



UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

ECUMENICAL CAMPUS Coalition

Survey of Service Providers in the University District

October 10, 2009





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Introduction

The following summary was gleaned from interviews with the executive directors of 21 human service agencies serving the University District. UDECC board members conducted these interviews. Following this summary are more detailed reports from the interviews at each agency.

Quick Reference: University District Service Providers

- 45th Street Clinic (Homeless Youth Clinic) – in Wallingford
 - Free health care for young people 12 – 23 years old
- Elizabeth Gregory Home – at University Lutheran Church
 - Women’s transitional housing facility
 - Drop-in day center for homeless women
- Peoples’ Harm Reduction Alliance – at University Temple United Methodist Church
 - U District Needle Exchange, distribution of sterile supplies
 - Vein care, health counseling & education
 - Hepatitis C Testing
- Planned Parenthood
 - Sexual health screening, testing, treatment, education & counseling
 - Family planning, birth control
- ROOTS Young Adult Shelter – at University Temple United Methodist Church
 - Emergency shelter for young people 18 – 25 years old
 - Friday Feast evening meal (all ages)
- Sanctuary Art Center – at University Lutheran Church
 - Art studio & music activities for young people 13 – 25 years old
 - Skills/job training (Silk screen studio)
- Seattle Education Access
 - Access to higher education (college) for disadvantaged young people and adults
- Seattle Youth Garden Works
 - Job skills, training and employment for young people 14 – 22 years old
 - Food production for area food banks
- SHARE/WHEEL – at several church buildings
 - Emergency shelter at Christ Episcopal Church
 - Emergency shelter at University Friends Meeting
 - Emergency shelter for women at University Lutheran Church
- Street Youth Ministries – at University Presbyterian Church
 - Faith-based drop-in center and activities for young people 13 – 22 years old
- Tallmadge Hamilton House
 - Senior center providing broad range of services (ceased operation in 2008)
- The Thrift Store – at University Temple United Methodist Church
 - Very low-cost clothing, furnishings, house wares and books (all ages)
 - Drop-in center providing Friday lunch and hygiene services, and health referrals
- University Churches Emergency Fund – at University Congregational United Church of Christ
 - Financial assistance for housing emergencies; counseling and referrals (all ages)



- University District Food Bank – at University Christian Church
 - Food and nutrition for disadvantaged populations (all ages)
- University District Service Providers Alliance
 - Coordination of human service agencies and programs
- University District Youth Center – at the UCUCG Gold House
 - Interagency Academy for GED completion and high school diplomas
 - Catholic Community Services' day center, counseling, hygiene facilities for youth
- University Family YMCA
 - Drop-in center & hygiene services for homeless youth
 - Saturday evening meal for homeless youth
- University Neighborhood Service Center, City of Seattle
 - Information and access to municipal services
- University Street Ministry – in multiple church facilities
 - Teen Feed – Feeding program for young people 13 – 25 years old
 - Service Links for Youth (SLY) – Support coordination program
 - Street Talk Outreach Program (STOP)
- The Working Zone
 - Work-readiness and job training programs for young people 15 – 22 years old
- YouthCare
 - Orion Center – Multi-service facility for young people 13 – 22 years old
 - Emergency shelter and transitional housing for young people 12 – 24 years old



Table: Services Provided

	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Financial Assistance for Housing	Food / Feeding Programs / Nutrition Programs	Hygiene Facilities	Clothing / Household Furnishings	Medical/Dental Services; Wellness/Fitness Programs	Drop-in, Case Management & Outreach Programs	Education Programs	Vocational Training / Employment Counseling	Transportation Assistance / Bus Tickets	Computer Use / Internet Access	Social Activities / Community Connections
45 th Street Clinic*							■						
Elizabeth Gregory Home		■		■	■			■					■
Peoples Harm Reduction Alliance							■						
Planned Parenthood							■	■					
ROOTS*	■			■	■		■	■					
Sanctuary Art Center*										■			■
Seattle Education Access*								■					
Seattle Youth Garden Works*								■	■				■
SHARE/WHEEL	■										■		■
Street Youth Ministry (UPC)*				■	■	■	■	■			■		
Tallmadge Hamilton House				■			■	■				■	■
Univ. Churches Emergency Fund			■					■			■		
U Dist. Food Bank				■									
U Dist. Service Providers Alliance													■
U Dist. Youth Center*				■	■			■	■	■		■	
Univ. Family YMCA*				■	■			■				■	■
Univ. Neighborhood Service Ctr.													
Univ. Street Ministry*				■				■					
UTUMC Thrift Store				■	■	■		■					
YWCA Working Zone*								■	■			■	
YouthCare (incl. Orion Center)	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■

