



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

Office of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention

184111

Washington, D.C. 20531

Memorandum

Grant Managers Assessment Report

Grant Title: The President's Crime Prevention Council:
Ounce of Prevention Grant Program
Raven Project, Youth to Youth
Street Outreach Program for Homeless/Street Youth

Grant Number: 97-JN-CX-0005

Grantee: Redwood Community Action Agency

Project Director: Lloyd Thorne

Grant Monitor: D. Elen Grigg for Rich Friedman

Financial Award: \$ 100,000

Date: December 28, 1999

PROPERTY OF
National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)
Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000

See attached description

Signature:

Charlotte Kerr
Acting Director, RPDD

1/10/00
Date

OUNCE OF PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM

GRANTEE: Redwood Community Action Agency (Eureka, CA)--\$100,000

OVERVIEW: The RAVEN project, a component of the Community Action Agency and its Youth Service Bureau (YSB), expands and enhances a three year old youth-led street outreach to homeless and runaway youth in Humboldt County. The project provides health education, risk reduction information, alternatives to substance use and abuse, resource referral, and access to needed services for vulnerable youth. The youth educators for RAVEN are recruited from the streets, provided substance abuse prevention education and training, and work on a peer-to-peer basis with transient youth. Project goals include increasing the physical health and well being of youth, ages 10-20; increasing leadership and employment opportunities for homeless youth; and increasing alcohol and drug education, prevention, and risk reduction services to youth. Street youth will be recruited to participate in policy and program development decisions and provide direct services for homeless/runaway youth, such as group discussions on alternatives to drug use and other intervention strategies for youth through the YSB Youth Advisory Council.

NOTABLE OUTCOMES: The RAVEN project staff consists of one full-time coordinator, three part-time outreach workers, 8-10 part-time youth educators, and 4-5 volunteers. All services are voluntary and confidential. The project responded to a total of approximately 1,631 unduplicated youth for a total of 3,878 contacts through peer/youth educators and outreach workers. The drop-in services program component appears to have handled 571 youth (49% female and 51% male). This group of at-risk youth were primarily Caucasian (69%) with African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Others (21%) also represented. Most youth were ages 18-21(60%) and ages 15-17 (22%), though some were as young as age 10 and old as age 24. Homeless or disenfranchised youth comprised approximately 70% of the target population while approximately 30% of youth considered themselves "in transition" or traveling. Approximately 81% of these youth were referred for medical care, shelter, and counseling; 50% were involved in RAVEN activities and 69% were involved in education and employment-related activities.

There were 1265 homeless and street youth (63% female, 27% male) contacted by the RAVEN outreach program in the towns of Eureka, Arcata, and Garberville. Homeless and runaway youth and those "in transition" or "hanging out" were largely Caucasian (76%) and medical care, temporary shelter, and counseling services were provided.

Approximately 3,069 health and education, HIV/AIDS, and local resources prevention materials were disseminated to drop-in and street outreach youth. Survival supplies (e.g., shoes, sleeping bags, clothing, food, personal hygiene products) were provided to numerous youth. Referrals for specific health-related concerns and shelter were also made. Providing longer-term substance use prevention, education, vocational training, and job placement services proved more difficult for this at-risk population.

The goal of recruiting, training, and utilizing youth educators from among this population proved

particularly challenging to the RAVEN staff. Runaway, homeless, and street youth are not used to taking care of themselves and having self-discipline to follow through on planned activities. Most are struggling with their adolescent identity, exploring and experimenting with different life styles, and have low self-esteem. Nevertheless, the project had a total of 24 youth educators throughout the grant year, some of whom were terminated due to "breaking program policy regarding consumption of substances while on the job". These youth were trained in substance use prevention, diet and nutrition, emotional and spiritual health, alternative therapies and exercise, and goal setting prior to providing outreach services to their peers. Alternative to drug use groups were held once a month at the RAVEN facility due to the transient nature of street youth and the lack of public transportation in the three target rural communities.

ROLE OF YOUTH IN SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION: For the most part, this substance use prevention initiative was youth-designed and youth-led as a means of reaching other runaway, homeless, and street youth. Youth were involved in all phases of project activities, including the design of data collection instruments, distribution of supplies and prevention education materials to project participants, and compilation of project statistics. Peer-to-peer activities were emphasized in an effort to reach this vulnerable youth population throughout the rural communities in northern California. Staff support from the Youth Services Bureau remained committed to this youth-led prevention project. Resource materials and brochures developed by project participants are included in the file. The Youth Leader, Karen Klamka, joined the Adult Leader, Suzette Dunning, at the evaluation training for Ounce of Prevention grantees held in Washington, DC in January 1998 and sponsored by the national evaluators of the Youth-Led Substance Use Prevention Program, the University of New Hampshire.

PROJECT CONTINUATION: The RAVEN project will be continued with a three year grant from the Department of Health and Human Services and a sub-contract with the State Department of Public Health. The project is a part of a multiple access facility for homeless and disenfranchised populations in northern Humboldt County. Further health education and training, substance use prevention workshops, and site visits to area youth councils have been scheduled. The project has also developed a collaboration with the Northcoast Gay and Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Association in order to provide appropriate mental health and support services for selected youth.

PROGRAM MANAGER'S COMMENTS: Project staff, youth educators, and volunteers involved with this unique prevention project were enthusiastic, creative, energetic, and committed to providing holistic prevention services. The strengths and weaknesses of this one year project were evident throughout the grant year. Recruitment and training of youth leaders from the target population proved challenging and provided an opportunity for improving the self-image of vulnerable youth. Peer outreach to street youth for substance use prevention services is a positive concept and requires long-term commitment from the community and funding sources. Staff are competent in dealing with problem youth, less so in the completion of grant related reports in a timely manner. The project provided critically needed prevention services to a highly vulnerable and transient rural youth population. Project funds appear to have been expended appropriately.

