



## GRANT APPLICATION

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

**Organization's Legal Name:** Casa Youth Shelter

**Address:** 10911 Reagan Street, Los Alamitos, CA 90720

**Telephone:** 562.594.6825      **Fax:** 562.594.9185      **Web site:** [www.casayouthshelter.org](http://www.casayouthshelter.org)

**Board Chair:** Nesi Stewart

**Contact Person / Title for Application:** Jennifer Frank, Development Director

**Phone:** 562.742.3959      **Email:** [jenniferfrank@casayouthshelter.org](mailto:jenniferfrank@casayouthshelter.org)

**Year Organized:** 1978      **Number of paid, full time employees:** 9      **# part time:** 37

**Amount Requested for Core Support from the Foundation:** \$100,000

### ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION & PLANNING

**1. Briefly describe any changes to your organization over the last year, including mission, target population, geographic service region(s) and the evolution of its goals and objectives.**

As mentioned in our 2017 proposal, one of the organizational facts that came to light during last year's data analysis process was that while CYC has enough beds to serve the male population, we have historically had to refer out a disproportionate number of females for lack of availability. After discussion with Casa's Management Team, we concluded that by "gender neutralizing" the shelter's bedrooms, we are better able to serve the needs of youth in crisis. That does not mean allowing male and female residents to utilize the same room at the same time. It means that throughout 2018, we have made it a fundraising priority to find sponsors who are willing to fund the aesthetic overhaul of each of Casa Youth Shelter's rooms so that when we have more male residents we can use more of our rooms to comfortably house them; and likewise when we have more females in need of residential services we can shift and use more of our rooms for females without either population feeling like they are living in rooms not designed for them. Those changes are currently underway.

While our mission, target population, service region and overall goals and objectives remain unaltered, Casa Youth Shelter is constantly assessing our methods and practices. In this, our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, we are as committed as ever to meeting and exceeding best practice standards for crisis shelter services. In that light, small but significant changes to our home and our programs are discussed at weekly

Management meetings. The most mission-critical of these changes is outlined, action plans created, and implementation takes place as quickly and efficiently as possible.

**2. Have there been any changes to the charitable services the organization provides over the last year?**

In 2017, CYS increased efforts to focusing more programmatic energy on “before” and “after” rather than just during our residents’ stay at the shelter. In 2018, our Case Manager is working closely with our MSW Intern to further professionalize this more holistic approach. In doing so, they developed a biopsychosocial clinical assessment tool – that is, a residential assessment that takes a broad view of each resident’s current situation, attributing their crisis to the intricate interaction of biological factors (genetic, biochemical, etc.), psychological factors (mood, personality, behavior, etc.), and social factors (cultural, familial, socioeconomic, etc.). While it has always been assumed that there are myriad factors contributing to each resident’s need for emergency care, Casa Youth Shelter’s clinicians are more focused on emphasizing the importance of viewing every individual case as an integration of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors. Ultimately, this helps CYS expand both residential and non-residential program services by helping us understand both the immediate and “big picture” needs of our youth and their families. Armed with such insightful information, Casa Youth Shelter’s individual counselors, group facilitators, and case managers are more capable of empowering residents and their families to make positive changes in their lives.

Likewise, CYS’s Outreach Team has been focusing on insightful information gathering. This year they have developed and implemented a detailed youth survey aimed at the youth who interact with Casa Youth Shelter’s Outreach Team through various activities. This survey is helping us collect more detailed input directly from our target population regarding the issues youth are facing and the resources they utilize in times of crisis.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & POTENTIAL IMPACT**

**1. Please summarize in detail the activities, program(s) or specific need(s) for which the organization is requesting support. If your organization has needs for several programs or projects, please do not hesitate to describe them as alternatives for funding.**

**History.**

2018 is a year of much historical reflection for Casa Youth Shelter. Celebrating 40 years of uninterrupted service brings both pride in our accomplishments and humble appreciation for how much more work there is to be done for youth in crisis. We are inspired by our Founder, Myldred Jones, who, at the age of 69, wanted to provide a safe place for runaways and abandoned youth living on the streets. Her sense of purpose and dedication to the cause are the bedrock upon which Casa was built. On April 7, 1978, the shelter welcomed its first troubled youth through its doors and those doors have remained open ever since.

