

In 1978, Myldred Jones had already retired from the Navy as a Lieutenant Commander, played an active role in the Civil Rights Movement, and worked with then-California Governor Ronald Reagan to develop a state-wide crisis hotline for runaway teens. But, at the age of 69, Ms. Jones didn't stop there. In her work with the Governor, she saw the need for an Orange County-based shelter specifically for homeless and troubled youth. It just took one woman and her unflappable fortitude to make that happen. In 1977, she sold her home and used the proceeds to purchase two adjacent lots in Los Alamitos. With help from her community, she established the shelter in the three-bedroom house on one lot and took up residence in the adjacent cottage. On April 7, 1978, the shelter welcomed the first troubled youth through our doors. Many things have changed since that April day; the need for a youth-specific shelter in Orange County is not one of them.

From our location in Los Alamitos, Casa Youth Shelter serves as a critical link in the safety net for at-risk and potentially homeless youth – the area's only 24/7 full-service, youth-specific shelter. While we welcome youth who seek our care regardless of geography, we focus on providing outreach programs and services to areas where we may be most helpful in alleviating issues of youth in crisis. Our primary catchment areas include cities throughout Orange and Los Angeles Counties where poverty and homelessness are prevalent. Casa Youth Shelter serves the needs of youth and families in-crisis both on-site through our Residential Shelter Care Program and in the community through our extensive Community Outreach Program. Our programs work in concert with each other to offer individuals and families the tools they need in order to mitigate crises and work together as a cohesive unit whenever possible.

While many things in our community have changed since 1978, Casa Youth Shelter's mission has remained consistent: *to provide a safe place to call home for runaway, throwaway and abandoned youth in crisis, enabling them to come through the crisis with increased personal strength and a sense of renewal while in a supportive environment.* As an organization whose mission hasn't changed in four decades, we remain steadfast in our determination to be a solution to the problems that plague at-risk youth, and we remain true to our founder's philosophy of depth over breadth -- that is, not to expand our programs just for the sake of expansion but to invest our resources into the unique needs of every one of our residents and their families. We firmly believe that has been the key to our quantifiable success -- and the success of our residents -- for 40 years.

The services we have provided for the past four decades would not have been possible without strong community relationships; we are grateful for the dedication of our long-time partners and enthusiastic about forging new partnerships with likeminded individuals and organizations. Together with Casa Youth Shelter, you can have a tangible, lasting effect on the youth and families who need us most. It is our great hope that this is just one step in a long and beneficial collaboration...