CONTACT PERSON: Suzette Dunning, Youth Service Bureau, Redwood Community Action Agency, 904 G Street, Eureka, CA 95501, (707) 443-7099.

1) STATUS REPORT

FINANCIAL:

The RAVEN Project's total expenditures as of November 15th, 1998 is \$ 99,855.21. The following is an itemized breakdown of the above total and percentages spent:

• Salaries & Wages - 54,690.05	112.16%
• Fringe Benefits - 8,728.65	107.58%
• Mileage-Personal - 330.96	55.16%
• Gasoline - 1,341.66	53.66%
• Janitorial services - 1,367.70	113.97%
• Utilities - 822.85	45.71%
• Office Supplies - 593.25	74.15%
• YSB Astro Van Repair & Maintenance - \$254.49	25.44%
• Insurance & bonding - 1,736.87	78.66%
• Communications - 1,268.17	159.35%
• Postage - 78.15	26.05%
• Employee Dev. & Recruitment - 6,539.52	117.09%
• Admn. expense - 5,000	71.42%
• Program supplies - 3,867.06	79.35%
• Food supplies - 3,302.88	100.08%
• Stipends - 9,194.37	103.76%

The following money was not itemized in the initial Ounce of Prevention budget, but was added via redistribution of funds through several budget amendments:

- Retirement Fund - 42.45
- Mileage-Agency Vehicle - 373.95
- Per Diem - 76.00
- YSB Van - 267.00
- Printing & Publications - 72.47
- Consultants - 192.00

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$102,353.43* 102.35%

*Note: used money from other funding sources to cover over-expenditures

ADMINISTRATION:

The RAVEN Project's staff consists of 1 full-time coordinator, 3 part-time outreach workers, 8-10 part-time youth educators, and 4-5 volunteers.

Street Outreach Workers:

- Karen Klamka has remained with project since she was first hired in October of 1997. Her ability to remain calm and flexible during times of crisis and her ever increasing knowledge base have helped the project to grow and mature. She has been instrumental to the success of RAVEN both out on the streets and amongst other youth-serving agencies. Her personal interest in becoming a midwife has helped her to educate the RAVEN staff about health issues particular to pregnancy and male/female sexuality. Her input in the decision making process regarding disciplinary actions, program objectives, and trainings has always proven to be insightful and helpful.
- Natalie Schramm was added to the RAVEN staff in the position of Outreach worker in mid-July 1998. She replaced Gypsy Boyy who was terminated due to a severe violation of agency policy in late June 1998. Natalie had a very interesting educational and experiential backgrounds that included travelling with Upward People, performing arts,

much needed dose of "new" and "positive" energy to the project, which was at a low due to the recent losses in the personnel department (Gypsy and Honeybear). Most important, was the balance she brought to the relationship between her and Karen, a balance that did not exist between Karen and Gypsy. Their ability to respect one another has helped the project immensely, in fact, more than words can express.

- The project received monies from a tobacco grant that was written in collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club of Eureka. As a result, the project hired Wendy Oji as an additional outreach worker/health educator in early August. She has an incredible health education background especially in the areas of substance use/abuse, STD's, male & female anatomy, nutrition, and mental health issues. She has a thorough grasp of the harm reduction philosophy and it is evident in the way she discusses, approaches, and incorporates health information holistically. She has been a valuable resource to the project especially regarding the cohesiveness of the outreach worker staff.

Youth Educators

They all remain vital parts to the ultimate and legitimate success of the project amongst the homeless/street youth population we serve. Without their contributions to design and implementation of the projects activities and services the project would be at a definite loss. Their presence and association with the project has established the project as a viable resource for the homeless/street youth population. The trust they have been able to establish out on the streets has been an amazing process to both witness and be a part of. The legitimacy they have also been able to establish amongst other youth serving agencies, law enforcement, and healthcare providers and professionals has been instrumental in getting the needs of this community heard and recognized. They are the project and the project is them. We have been able to witness what can happen if youth are given the opportunity to empower themselves and their peers via ownership in a program that aims to serve their needs, incorporates their ideas, and allows their voices to be heard.

Please refer to Goal #2 for profiles and more information regarding the Youth Educator Cadre.

2) PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Increase the physical health and well-being of youth, ages 10-21, living and hanging on the streets of Humboldt County

Drop-in:

During the July-October 1998 period, drop-in services at the RAVEN project's facility had numerous contacts with homeless/street and disenfranchised youth living &/or hanging on the streets of Humboldt County:

Total # of youth: 234
Total # of contacts: 500

The following is a demographic breakdown of the youth encountered during drop-in (please note that phone contacts are not included in total #of youth):

GENDER	AGE	ETHNICITY	LIVING SITUATION
Female: 114	10-14: 7	Caucasian: 163	*Homeless: 120
Male: 120	15-17: 42	African Am.: 11	*Disenfranchised: 172
phone: 55	18-21: 162	Latina/o: 8	In-transition: 32
	22-23: 23	Native Am.: 2	Traveling: 74
		Other: 50	*These 2 categories overlap so often times youth marked down both categories when describing their situation

Additional information regarding drop-in services:

REFERRALS	ACTIVITIES
Medical - 179	Computer - 62
Shelter - 128	Job-related/resume - 35
Counseling - 32	Arts & Crafts - 76
Crisis Hotlines - 65	Conversation - 200
Employment - 240	Educational videos - 23
Education - 31	Cooking/meals - 200
Freemeals/Foodboxes - 233	Phone-use - 206
RAVEN Activities - 154	Showers - 177
Salvation Army - 33	Mail - 8
St. Vincent De Paul - 42	Identification - 11
Social Services - 226	Birth Certificates - 4
	Laundry - 181 @ 387 hrs

Survival & Basic Hygiene supplies (amount given out):

*669 articles of clothing (shirts, pants, sweaters/sweatshirts, jackets, socks, hats, skirts, etc.)