* Denotes member agency of University District Service Providers Alliance

Key to Current Program Location:

In UDECC Church Facility	In non-UDECC Church Facility	In non-Church Facility	No Longer Operating
■	■	■	■



Summary of Comments from Service Provider Interviews

(Note: a numeral in parenthesis indicates repeated comments by multiple subjects.)

Strengths of being in the University District

- (4) Eclectic, diverse, “non-sterile” Active neighborhood, a mix of students, academics, families, service providers, businesses
- Doing a pretty good job of helping at-risk youth
- (2) Restaurants serving nutritious, reasonably priced food – very important
- Nice neighborhood feel of “the Ave.” Bulldog News, etc.
- Very cool clients, kids great to work with
- (2) Strong sense of community among U District service providers, emotional support, connection, mostly progressive
- U District residents are mostly transient, main population doesn’t connect with street culture. So community/resident-based assistance isn’t really possible. Have to depend on agencies...
- (2) But, the churches help make up for transient nature of the resident population. “The congregations here are great: progressive, open, tolerant, we’re lucky to know and work with these people.” “16 of the 25 volunteers who help with TeenFeed are from your churches.” “Street Youth Ministry can only work because there’s the support of an ecumenical religious community.” “You guys are not hate-filled bigots, and I’m glad.”

Challenges that need to be addressed in the University District

SERVICE PROVIDERS

- (5) Better / less shabby / larger / less expensive / better equipped space for agencies, better suited to their functions
- Need building maintenance staff, so agency staff isn’t always doing repairs
- (5) More / better hygiene facilities. At ROOTS, of 25 guests per night, there’s time and space for only 7 showers per night
- Storage lockers where homeless clients can store their belongings for the day
- Mail service for clients
- (3) Better staff pay/benefits/assistance. Staff support (including more staff) to avoid burnout – counseling, space for staff to meet and debrief
- The Alliance is great for coordinating, but we need UDSPA-driven training beyond Homelessness 101. Hard to get a feel for the job until you actually do it.
- (7) More volunteers at the agencies / more long-term volunteers for stability, better service; esp. important when funding for paid staff is low
- (1) PR for agencies and what they do, improved community relations, community sense of them & their work
- Better & more advocacy for youth issues

SHELTER & TRANSPORTATION

- (2) Affordable housing (working families; low income)
- Permanent supportive housing
- (3) Overnight shelter space – ROOTS had to turn 1000 guests away last year. Some nights they have to turn 7 away. TeenFeed sees 50-60 kids each night, but ROOTS has 25 beds, and some kids are under 18 and not allowed to stay at ROOTS.
- (3) Improved transportation to/from U District, especially with increase in fuel costs



SERVICES & PROGRAMS

- Need a continuum of care for the homeless: Shelter, drop in centers, medical/dental care, transitional housing—all readily available. E.g., coordinate Food Bank with other services for its client population, of which 15-20% are homeless and the rest have no or inadequate jobs and skills.
- (2) Variety of service options to try to reach every individual (i.e., one approach does not work for everyone.)
- (4) More chemical/alcohol dependency assistance/counseling programs
- (4) More mental health services
- Noon feeding programs daily
- Dental services / screening
- More case management services for youth
- English as a Second Language instruction
- More street outreach; go where the kids are and help them
- (6) More vocational training for clients
- Supported employment in the neighborhood for youth, a “working zone for youth.” Helping keep neighborhood clean can be a youth job.
- (2) Gallery/studio space for kids’ art in a street level very public space, and a separate, more functional and roomy studio
- (3) Space for clients to go chill out after events (TeenFeed, etc.). Stuff for youth to do: a gym, outdoor basketball court, garden to plant in, “a storefront living room on the Ave”
- (2) Drop-in / low-cost day care for children of low income and/or homeless
- Services for 25 and older, esp. men; single adults