For four decades, Casa Youth Shelter has provided emergency temporary shelter and professional counseling to homeless and abused youth, aged 12-17. Since our founding in 1978, CYS’s mission has remained constant – 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.

The services we provide would not be possible without strong community partnerships like the one forged between The Foster Family Foundation and Casa Youth Shelter. This proposal marks our seventh year of collaboration; as two organizations dedicated to the well-being of families, it is our fondest hope that we can continue to serve your needs in addition to you helping to fund our needs. We are grateful for the dedication of our long-time collaborators and enthusiastic about establishing new partnerships with likeminded organizations. Together, The Foster Family Foundation and Casa Youth Shelter can continue to have a tangible, lasting effect on the families in our shared community who need us most.

### **Programs.**

According to Assemblywoman Young Kim in an article she wrote for the *Orange County Register*, “There are crises in Orange County and across the state that are easy to identify: We can see the effects of drought, unemployment and crime rates. But there are also crises that are largely invisible, yet still drastically affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of vulnerable Californians. One such example is the tragically increasing occurrence of homeless youth.” Recently, *The Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County* indicated that more than 30,000 of Orange County’s children are considered homeless at some point. Without proper intervention, these youth become the next generation of chronically homeless adults. Providing services for this population is an increasingly pressing issue locally and statewide.

From our location in Los Alamitos, Casa Youth Shelter serves as a critical link in the safety net for homeless 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, including homelessness. 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 in the community through our Community Outreach Program and on-site through our Residential Shelter Care 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.

Community Outreach - The Community Outreach Program serves a dual purpose: 1) To help address the needs of youth and their families before our shelter services are necessary; and 2) To bring awareness to CYS’s Residential Shelter Care Program. Casa Youth Shelter recognizes that with limited shelter capacity, we are most effective in helping youth in crisis when we are preventing them from needing our shelter services at all. Therefore, we believe that crisis-prevention is as important as direct shelter services. We meet this need by providing our community with an array of services under the umbrella of our Community Outreach Program. They include monthly street-based and site-based outreach activities, parenting classes, school and community event-based presentations, youth leadership activities and collaborative partnerships.

Specific Community Outreach Program activities include (but are not limited to): 1) Outreach to parents in the community, providing weekly Parenting Education Classes at the shelter. We present our parenting classes in Spanish as well as English, to better reach our community’s Hispanic families in crisis. For parents with teenagers in the home, we also offer simultaneous teen group counseling so that the entire family is working together towards building a stronger household. 2) Monthly site visits to local low-budget motels so that youth and their families who are living there are well-informed about Casa Youth Shelter and feel empowered to make positive changes in their lives. When deemed beneficial, street outreach staff dispense “Street Outreach Kits” comprised of hygiene products, food,

and literature with information about CYS, 2-1-1 and human trafficking resources. 3) Our Youth Leadership Program (YLP), one facet of our Community Outreach Program, carries out peer-to-peer outreach and also develops leadership skills and a sense of volunteerism in young men and women. YLP is designed to help youth gain skills and knowledge necessary to lead civic engagement, education reform and community organizing activities. In addition to teaching young people specific skills associated with leadership and empowerment, youth are trained and encouraged to become resources for their own peers who seek help. 4) CYS Outreach staff maintain active roles with local, county-wide and national organizations including the Advisory Committees for both Long Beach and Orange County Human Trafficking Taskforces; The LGBT Center of Long Beach; OC Child Protective Services; area school district counseling teams, homeless liaisons and administrators; and multiple law enforcement agencies throughout Los Angeles and Orange Counties as well as Homeland Security.

This multipronged approach to outreach allows CYS representatives to have meaningful interaction with a wide range of people who frequently come in contact with youth in crisis, empowering each of those people to refer youth to Casa Youth Shelter in their time of need.

Residential Shelter Care - Given the need for programs serving homeless youth in California, Casa Youth Shelter is pleased to be one of the 34 emergency temporary shelters in the state, providing 12 of the 24 emergency beds available to unaccompanied youth in Orange County. In 2017, of the 203 residents in our care, more than half were at imminent risk of becoming – or already were – homeless when they came to the shelter.