*31 pairs of shoes

*13 sleeping bags

*198 parcels of food (canned goods, pasta sauces, sandwiches, cooked meals)

*758 Personal Hygiene products (soap, shampoo, razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste, combs/brushes, lip balm, deodorant, tampons, etc.)

*91 Baby-related items (diapers, lotion, teething gel, etc.)

*341 HIV/AIDS condom packets (ed. / info. & supplies = 1,014 condoms)

*76 IDU-related educational/health supplies

*5 Backpacking Backpacks

*2 Bicycles

*8 Blankets

11 Books*Total: 2,034 items****Vouchers:*****51 YSB Thrift Store vouchers (Eureka, Arcata, Fortuna)*****60 Bus vouchers****Total: 111****Transportation:*****113 rides via RAVEN Van*****2 Bicycles****Total: 115****Street Outreach:**

During the July-December period the RAVEN Project's outreach services had numerous contacts with homeless/street youth living &/or hanging on the streets of Humboldt County:

Total # of youth	Total # of contacts	Contacts per Area	Outreach hours per Area
677	1,698	Eureka - 415 Arcata - 1,103 Garberville - 59 Regional - 11	Eureka - 85 Arcata - 110 Garberville - 20 Regional - 69

The following is a demographic breakdown of the youth encountered during street outreach:

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Living Situation
Female - 233	10-14 - 21	Caucasian - 503	Homeless - 336
Male - 444	15-17 - 147	African Am. - 12	Runaways - 9
	18-21 - 341	Latino/a - 29	In-transition - 130
	22-24 - 168	Native am. - 37	Hanging out - 202
		API - 11	
		Other - 85	

REFERRALS:

Medical - 150

Shelter - 197

Counseling - 92

Crisis Hotlines - 140

Employment - 143

Education - 146

Free meals/food boxes -

RAVEN Activities - 494

Survival & Basic Hygiene supplies (amount given out):***9 articles of clothing*****53 pair of shoes*****1198 parcels of food*****684 hygiene products*****300 HIV/AIDS condom packets = 1,800 condoms*****375 health and drug education/information pamphlets*****100 "ZINES" (please see attached copies for examples of work)*****67 youth received 1st aid supplies*****916 local resources pamphlets (pocket-sized)****TOTAL: 3,259 supplies & 933 pamphlets (health, drug, resources)****Transportation:*****50 RAVEN van**

**Combined Measurement of Progress According to Stated Objectives of Goal # 1
(October 1997 - October 1998):**

Narrative:

As you will note, the main objective of the project is to make sure youth living &/or hanging on the streets are staying as healthy as they can given their precarious situations and to "hook" them up with local resources and services that are available to them. The project's services are all **voluntary** and **confidential**. Our role is to be there for these youth when they make the decision to put school, education, employment, etc. at the top of their lists of priorities instead of at the bottom. "Being there" involves the giving of necessary referrals and help filling out paperwork that can often times prove to be quite intimidating.

One of the big mysteries in working with this target population is knowing what it takes to get youth living on the streets to get to a point in their lives where they are "ready" and want to make this transition. What is important to point out here is that we cannot assume that **ALL** youth living &/or hanging out on the streets want to get off of them. In order to best serve this population, our program has had to keep reminding itself that: **IT IS** our intention to provide whatever supplies and necessary information to those on the streets so they can be as healthy as they can given their current situation/s and **IT IS NOT** to become fixated on the idea of getting them off of the streets. Remember: it is not about what we want for them, it is about what they want for themselves. This plays a crucial role in the efficacy of the program because it allows us to focus and re-focus on just exactly what it is our program is trying to accomplish, what approach(es) we are going to take, and why.

A person is not going to change unless he/she: 1) wants to, 2) has information on how, 3) knows where they can go for help, and 4) has unconditional support in their effort. The project can only take on #'s 2-4, the first one is entirely up to the individual him/herself. Until a person reaches the point where he/she wants to go to school, get a job, etc., the project will pass on valuable survival supplies and resource/health information in a very consistent manner via outreach, drop-in, and group/workshop services.

Statistics:

A) The RAVEN project provided holistic **street outreach** and **drop-in** services via peer/youth educators and outreach workers to approximately **1,631** unduplicated youth during a total of **3,878** contacts. This exceeds our goal of outreaching to **200** unduplicated youth by a margin of **1,431** youth, a **715%** achievement rate.

B) The RAVEN project disseminated **3,069** health & drug education, HIV/AIDS, and local resources pamphlets during a total of **4,373** contacts via drop-in and street outreach services.

C) The project disseminated a total of **6,949** survival supplies while conducting street outreach and a total of **4,212** survival supplies via drop-in services; a total of **11,161** survival supplies. These supplies were distributed amongst a total of approximately **1,631** unduplicated youth (**1,397** from outreach & **487** from drop-in services) during **4,373** contacts.

D) **8.6%** of the youth contacted or involved with the project re-entered or are in the process of re-entering educational institutions.