THE COMMUNITY WE SHARE

- (2) Need improved connections in the community. Service agencies have good relationships with host churches & some business owners, but not many of the residents. Strengthening those relationships would be good for expanding volunteer pool and other purposes.
- Coordination – a coalition of service agencies and other stakeholders that chooses a limited and targeted set of priorities, aware that others are taking care of others to lessen duplication.
- No cohesiveness in U District diversity, people are here for different reasons (which is a strength), but no one is working to cultivate a sense of community. There are pockets (UDSPA, Ecumenical Parish, Chamber of Commerce).
- How about a U District Community Group – an access point for being together, partly but not all to solve problems as they come up. Organized not around a response of meeting to deal with Issue X (a crisis - Greek Row or street violence out of control, or a possibility - somebody wants a P Patch). A forum that’s not always reactive.
- U District has lots of engaged people passionate about lots of different things, but they don’t meet regularly – business owners, service providers, and faith communities. Create opportunities for people to work together – group A has a project, group B has a space to loan them for it. Building a sense of relationship that doesn’t come solely out of a sense of crisis. Come together in celebration of what’s going on.
- Neighborhood sense of where the community is trying to head. Big changes: new buildings, UW at the Safeco Tower. Concerned with development people looking strictly at bottom-line questions. Where is collective sense of purpose and vision?
- Additional cultural activities beyond what the UW offers.



45th Street Clinic (Homeless Youth Clinic)

Interview with Charlotte Tucker, MSW, Clinic Manager



The Homeless Youth Clinic is housed in the 45th Street Clinic, a clinic in the NeighborCare Health network. It is located at 1629 North 45th. The clinic is operated on a drop-in basis, and is open Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 6 to 9 pm. It provides free health care to homeless and ‘near homeless’ youth ages 12 to 23. Services provided include medical (naturopathic and traditional), dental, acupuncture, and pharmacy. Though recent cuts have had to be made, the clinic also offers some mental health counseling and drug/alcohol addiction counseling. They have ‘outreach staff’ to provide education/vocational and other referrals. They also mentor some of their successful clients to be ‘peer outreach counselors’ in order to reach more youth.

The clinic can use volunteers in two main areas: medical personnel (physicians, physician assistants, ARNP, acupuncturists) and clerical personnel to help at the front desk or with data input with their electronic medical record. She also said the clinic is open to volunteers with other gifts to share. For example, they now offer yoga and meditation classes staffed by volunteer instructors.

The ‘good’ that Charlotte sees in the human service providers in the U District is the collaboration through the UDSPA meetings of staff and executive directors of the organizations. (The two groups meet in separate meetings.) She believes there is good sharing of information and resources so that individual organizations can help ‘fill in the gaps’ for their clients. She thought it would be even better if such meetings occurred at a city and/or county-wide level in order to better coordinate services for youth.

Charlotte’s ideal would be a continuum of care for the homeless: Shelter, drop in centers, medical/dental care, transitional housing – all readily available. She believes that it is important to have a variety of service options to try to reach each individual (i.e., one approach does not work for everyone.) She would prefer even more options in the U District, but she is realistic about funding.

Another ideal would be better support for human services staff. Charlotte believes that all too often human services staffers are not paid well and that service agencies do not/cannot provide benefits such as mental health counseling, support groups or other services that would help keep staff ‘healthy’ and avoid burn out. When asked what the churches could do to help, she suggested ‘free’ space for staff to meet in support groups. (She also offered that perhaps the service organizations could ‘barter’ for space, e.g. provide clean up in exchange for the space.)

Another staff member at the clinic had been the medical director at a daycare center for homeless women and children. She commented that there is a real need for regular and ‘drop-in’ day care services for low income and homeless populations.

Charlotte commented that she is pleased that we are conducting these interviews, and impressed that we are attempting to gather this information.



Elizabeth Gregory Home (EGH)

Interview with Kimberly Jackson, Executive Director, and Jessica Silye, Case Manager



Elizabeth Gregory Home has two complementary programs:

- An 11-bed transitional housing program for women, located in the Royal Manor apartments across the street from University Lutheran Church at 16th Avenue NE and NE 50th Street.
- A drop-in day center located in the lower level of University Lutheran Church, available to EGH residents and other homeless women visitors.