On a day-to-day basis, the Residential Shelter Care Program is run on a 24-hour schedule. That means our home is always open with awake staff on duty, 24 hours a day, so that any youth who find themselves on the streets at any hour can seek shelter with us. We are accessible to families, school officials and social services; we are also a resource for law enforcement officers who rescue teens from the streets day and night and bring them to Casa Youth Shelter for safekeeping and counseling. We provide immediate shelter to youth who are homeless, abused or otherwise in need of a family cooling off period. We offer our residents full shelter amenities including 12 licensed beds, meals, on-site professional counseling, and customized education services. The goal of this program is to help residents stabilize their lives in order to reunify them with their families while providing the entire family with crisis-aversion tools.

During residents' stay at the shelter, we provide three nutritious meals a day with snacks and other basic needs such as hot showers, clean clothes and fresh linens for beds. However, at CYS we believe that beds and other immediate necessities are only one step in the long process of crisis mitigation. In that light, CYS's Residential Shelter Care Program provides a comprehensive array of counseling and support services to our shelter residents and their families - clients who have historically lacked access to clinical mental health care.

Youth receiving shelter at CYS are required to participate in crisis counseling, a critical component of their overall shelter care. Last year, three-quarters of our residents identified themselves as involved in "at-risk" behavior. 70% of the youth were victims of at least one form of child abuse; many arrive at our shelter depressed and struggling to cope with other crises. Without counseling, their issues may escalate to homelessness or worse.

Upon arrival at the shelter, each client's needs are evaluated and an individual case plan is created as the first step of their shelter care. With full participation from the residents, counselors prescribe a specific plan of one-on-one, teen group, family and aftercare counseling. Each resident receives the

following: individual counseling approximately 2 to 3 times per week, family counseling approximately twice per week, adapted education services approximately 2 to 3 times per day, and aftercare counseling approximately once per week. Each resident also receives teen group counseling approximately twice per day covering an array of topics such as Recovery from Physical, Sexual and/or Mental Abuse; Substance Abuse Prevention; Teen Pregnancy and STD Prevention; Anger Management; Developing Communication Skills; Art Therapy; Music Appreciation; and Pet Therapy. On an annual basis, Casa Youth Shelter provides approximately 1,000 hours of individual counseling, 600 hours of family counseling, and 6,000 hours of group counseling and education services.

### **The Numbers.**

The population served by CYS represents youth at the intersection of many "at-risk" communities. In 2017, a significant number of our clients were victims of child abuse: 33% were physically abused, 18% were sexually abused, 12% were mentally abused and 10% classified themselves as "neglected/thrown away". Many of our residents are working through critical underlying issues; last year, 16% of our residence struggled with substance abuse and another 15% were literacy challenged. 72% of youth who received our shelter care were Hispanic, African-American, Asian, Native American or of mixed race/ethnicity. Poverty is a primary factor in the issues faced by our shelter residents and their families. In 2017, the average family income for a Casa resident was only \$29,688 with an average family size of 4.5. That is tens of thousands of dollars below the official Orange County low income threshold of \$84,450 for a family of four. In fact, it is only slightly higher than the federal poverty level of \$25,100 for a family of four.

With the help of an all-volunteer 28 member Board of Directors and the 200-plus community volunteers who contribute more than 15,000 hours of service annually, we provide 24/7 emergency shelter with only 9 full time employees and fewer than 40 part time employees, with nearly 90% of our employees providing direct services to the shelter's youth. As a result, every donated dollar is prudently administered. We currently have an administrative to program ratio of 13%, which translates to 87 cents of every dollar raised going directly towards program expenses. Our focus on financial sustainability ensures that our doors continue to stay open and that no child is turned away for lack of financial resources.

### **2. If applicable, what is the approximate starting date and duration of the proposed program(s)?**

Both the Residential Shelter Care and Community Outreach Programs are ongoing.

### **3. Please describe potential funding sources for the program(s) to date, both assured and requested.**

See attached.