E) **68** youth who were contacted were successful in getting employment. Unfortunately, getting a job and becoming economically stable are two very different things. The transient nature of the homeless/street youth population interferes with the project's ability to do any kind of pre-test/post-test comparisons let alone comprehensive tracking of other lifestyle changes. The project will occasionally hear from kids who are getting their life "in order" thanks to the support and help they received from the project. Usually the project will hear from a client that he/she got a job and is well on their way to stability, then a few weeks/months later that same youth is unemployed and homeless once again. The transition from homelessness to economic stability is a cycle of ups & downs. The project assists clients

in writing resumes, cover letters, filling out applications, personal budgeting, interviewing, etc.. The type of assistance a client receives depends on their individual needs.

F) 713 youth received health &/or medical-related referrals. The project estimates that 20-25% of the youth who received health referrals actually go to receive medical attention and other health-related services. As a result of the transient nature of this population the project may never know to what extent the information they are given is actually incorporated into their current lifestyles or whether they make use of the referrals they receive. This has been and will remain to be a problem as far as trying to measure any behavior or attitude changes amongst members of this community. The transition from disregarding one's health to taking care of oneself involves education, access to services & supplies, and community support. Community as defined here is any body of people that a person belongs to that is concerned for the well-being of that individual. The whole process of change begins with empowerment. Empowerment involves education and thus, increasing one's knowledge base. Getting a person to think about their health and well-being, to incorporate this information so as to encourage attitude changes, and to allow their changes in attitude to positively influence their unhealthy behaviors is an incredibly difficult process. It is best exemplified in the following description: its like climbing a hill of very loose gravel where for every 2 baby steps forwards there are several slides backwards.

Please refer to the attachment titled, Surveys, for information the project collected as a means to see: 1) if and what health-related services our clients were accessing, 2) how the project has helped them, and 3) to do a needs assessment of our target population.

G) 686 youth received shelter/housing referrals & information. Unfortunately, the county has done very little to address the problem of insufficient shelters and shelter services, with the exception, of the city of Arcata who is currently constructing a multiple access facility. The social services department is already overwhelmed to the point where the average time it takes the client to receive most monies or benefits is several months. Without a sufficient number of shelter space/facilities, people waiting to receive their checks and other financial assistance are forced to roam the streets and abandoned/neglected areas in search of shelter. This is especially true for youth, particularly those individuals whose eligibility for social and medical services is denied for whatever reasons (age, residency, etc.). It is not uncommon for the project to encounter the following phenomenon: one youth will get a house or an apartment and his/her friends will move in. Eventually the landlord will discover that the rental has turned into a "flop house" and everyone including the youth whose name is on the agreement/lease will be evicted.

Goal 2: Increase the number of leadership and employment opportunities for homeless and disenfranchised youth in Humboldt County

Program Design & Implementation:

As was stated in the first report covering the October '97- June '98 period, the design of the RAVEN project continues to be a youth-driven and youth-implemented outreach program. The following challenges were met with a good amount of success and some failure:

- 1) Taking the two urban-based programs the RAVEN project has modeled itself after and incorporating changes that would enhance their applicability to a rural community.
- 2) Recruiting 10 street/streetwise youth who will take on the responsibilities that will be required of them as peer health educators. Particular to this population, the concept of responsibility may have never been a part of their reality and will by far be our biggest challenge!

- 3) Getting the youth to take ownership of the program in a manner that will inspire them to really get involved and help the program to achieve it's goals.
- 4) Figuring out how to effectively train & educate the youth educators so that they "take in" the information and positive messages the supervisory staff and guest speakers are sending them via trainings and workshops.
- 5) To establish ourselves as a viable resource for the homeless/street & disenfranchised youth populations and other youth-serving agencies in Humboldt County.

Commentary on the project's experience with the aforementioned challenges:

The approach used to address numbers 2 & 3 from above focused on establishing a relationship with **ALL** members of the project based on **Trust, Belief, and Respect**.

When youth educators are brought aboard the program, they are done so:

- 1) With the **belief** that they can accomplish anything they set their minds to
- 2) By **trusting** them to be honest, to honor the philosophy of the project, and to value the importance and power of **Trust**; once it's lost it can never fully be regained
- 3) With the confidence and expectation that they will **respect** one another and their differences (in look, dress, opinion, sexuality, etc.); "**respect** is earned by giving it"

With regards to getting the youth educators to take responsibility and ownership of the program, we have experienced many ups and downs along the way. One thing is for sure, ups and downs are part of working with **ALL** youth between the ages of 16-21, let alone homeless/street youth. The following is some insight into why it was and still is very challenging to get street/homeless youth to assume responsibility for themselves and for their work obligations.

1) Having to survive on the streets as a youth forces him/her to grow up quickly because they are forced to come face to face with the ugly and chaotic realities of the world as it really exists. Unfortunately, for many youth the brutal realities inherent in street survival are a cruel and rude awakening. This awakening of sorts is not one known for its encouragement of healthy cognitive and emotional development. Having to survive on the streets, outside existing social and mental health services forces youth, especially those in their adolescence, to abandon their innocence. Youth are forced to exchange sex for money, shelter, food and substances. The harshness of street life is so overwhelming and defeating that many youth fall into a nasty, hard to break cycle of substance abuse in order to numb themselves from all of the "shit". Homeless/street youth are **FORCED** to assume full responsibility for taking care of themselves, a situation that does not foster growth, as "growing up fast" would insinuate. Rather, their precarious situations serve as a barriers to healthy emotional and cognitive growth during one of their more crucial stages of development. Furthermore, a majority of these youth, 1) are **NOT** taking care of themselves, 2) are far from knowing how, and even if they did, where, and 3) don't "give a shit" about their health & well-being. Self-esteem plays a huge role in all of this. In fact, the self-esteem issues involved are as numerous and various as the homeless/street youth population is itself.