EGH was conceived by and received overwhelming support from the congregation at University Lutheran Church. It was incorporated in April 2001. The first staffers were hired in the summer of 2006. The transitional housing program opened with individual housing for nine residents on October 2, 2006, after a community open house in August of that year. EGH made tenant improvements to the University Lutheran space and opened the drop-in center in October 2007. With the move of staff offices to the drop in center, EGH office space at Royal Manor was converted to housing for two more women.

The drop-in center is used by the residents of the EGH transitional housing program and by other homeless women who come as visitors. The drop-in center can serve up to 21 women daily. The addition of a nightly WHEEL women's shelter at ULC in May 2009 has resulted in an increase in usage at the drop-in center. Women have access to a computer lab, laundry facilities, and case management. Breakfast and lunch are served daily, and service learner volunteers from UW prepare hot meals on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It is expected that the drop in center will become the primary source for EGH transitional housing referrals. The program is highly dependent on volunteers.

The transitional housing residents meet after the Tuesday meal for Open Floor Meetings (to air differences), and/or to participate in Life Skills classes. A savings program is offered to help women save toward apartment applications, rental deposits for permanent housing, or other transitional expenses. Twice a month sessions are held with a licensed psychologist from University Lutheran.

The EGH board currently has 10 members, most of whom are current members of University Lutheran Church. They are working on board development; the board can have as many as 13 members. EGH's annual budget for 2008 was \$360,000. Articles in local newspapers and a news story on Fox News have helped garner support. Current funding is from individual donors, fund raising events, private grants and churches.

EGH staffers find the neighborhood energizing with the mix of students, academia, families, and service providers. Although the neighborhood does a good job of working with youth and young adults, there is little in the way of services for those 25 and older, especially men. Kimberley sees a need for more overnight shelter beds, permanent supportive housing, expanded services for single adults, substance abuse and chemical dependency programs, mental health services, and a WorkSource location in or near the University District.



Peoples Harm Reduction Alliance (PHRA)

Interview with Shilo Murphy, Executive Director

PHRA is the grassroots organization that operates the University District Needle Exchange Program from rented space at University Temple United Methodist Church (UTUMC). Accessed from the alley between the church and the University Station Post Office, it provides intravenous drug users of all ages with new sterile syringes, alcohol wipes and other sterile supplies. They distribute a host of pamphlets and other educational materials on how to stay clean and safe. They also provide vein care and wound care, and free Hepatitis C testing on the first Thursday of every month. The Needle Exchange operates 7 days each week, from 5-7 PM Monday-Thursday, and from 1-5 PM Friday-Sunday. On average, they serve 400-500 individuals each month, about 1/3 of them street youth, about 1/3 veterans of foreign wars, and about 1/3 working class folks.

Working out of a rented 6' by 10' closet space, the University District Needle Exchange is the second largest needle exchange program in the United States, and the largest working out of a single location. In 2008, they distributed more than 1.89 million syringes! The only larger program is a Chicago program that operates out of 10 locations. King County Public Health operates 4 other needle exchanges elsewhere in the County, none of which are 7 day per week programs. The University District Needle Exchange is larger than all of the King County facilities combined.

PHRA is a peer-run organization, meaning its bylaws require that all staff and volunteers, including board members, are active or former intravenous drug users. The organization has a long waiting list of volunteers, who are motivated to provide non-judgmental help, and who have few opportunities to help at other service agencies. Executive Director Shilo Murphy has been at the University District Needle Exchange for 15 years.

Hepatitis C has been a raging pandemic for many years. While 82-92 percent of those served by the Needle Exchange test positive for Hepatitis C infections, only 2-4 percent have HIV infections (the lowest in the United States) thanks to the needle exchange.

PHRA operates with an annual budget of only \$55,000, which pays for staff, rent, and wound care services. In 2008, the organization received nearly \$250,000 in donated supplies. The operating budget is primarily funded by individual donations.

Officially, there is a federal ban on needle exchange programs, a politically loaded situation that is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. States' rights trump federal law, however, and Washington State permits needle exchange programs in counties (like King County) that condone them.

