someone less fortunate. Help make the holidays bright by giving.

All of us at YFA Connections wish you and yours a happy, healthy, safe and peaceful holiday season!