2) Youth transitioning from adolescence to adulthood are trying to form their own identities, discovering their own limits, figuring out what and when to set their boundaries, and trying to assume personal responsibility. Thus, this is a time where **exploration** and **experimentation** come into full use; how

else is someone to figure out who they are, where they want to go, what they want to do, etc.? This is a crucial period in the formation of their paradigms and self-esteem. For those youth inside mainstream society and those outside this is a reality, it is one stage along the never-ending cycle of growth. The difference between street/homeless youth vs. youth in stable home environments is that this growth is not nurtured in a healthy manner and, in most cases, is not nurtured at all. The whole experimentation and exploration that ALL humans undertake is as natural and instinctive a process as is breathing and eating. Each of us will learn life lessons unique to our own experiences, some of us won't learn the first time around, and some of us won't learn them at all.

Example: When you learned how to ride a bike it didn't happen overnight or the first time you got on. It took lots of falling down, crashing, and most important of all, it took someone's unconditional support and faith along the way. That outside support was instrumental in giving you the self confidence you needed in order to overcome the obstacles facing you as you learned how to ride your bike without falling and hurting yourself.

Thus, for most, if not all, of the youth educators the RAVEN project is the first entity in their lives that has provided them with this kind of unconditional support and encouragement.

Measurement of Progress According to Stated Objectives of Goal #2 (July-December 1998):

Youth Educator Cadre

A) Since hiring it's first cadre of youth educators in early November of 1997, the project has had a total of 24 youth educators. The transition the youth educators have to make according to their role as a peer health educator/outreach worker has been a demanding one. It requires that they become responsible for their actions and to work with others in a team-oriented atmosphere. Becoming a responsible person does not happen overnight, it is a lifetime process that many adults, let alone homeless/street youth, have yet to assume. Every single one of the youth educators that has been and continue to be with the project, has taught me a lot about life and the beauty that surrounds us all. I have learned from them the importance of honesty, trust, and a positive support system based on unconditional acceptance of who they are and what they look like.

Terminations and Exits of RAVEN Youth Educators

Name: Gypsy Boyy
Exit Date: 7/98
Reason: Was terminated due to breaking program policy regarding the consumption of substances while on the job.

Name: Honeybear
Exit Date: 7/98
Reason: Was terminated due to breaking program policy regarding the consumption of substances while on the job.
 * She was re-hired in September

Name: Carrot Top (Sam Collier)
Exit Date: 12/15/98

Reason: Got accepted to Heartwood Institute and will be attending in the spring of '99 in their intensive massage therapy program.

Name: Chrystal Janisse

Exit Date: 2/5/99

Reason: Her need for more hours of work demanded that she look for a fulltime job elsewhere because the project could only offer her 10 hrs a week @ \$5.75/hr. She was successful in getting a fulltime job and the project is very proud of her accomplishments.

Name: Kella Webb

Exit Date: 2/1/99

Reason: She wanted to get a job in the area of her studies at College of the Redwoods in computer technologies/programming. The project is very proud of her accomplishments and wishes her the best of luck.

POSITIVE ROLE MODELING

Responsible parenting:

The RAVEN project has been able to witness the effectiveness of both peer-led activities and peer-based role modeling with regards to such topics as self-esteem, health, safe sex, substance use, and responsible parenting.

The project has two youth educators, Shiro and Koa, that just recently had babies. Shiro was a couple of months pregnant and just twenty years old when she began participating in an Herbal workshop the project was offering winter of 1997. After a couple of months Shiro began to volunteer with the project in order to receive financial assistance via Calworks. Soon thereafter Shiro was hired as a youth educator and has since continued to work for the project.

Shiro referred her friend Koa to the project to see if there was any employment opportunity available. Koa was 1 of 2 youth educators hired in early April of 1998 and she continues to work for the project.

Both Shiro and Koa were given maternity leave from the project with their security guaranteed. Their ability to maintain a job, access necessary pre-natal and post-natal care services, and work towards having their own daycare business has had an enormously positive affect on the rest of their co-workers.

Their presence at drop-in and staff trainings has enabled the rest of the youth educators and clients to get a unique "real life" picture of what responsible parenting involves. Youth appear to listen best to their peers and to be more resistant to listening to adults; parenting and pregnancy is no exception.

The teen years are a time of personal exploration marked by the testing of one's boundaries, limits, and sexuality. This so-called "personal exploration" is manifested in a number of different reactions and behaviors: substance use & abuse, sexual relations, smoking, recklessness, travelling, personal appearance, solitude, isolation, etc.. During this search for an identity of their own, pregnancy and parenthood often become idolized and desired by young women who find themselves in search of the ever elusive "unconditional love" they might have never received from their families, boyfriends, etc..

This is where positive role modeling comes into play. Koa & Shiro accomplish the task of giving youth a reality check about what parenting and being responsible for another human being involves. Their involvement with the project has allowed all those around to get a

unique insight into the strength, perseverance, patience, responsibility, and personal sacrifices required of those who decide to take on motherhood.

In addition to Koa & Shiro, Shiro's partner Cory has served as a great role model for young dads. Cory, at 19 years old, came out from Michigan to assume responsibility for his role as a father to his son, Ezekeal. Cory works full-time and has arranged schedule so he can take care of Ezekeal when Shiro is at work or consumed with the process of organizing her own Day care program. Cory and Shiro share parenting duties & responsibilities as best as any two responsible individuals can. They are both doing exemplary work in their roles as responsible parents.

Healthy relationships with substances:

Please refer to goal #3 for information regarding this topic.

RAVENSTAFF:

The following information provides details about activities, trainings, guest speaking, etc. completed/undertaken by RAVEN youth educators and outreach workers towards achieving the goal's objectives.