PHRA will soon gain the use of an office space at UTUMC for the first time, enabling expansion of their wound care advice program, including assistance from two emergency medical technicians (EMTs). They also intend to use the space to begin scheduling group discussion/counseling sessions, working to reduce IV drug use.



Planned Parenthood

Interview with Kristen Glundberg-Prosser, Public Affairs Director

**PLANNED
PARENTHOOD**

Planned Parenthood is an essential community provider of health care that clients feel they can trust. People count on PP for unbiased, nonjudgmental, no-strings professional care for their sexual health, and go elsewhere for other health needs.

Planned Parenthood has two U District health centers. The one on Roosevelt Way NE near NE 50th offers birth control, STD testing, and a few other services. A full-service center is on 8th NE near NE 45th, offering family planning, cancer screening, STI testing and treatment, vasectomies, medical abortions (via pill, not surgery), HIV testing and counseling, blood pressure checks, and referrals for many different needs, including mental health services, and sexual and gender identity issues.

In 2008, the two offices had a total of 9761 visits, with more than 2/3 of this number using the full-service center. By far the great majority of clients are in their twenties – post-college and lacking health insurance because they are no longer covered by their families, but many not yet employed with sufficient health care benefits on the job. Fewer than 3% were of college age – probably because UW Hall Health Center and family physicians back home take care of younger potential clients' health needs.

The biggest challenge facing Planned Parenthood besides currently diminishing funding due to the recession is complying with a myriad of federal restrictions on care that they can provide for free. Often “clinicians turn into mini-claims processors,” having to analyze what combinations of funding can be used for Condition X. They tell clients, “We can cover this part. Can you pay for that part?” It’s difficult to patch together funding of different kinds that will let PP fully serve the needs of people who consult them.

For example, government rules restrict federal funding of PP services strictly to pregnancy-related conditions. The result is that PP can’t take a comprehensive approach to sexually transmitted infections (even though many are asymptomatic and, untreated, can lead to infertility). One result is a current epidemic of Chlamydia and gonorrhea – a 20-24% rise in such infections this year.

Planned Parenthood has no ongoing relationships with other U District service providers, although they get referrals from some.



ROOTS Young Adult Shelter

Interview with Matt Fox, Program Director



ROOTS (“Rising Out of the Shadows”) is Seattle’s only shelter program specifically addressing the needs of homeless young adults. ROOTS serves young people 18-25 years old seven nights a week, and provides critical services to street-involved, homeless, and other low-income persons. Its clients are too old to access youth shelters but often feel unwelcome or threatened in programs serving mostly older single adults.

The ROOTS program includes:

- Safe emergency overnight shelter to street-involved young adults, ages 18-25
- Clean bedding and sheets
- Snacks, dinner, and hot breakfast
- Opportunities for personal hygiene (including laundry, showers)
- On-site case management, referral to other services
- Visits by healthcare providers
- Supportive, nurturing relationships between staff, volunteers, and guests

In addition, ROOTS hosts Friday Feast. Every Friday night at 6pm a restaurant-quality meal is served to people of all ages.

What would improve the work of ROOTS?

- A space more specifically designed to be a shelter
- A less shabby space that doesn’t show dirt so much, easier to clean, heat, and ventilate
- A larger space, to serve 5 more sleepers per night. They had to turn 1000 guests away last year. Some nights they have to turn 7 away.
- Actual bunks instead of mats on the floor
- Storage lockers for guests, where they could store their belongings for the day
- A designated address for receiving guest mail
- Kitchen improvements
- More bathroom space
- A bigger laundry room
- More volunteers in summer, when UW students and faculty are gone

What would improve the delivery of needed human services in the U District?

- Co-location of services
 - Proximity of a full range of services will especially help youth recently arrived in the District
 - Economic efficiencies would be achieved through shared common space (though there would be scheduling issues)
- More vocational training for clients/guests
- Services for single mothers and kids in the U District
- More public rest rooms and hygiene centers in the District. Even guests at ROOTS don’t always get a chance to shower. ROOTS hosts 25 guests/night, but they’re admitted at 9:00 with lights-out at 10:30, so there’s time for only 7 people to have showers.