### **4. Please describe the desired result of the program(s) for which funding is being requested. How does the organization measure effectiveness?**

Ultimately, the measurable, desired result of CYS's Community Outreach Program is to make sure an average of 220 youth utilize our shelter services annually. Since it is nearly impossible to measure the impact of outreach on youth who do not need our residential services, we focus primarily on tracking the referral sources for each resident who does need our shelter care. For example, between 2015 and 2017, Outreach Team members increased the frequency of presentations made to local law enforcement. As a result, police referrals more than doubled from 2016 to 2017. Community agencies

and schools remain our primary referral sources – with nearly half of all residents learning about CYS through those entities.

When youth do come to Casa Youth Shelter, the effectiveness of the Residential Shelter Care Program is evaluated based on two of the program's overarching objectives: 1) To maintain a minimum 85% "Successful or Satisfactory" exit disposition rate based on client survey responses; 2) To maintain a minimum 75% success rate in reunifying residents with their families. In 2017, upon leaving the shelter, 88% of our residents assessed their own disposition as "Successful" or "Satisfactory". These same residents were in the depths of crisis just weeks prior. Additionally, in 2017 77% of our residents were successfully reunited with their families and nearly all of those families participated in aftercare services.

To evaluate all programmatic development and outcomes, Casa Youth Shelter utilizes a variety of procedures to track both client and overall progress. CYS employs a customized electronic data management program to compile statistics and measure results year after year. Upon arriving at Casa Youth Shelter, a client's relevant background and demographic data is collected by staff and entered in the database. Collected information includes (but is not limited to) family size and income, home city, employment and educational status, referral reason, alcohol/drug use and child abuse incidents.

In addition, each youth's individual case plan serves as an important tool to track personal as well as programmatic goals and progress. All actions taken on behalf of each client are logged including the date of intake interview and exit date. In addition, counseling, recreational and education service hours are input in the database. Casa Youth Shelter's record-keeping and data gathering procedures ensure that we accurately compare results from year to year and can make adjustments to improve performance where needed.

Evaluative data is also used to track and adjust individual client treatment. On a weekly basis, the CYS Clinical Director meets with each counselor a minimum of 5 hours to review recorded client information; she also meets weekly with the Executive Director to report on key milestones and evaluate program effectiveness.

Exit surveys are collected for every resident to establish exit disposition and destination (among other data) and follow-up surveys are sent to former clients via both conventional and electronic media in order to track longer term success rates. Similar pre- and post- surveys are used for parenting class participants, leadership conference attendees and other outreach service recipients to measure the effectiveness of community outreach activities.

**5. Please describe any barriers and challenges to outcome evaluation for the projects for which you are requesting support.**

As ever, there is a degree of challenge inherent to program evaluation when working with our particular client population. They are minors, in crisis at the time services and evaluations are rendered, many are transient and all are deserving of confidentiality. The vast majority of our clients are willing and able to complete follow-up evaluative surveys; however, there are those who move on from Casa Youth Shelter and opt not to remain in contact or respond to our attempts at follow-up. As clinicians and therapists, we are careful to respect clients' healing processes and in some cases a total separation from the shelter is an integral part.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP / GOVERNANCE**

**Have there been any changes to the Board (additions/retirements) in the last year? To the officers of the organization? What were the circumstances of these changes? Please provide contact information for these former Directors or officers.**

In June 2017, Casa Youth Shelter warmly welcomed Amy Lakin on board as our new Executive Director. As prior Executive Director of the Friends of Arts Education, Ms. Lakin was responsible for program administration, personnel and budget management, fundraising, board development, and relationship cultivation. She worked closely with the Board of Directors to create a clear strategic plan, and built a successful fundraising campaign that included individual and corporate donors, special events, and grants. She collaborated with the County Supervisor to develop a matching grant program, and established naming opportunities that brought in record corporate funds. In her previous role as Associate Director of Marketing at Tetra Tech BAS she focused largely on business development. It is this combination of social service and business success that has made Ms. Lakin an instant asset to Casa Youth Shelter.