- *3 youth educators went to the L.Y.R.I.C. sponsored Young, Loud, and Proud conference for gay/lesbian/bisexual/queer/questioning... youth in San Francisco
- *4 youth educators attended a suicide intervention training workshop for teens
- *9 of the 11 youth educators enrolled in College of the Redwoods and Zoe Barnum
- *Several youth educators played a key role in the creation of the murals now surrounding the YSB facility and facing the garden
- *Most of the youth educator staff is trying to quit smoking
- *

Trainings:

The supervisory staff decided that it was time for the youth educators to share some of their knowledge with one another, so they were asked to pair up, create, and facilitate trainings on topics of their choice. The following is the breakdown of the trainings led by the youth educators and enjoyed by the RAVEN staff:

- *Vegan diet & Organic food (political and social perspective)
- *Personal manifestation
- *Local plant identification (edible and medicinal)
- *Yoga/meditation
- *Vegan & Vegetarian cuisine and nutrition

Other trainings for this quarter go as follows:

- *Outreach procedure/role playing (review and update)
- *RAVEN philosophy
- *Role of peer health educator (responsibilities and expectations)
- *Male & Female anatomy
- *STI's
- *Hepatitis A, B, C
- *Local resources
- *Aboriginal Music (history & therapy)

The RAVEN project's coordinator and outreach workers decided to address a variety of health-related issues such as substance use & abuse, diet & nutrition, and stress reduction, using a holistic approach. The idea behind this decision evolved out of client and youth educator feedback regarding the following question : What is health? The overwhelming response indicated that health was being looked at from a very narrow non-inclusive perspective. Thus, we decided to take up this issue and created a series of RAVEN staff trainings and special workshops/activities addressing the many facets involved in leading a healthier lifestyle.

Each training included a discussion on healthy pregnancies, responsible parenting, and developing healthy relationships with substances.

The following is a schedule of activities that took place under the project's Holistic umbrella of health:

Dates:	Topic and Facilitators:
10/4/98	Diet & Nutrition (Organic food/cooking) RAVEN staff
10/13/98	Substance use & abuse RAVEN outreach workers (Wendy & Natalie)
10/20/98	Substance use & abuse RAVEN outreach workers (All)
10/27/98	HIV/AIDS testing & Harm Reduction Susan McBride - NorCAP (Northcoast Aids Project) Suzette - RAVEN coordinator
11/3/98	Harm Reduction RAVEN coordinator
11/10/98	Emotional & Spiritual health RAVEN Staff Relaxation tapes and interactive techniques
11/17/98	Nutrition/exercise RAVEN outreach workers (All) RAVEN coordinator
12/1/98	Alternative Therapies Guest Speaker
12/8/98	Goal Setting RAVEN staff

The following is a brief run-down of community trainings and guest speaking engagements the youth educators and RAVEN supervisors conducted this period:

- *9/98 Harm reduction /communication skills for Straight Up Americorps
- *10/98 Harm reduction/communication skills for Environmental Division of Americorps
- *10/98 Harm reduction-based health education for Manila community and Teenship (teen program)
- *10/98 Communication skills using harm reduction philosophy for Teenship
- *11/98 Harm reduction: philosophy and practical implementation for T.O.P. (Teen Outreach Project)
- 11/98 Leadership skills for Teenship
- *11/98 HIV, Hepatitis A, B, and C for Youth Service Bureau's Transitional Living Program (Launch Pad)
- 11/98 Local resources & referrals for T.O.P.
- *11/98 Peer counseling pt. 1 for America's Promise Youth Group
- *12/98 Peer Counseling pt. 2 for America's Promise Youth Group
- 12/98 Professional presentation America's Promise Youth Group

Please note that those trainings with * spent some time addressing teen pregnancy, teen parenting, and substance use vs. abuse issues with a focus on responsible parenting, health education, local resources, and forming healthy relationships with substances.

Goal 3: Increase alcohol and other drug education, prevention, intervention, and risk reduction services to youth in Humboldt County

As a means to address the very delicate subject of substance abuse vs. use the project used a very avant-garde approach to the matter:

"Drugs are here to stay. History teaches that it is vain to hope that drugs will ever disappear and that any effort to eliminate them from society is doomed to failure."

Chocolate to Morphine. (1983)

More importantly, the project fully accepted and embraced this often overlooked fact: people are going to make their own decisions, they already are and will continue to do so for the rest of their lives. Our role then as educators is to do just that; educate youth so that the decisions they make are healthy and as harm free as is possible. So then the question becomes, How do you go about effectively educating youth, or anyone for that matter, about substance abuse vs. use?

First and foremost, we re-defined what a drug was and discovered the following definition in every single dictionary we could find. The definition of a drug is "any substance that alters your mood or consciousness". Take a moment and think about this definition and the impact it can have on one's perception and thus, their understanding of the prevalence of substances in everyday life. The way a person labels or stigmatizes a drug directly affects the way the person sees his/herself and the relationship they develop with that drug(s).

For us, the subject of drug education consisted of a four part process:

- 1) re-defining what a drug is
- 2) De-mystifying the "good drug vs. bad drug"
- 3) Drug abuse = unhealthy relationship with drug
Drug use = healthy relationship with drug
- 4) Allowing the participants to define for themselves what a healthy relationship with drugs involves and promotes

We already discussed the re-definition of what is a drug, so let's look at the highly misleading and overly marketed "good drug vs. bad drug" **MYTH**. All drugs have good and bad qualities, some are more toxic than others, some have more addictive qualities than others, some are prescribed & over-prescribed by health professionals; some have powerful healing properties, etc.. To discuss and understand their qualities is one thing, but to **label** and or **classify** drugs as **good** or **bad** is very misleading to say the least. By **stigmatizing** a drug based on whether it is illegal or not, socially accepted or not, you are merely applying a stigma to the person who **chooses** to use that drug. In other words, a person becomes defined by the drug they choose to consume, they are either good or bad.