Sanctuary Art Center (SAC)

Interview with Troy Carter, Executive Director

SANCTUARY The Sanctuary Art Center is a nonprofit art studio serving homeless youth and young adults ages 13-25. The center operates five days a week and offers programs in the visual arts, theatre and music. Professional and amateur artists from the local community instruct programs. The focus is on creating meaningful relationships with young people as they are guided through the art making process. Programs provide an outlet for creative expression for participating youth, most of whom have experienced significant mental and/or physical trauma in their lives. Established in 1999, the program is designed to connect with disenfranchised youth in a positive and meaningful way. During its 10-year history, SAC has continued to grow. In 2008, 397 youth made 3,235 visits to SAC. Also in 2008, the program was expanded to include programs in youth employment, with the opening of a new silkscreen studio.

Sanctuary Art Center is located at University Lutheran Church. The main studio space, on the church's second floor level, is roomy and well equipped, with 2 kilns for firing ceramic work, equipment and work areas for a variety of visual media. A second studio space on the same level is equipped with silkscreen printing equipment, where original art produced by young SAC artists is transferred to t-shirts and other textile products. Participants in the silkscreen studio program learn marketing, production and management skills as they produce fundraising merchandise for SAC and other nonprofit organizations.

Troy thinks there could be several benefits to collocating youth services at a central location, including simplified tracking and access to youth in need, and making it easier for homeless and at-risk youth to access services.

There is a feeling that it might be better not to be branded as services that are associated with a particular religion (Christianity and how it is perceived by their young clients). This might be solved by location in a facility where service agencies have a street presence and identity apart from the faith communities that host them.

In the future, Troy would like SAC to have a street-level storefront space in a more central location in the U. District, to have a display gallery with art for sale, and some studio space as well. The need for studio space is probably greater than what a storefront location would provide, however, so the future may instead consist of a gallery/studio in a very public street-level space, and a second, more functional and roomy studio elsewhere.



Seattle Education Access (SEA)

Interview with Dr. Polly Trout, Executive Director, and Anthon Smith, Program Director



The offices of Seattle Education Access are located at 6920 Roosevelt Way NE. The Student Resource Center is at 1406 NE 50th St., #202.

The mission of SEA is to provide higher education advocacy and opportunity to people struggling to overcome poverty and adversity.

Goals

- To **connect** non-traditional students with the information and financial resources to help them achieve their dreams of a college education.
- To provide **financial support** that helps low-income youth access higher education and meet their housing and basic survival needs while in school.
- To provide the **personal attention**, mentoring, technical assistance, and moral support that marginalized youth need to navigate the complexities of higher education and financial aid.
- To empower young people living in poverty to develop their voices and succeed in the higher academic arena.

Through its **College Success Program**, SEA helps youth and young adults transition successfully to community colleges by combining financial support with social support. SEA provides non-traditional scholarships, tutoring, career counseling, computers, academic advising, books, case management and advocacy.

Through **Youth Outreach** projects, SEA partners with other local nonprofits that provide basic services to homeless youth, in order to increase the range of service learning opportunities that they are able to provide their clients. Past projects include refurbishing a computer lab at a local group home, cooking for TeenFeed, providing books for shelters and school programs that serve homeless youth, providing book seminars and art lessons for homeless youth at partner nonprofits.

Education Advocacy Training: SEA staff provides free consultation to other grassroots organizations, teaching them how to adapt the College Success Program to their own unique constituencies. Training workshops and consultation are offered to service providers that serve low income and marginalized people, teaching them how to provide higher education advocacy for their clients.