Both Gary Howard and Josh Wilson retired from Casa's Board in the last calendar year. Mr. Howard has made great efforts for many years to balance a tight schedule with his commitment to the board; unfortunately, other demands finally won out. Mr. Wilson accepted a well-earned job promotion that required an out-of-state move. They can be reached at [gary@glhowardcpa.com](mailto:gary@glhowardcpa.com) and [josh@joshuaswilson.com](mailto:josh@joshuaswilson.com) respectively. In balance, CYS is pleased to announce the addition of The Honorable Robert Moss, Kelly Perry, and Gary Zager to our Board of Directors.

## **FINANCIALS**

**1. Please furnish a copy of the most recent financial statements and most recent Form 990 filed with the Internal Revenue Service.**

See attached audited financials and Form 990.

**2. Please certify that organization's *IRS 501 (c) (3)* status has not changed.**

See attached IRS determination letter.

**3. Please describe any payments to independent contractors in excess of \$100,000 in the last year.**

N/A

**4. Please describe more fully any payments (shown in Schedule L on the organization's most recent Form 990) related to "Transactions with Interested Persons."**

N/A

**5. Please describe your fundraising activities, and provide an estimate of the costs vs. amounts raised as a result of each of these activities for the past year.**

Casa Youth Shelter's primary fundraising activity remains our signature Gala event, this year celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The evening of dinner, dancing, live music, and auction draws about 400 supporters each year. This year's event was held on April 14<sup>th</sup> at the Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach. Total estimated revenue was \$283,530 while expenses totaled \$120,953.

**6. Have you engaged the services of a professional fundraiser in the past year? If so, why? What is the compensation paid to the fundraiser(s) you hire?**

We do not engage the services of a professional fundraiser outside of our Development Department, which consists of a part-time Development Director and a part-time Director of Marketing and Communications.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Please provide any additional information not addressed in the Grant Application that will help us to better understand the organization's current needs and the project(s) or program(s) for which you are requesting funding.**

The primary goal of all good writing is "Show, don't tell." But it is nearly impossible to show in words what our staff and volunteers see in action at Casa Youth Shelter every day. Partnerships like the one between Casa Youth Shelter and the Foster Family Foundation are the scaffolding that our residents use when rebuilding their lives. We invite you to come visit the shelter and meet for yourselves some of the residents who you help with your donations. In the meantime, we will do our best to show you the impact you are having:

CYS Casa Study – "Samuel"

"Samuel" – a 17 year old male – spent 30 days at Casa Youth Shelter. The shelter served as a bastion in the whirling storm of Samuel's young life...

Samuel was abandoned by his biological father when he was just 6 months old and left again when his stepfather passed away when Samuel was just 9. His mother, an intermittent drug user, was an inattentive parent. The first time Samuel used methamphetamines he was 9 years old. He was officially initiated into a gang at the age of 12. By the time Samuel came to Casa he had already been shot at, seen a friend die and become a father.

By the time he was a young teenager, Samuel's mother was already at her wit's end; she didn't have the tools to parent a son like Samuel nor the inclination to reach out for help. So she reverted back to her own childhood and drove Samuel to Mexico (a country unfamiliar to him though it was his mother's home country). Samuel was left at a rehabilitation facility. His mother returned to the states alone and maintained contact with him only through other relatives. He had been abandoned once again.

Months later, with the help of family members, Samuel returned to the United States. However, he returned to find that his mother had no interest in parenting him. Not surprisingly, Samuel fell back in with an unruly group of friends and was soon in trouble with the law. When he finally found himself in front of a judge, he was dismayed to hear his mother legally give up custody; Samuel became a ward of the state. He was terrified that he would be going to jail because he had nowhere else to go. Fortunately Samuel had a compassionate parole officer who gave him a choice – Juvenile Hall or Casa Youth Shelter.



We agreed that he could stay here on a short term basis while we helped him transition to a longer term program with more appropriate structure.

Samuel was a resident at Casa Youth Shelter for 30 days. While at Casa he was cooperative and proactive in his treatment planning, counseling and in the house. He was thankful, stating that he felt accepted, unjudged and cared for. He became hopeful and his affect slowly changed from reserved, angry and tearful to cautiously optimistic. Working with his counselor, case manager and probation officer he was successfully transferred to a more structured/higher level group home where he is thriving. Samuel continues to work with counselors on processing the multiple abandonments in his life and gaining the tools he will need for eventual independent living.