This perception and definition of "self" via the drug a person chooses to use gives rise to many issues of concern; one of which is the inability to see that it is not the drug itself as much as it is the relationship that has been formed between the person and the drug. The issues leading to one's decision to consume and thus, over-consume a drug are the real issue at hand. This is why the re-defining of the word **drug** is important, it allows a person to not **only** see the relationships people have made with drugs it also allows them to see the relationships drugs have made with our society.

How many people **depend** on their morning coffee to begin the day? How many people develop severe mood swings, headaches, irritability, in ability to concentrate, etc. when they don't have their daily dose of caffeine? How many people experience the shakes, nausea, inability to concentrate on specific tasks, diarrhea, etc. when they consume too much caffeine? Now, how many of these people would be surprised to discover that they have developed a dependence or an addiction, depending on the severity of the dependence, on a drug? Caffeine is a powerful and strong drug. A drug that enjoys regular consumption and overconsumption by many members of our society, it is one of the most widely used drugs in everything from soda to over-the-counter and prescription drugs.

A person's self-esteem and thus, self-image are the two most important contributing factors to the kind of relationship(s) they will form with drugs. For the homeless/street youth population, where a majority of self-esteems are "shot to hell", unhealthy relationships with drugs abound.

Measurement of progress towards goal:**Zines:**

Knowing the transience and survival mode of youth living on the streets of Humboldt county, the project came to the decision to make Zines as a means to best educate this population. The project's Zines incorporate topics such as STD's, Piercings and Tattooing, Safe drug use, Drug education, Safe sex, poetry, humor, art, in a booklet that speaks to the street youth. Therefore, the youth educators often use language in its "rawest" form in order to speak a language that is used amongst their peers and other street youth. The presentation of the educational material in our Zines is bold and forward and can be offensive to a lot of people in mainstream society. But we must remember that we are trying to communicate with people who live outside mainstream society and thus, are those whose lives exist in a reality outside mainstream society's comprehension. The Zines have been a great success with the homeless/street youth population. In fact, we get requests on the streets for certain Zines and other health pamphlets the project's Youth educator staff has put together. Furthermore, we know street youth are **reading the Zines** because they are always asking questions or giving comments about them on outreach or during drop-in services.

Due to the transient nature of this population we had to come up with an approach that would work and the Zines seem to have been our best approach so far. The effectiveness of the Zines as valid educational tools resides in the freedom they allow their reader to have regarding a subject, especially one as personal as drug abuse/use. Our goal is to educate the street/homeless youth about the harmful consequences of certain activities and to provide them with all kinds of information about safe ways to engage in certain activities if they ever decide to do so.

Our Zines hold steadfastly to the notion that youth living on the streets demand control over their decision-making process, whether it is a wise choice or not the decision remains theirs to make. They are constantly fighting for control over their bodies, minds, and spirits in a chaotic world. The approach is doubled pronged: 1) Allow them to make their own decisions while at the same time provide them with positive messages and 2) Deliver messages to the street youth that are relevant to their precarious situations and in their own language. The hope is that they take the information to heart and thus, begin the life-long process of healthy decision-making. In this manner, we set out to accomplish what we have intended from the outset; to empower youth to make their own healthy decisions. This is real, it is empowerment in its truest form.

Please see attached Zines for more insight on the subject.

Youth Educators:

Thanks to this approach to educating the street/homeless youth population we have witnessed an incredible learning process. Our entire youth educator staff have maintained their current relationships with drugs* and have begun to take control of their lives. They are all in school, several have moved on to other career-oriented jobs, some are getting ready to move on to other educational programs and entrepreneuring interests, and others are just working on themselves. They have begun the process of setting healthy and balanced priorities.

* the statistics collected for last report compared with the data collected for this report showed such insignificant change that they were not included. The project is proud of this stabilization.

The ability to create such change comes from determination and focus. In order to focus one's energy on achieving a certain goal, with the personal drive to persevere whatever obstacles come one's way, a person must maintain healthy relationships with the drugs they choose to consume. It is apparent that the youth educator staff has achieved a healthy balance in their relationships with drugs or they wouldn't be close to accomplishing what they already have. The road is filled with ups and downs the trick is to find the road less mountainous than the others. Some prefer to hitchhike down this road others choose to walk, there are those who opt to bike down this road, there are those who don't dare to move and then there are those who don't want to think so they sit down and wait for someone to tell them how to get to where they are heading. For some people its the outcome that matters and for others it is the process.

Unfortunately, it is hard to measure attitude or behavior change over a 6 month period and be able to give definitive data about the subject. I would at least give this process 2-3 years to go from "seed to plant". We look forward to see what changes do occur in the next few years.

Alternative to drug use groups:

The alternative-to-drug-use groups were turned into once-a-month workshops due in large part to the transient nature of the street youth and the lack of public transportation. The response to these workshops was very positive, having a large turnout at most of them. The project was focusing a lot of energy getting information out on the streets via outreach and Zines, so it decided to conduct more community workshops and trainings for other youth-serving agencies in place of the weekly groups. The project has experienced an increase in requests from the community to conduct trainings/workshops about the various issues homeless/street/disfranchised youth find important. The health of the individual depends on the support he/she receives from his/her community.

Public speaking and workshops:

Please refer to goal #2 under Trainings for information regarding community workshopstrainings and other public speaking engagements.

3) Project Accomplishments

- Project was awarded 3 year Health and Human Services grant
 - Project was offered a sub-contract by the Public Health department to conduct HIV testing on the streets to Medicaid eligible women and their drug using partners
 - Project committed itself to be part of multiple access facility for homeless and disenfranchised populations of northern Humboldt County
 - Supervisory staff attended national harm reduction conference in Cleveland, Ohio in early October 1998
 - Several insitutions (Humboldt State Womens Athletic Department, Rotary club, local continuation high school, etc.) organized successful toiletries and survival supplies drives
 - Most of the youth educators quit smoking
 - All of the youth educators are going to school
 - The project has really begun to establish itself as a valuable resource in the community
- * For more accomplishments look at goals #2 and #3

4) Future Activities

- Youth educator staff will participate in the first annual Manila Youth Conference in late March 1999 (they will facilitate workshops)
- The project will finalize Public Health department sub-contract and will begin testing services in mid spring 1999
- The project will begin working on a collaboration with the Northcoast Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Association that will provide sexual minority youth appropriate mental health and support services
- Several staff will attend basic 1 training through the Office of AIDS
- Several staff will attend national AIDS conference
- Project will host a visiting youth council from Chico, California and take them around on outreach
- Project will visit and undergo cross-training with a youth driven youth-focused program in San Francisco called The Center for Young Womens Development
- Participate in the organization and operations of the Arcata Food Endeavor's multi access facility in October 1999
- Provide ongoing trainings and employment opportunities to homeless/street youth
- Provide ongoing workshops for the community at-large

Surveys

Throughout the August-December 1998 period Raven clients from drop-in and outreach were asked to complete several different surveys. The purpose behind these surveys is to help the project further understand the needs of the youth in this community. In addition to understanding these needs, we have also been interested in seeing what ways the Raven project is currently able to help the population of homeless/street youth.

Health Survey

GENDER	AGE	ETHNICITY	INSURANCE
Female- 42	10-14: 2 15-17: 12 18-21: 25 22-24: 3	Caucasian- 18 Latina- 2 Greek- 1 Nat Am.- 2 API- 1 Other- 6 no answer- 12	No- 22 Yes- 15 no answer- 5
Male- 58	15-17: 12 18-21: 39 22-24: 7	Caucasian- 31 Latino- 2 API- 1 Nat. Am.- 4 Other- 13 no answer- 7	No- 19 Yes- 31 no answer- 8

Gender	Places	Services/Reasons
Male	Eureka Community Health Clinic - 5 Six Rivers Planned Parenthood- 3 Open Door Clinic- 10 Mental Health Department- 1 Public Health Department- 4 Food Banks/Free Meals - 19 Pregnant and Parenting services - 4 RAVEN facility	Cold/Flu - 3 Lice - 6 Scabies - 5 STD's - 3 Pregnancy Test - 1 Infections - 5 TB test - 2 Physical Exam - 2 HIV/AIDS Test - 6 Dental - 1 Counseling - 2 Food - 18 Vision- 2 Diabetes Stitches

In response to the question "Do you feel the health care providers are youth-friendly?" 19 males responded with yes, 2 responded with no, and 3 did not reply.

Out of these 58 males, 19 stated that they go to the doctor when they are sick, 2 stated that they go when they think they might be getting sick, and 5 stated they go because they want to stay healthy.

Gender	Places	Services/Reasons
Female	Eureka Community Health Clinic - 5 Six Rivers Planned Parenthood - 7 Open Door Clinic - 18 North Country Clinic - 4 Public Health Department - 3 Food Banks/Free meals - 28 Pregnant and Parenting Services - 4 Mental Health Department	Advocacy - 4 Cold/Flu - 8 Lice - 3 Scabies - 5 STD's - 6 Female Services - 17 Pregnancy Test - 9 PAP Smear/Pelvic Exam - 13 Pre-natal care - 3 Counseling - 2 Food - 25 Vision - 6 Safe sex kit - 2 Infections - 7 TB Test - 6 Physical Exam - 6 HIV/AIDS Test - 9 Dental - 8

In response to the question "Do you feel the health care providers are youth-friendly?" 35 females responded with yes, 2 with no and 5 did not reply.

Out of these 42 female youth, 26 stated that they go to the doctor when they are sick, 8 stated they go when they think they might be getting sick and 18 go because they want to stay healthy.

Community Feedback

In response to the question "Has the Raven project helped you out in any way?" 119 youth stated yes, 2 said no and 3 said "not yet".

The Following table represents the response to an optional survey filled out by some of the project's clients who have benefited from the specific services the Raven project offered via drop-in services during the months of August-December 1998.

# of respondents	Services	Services (Con't)
124	Laundry - 63 Medical services - 19 Food - 97 Bus vouchers - 11 Clothes - 52 Thrift Store vouchers - 19 Toiletries - 67 Housing/Shelter - 14 Identification - 6 Employment - 20 Job-hunting - 18	Condoms/lube - 53 Local Resources - 37 Mail - 7 Empowerment - 20 Health ed. - 2 Showers - 56 Education - 1 Support - 47 Safe place to hang out - 61 Transportation - 19 Birth Certif. - 5 Telephone - 38

Application for RAVEN Services

The following is a breakdown of the responses Raven clients gave at drop-in when asked to fill out an application for Raven services prior to their use of our facilities.

# of youth	How they heard about RAVEN	AGE	Living situation	Services
100	Fliers Outreach Friends Parents TLP Pastor Other agencies Word-of-mouth	15-17: 11 18-21: 79 22-24: 10	Homeless- 45 Traveling- 68 Runaway- 2 Other- 15	Help - 2 Food - 25 Free Stuff - 3 Clothes - 8 Rest - 1 Phone - 2 Showers - 55 Toiletries - 3 Laundry - 37 Hygiene - 12 Friendship/talk - 6 Peaceful place - 3 Groups - 1

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