Research has shown that the most effective college access programs share the following elements:

- Providing a key person who monitors the students over a long period of time
- Providing high-quality instruction and access to the most challenging courses
- Making long-term investments rather than short-term interventions
- Incorporating culturally sensitive practices
- Providing a supportive peer group
- Providing financial assistance and incentives

Students need:

- Affordable housing in the U District
- Affordable transportation to the U District (especially with rising cost of fuel)
- Student scholarships



Seattle Youth Garden Works

Interview with Janice Dilworth, Director



Seattle Youth Garden Works is a job skills and training program that has been operating as a program of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, but will be leaving the Church Council umbrella at the end of 2009. The program was founded in 1995 as a way to provide jobs and training for homeless youth in the U District. 49 youth participated in 2008. SYGW provides job-training programs for youth age 14-22, generally falling into one or more of the following three categories:

- Low-income
- Dropped-out (or at risk of dropping out) of school
- Immigrants

SYGW operates 12-week training programs, which provide minimum wage employment. Crewmembers learn valuable and marketable job skills in a supportive work setting. They learn how to plant, tend, and harvest organic vegetables, herbs, and flowers from seed for market, as well as basic job skills such as cashiering, customer service, sales tracking and inventory, entrepreneurship and marketing skills, reliability, and how to be an effective employee. In addition, crewmembers go on field trips, learn about food security issues, perform community service projects, and learn about nutrition by cooking meals using the produce they grow. They sell produce at area farmers markets, including the University District Farmers Market.

A pre-employment program teaches “soft skills” such as conducting a job search, resume building and interview skills, proper interview wardrobe and behavior. This work-readiness program includes on-line resume skills, and assistance in setting up an email account to aid in job search.

The Growing Roots AmeriCorps Team is a youth work exchange program operated by SYGW. This native plant propagation program conducts a curriculum based around distinguishing native and invasive species using a 1/4-acre parcel at the UW Horticulture Center near the U District.

A spring edible plant sale raises some income to support the program, but over 96 percent of SYGW’s \$435,000 annual budget comes from grants and charitable donations.

A great deal of the organization’s programming is based out of Marra Farm at Marra Desimone Park in Seattle’s South Park neighborhood, where SYGW farms about one acre. Working with Lettuce Link (a food and gardening program that creates access to fresh organic produce and gardening information) and with P-Patch growers, SYGW provides food for area food banks.

SYGW has 4 full-time staff, and also relies heavily on volunteers from the community. Four volunteers working with SYGW are part of a 12-member AmeriCorps team working in Seattle. VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) also provides a volunteer, and other volunteers come from the general community.

SYGW presently operates out of offices at the 2100 Building, a facility in SE Seattle that is currently home to 13 nonprofit organizations that provide programs and services to children and youth.



SHARE/WHEEL Shelters

SHARE is Seattle Housing and Resource Effort, a co-ed shelter program. WHEEL is the Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League, and is women-only. The two are partner organizations of homeless and formerly homeless men and women. Programs are self-managed, run by the homeless members themselves.

SHARE operates two shelters in the University District. Christ Episcopal Church hosts 25-30 men and women 7 nights each week in its Undercroft. University Friends Meeting also hosts a group of men and women at its facility.

WHEEL is now operating a new shelter for homeless women at University Lutheran Church. The University Lutheran Women's Shelter opened on May 13, 2009 with an initial population of 10 women, and will increase in capacity as the operation settles into a routine. In addition to overnight accommodations, guests are able to take advantage of the resources of the Elizabeth Gregory Home Day Center on site, where they have access to laundry facilities, kitchen and dining facilities, computer and Internet resources, and mail services. They can meet with case managers for referrals, support and advocacy, and for support in finding housing and employment.

Guests at SHARE/WHEEL shelters arrive in the evening and depart early the next morning. They are given bus passes and are expected to leave the area when not sleeping at the facility, rather than hanging around the neighborhood. Security patrols are conducted and organized by the shelter residents to maintain security for those at the shelter as well as the surrounding community.

SHARE/WHEEL operate 14 emergency shelters and 2 tent cities in the Seattle area, most of which are hosted by churches.



Street Youth Ministries (SYM)

Interview with Shelly Smith, Executive Director



Street Youth Ministry, a program of University Presbyterian Church, was established in 1993, the only agency for U District street youth that is both located in a church and committed to sharing a faith-based Christian message. Spiritual healing and reconciliation are part of SYM's work. Shelly says "this can at times generate a certain kind of tension between SYM and partner agencies in the UDSP Alliance, some of whom think all Christians espouse fundamentalist beliefs and aggressive evangelism as part of their mission." Shelly says SYM strives to do truly Christian work "in a community that doesn't really understand a Christian's calling."

SYM's mission is to provide street-involved youth age 13 – 22 in Seattle's University District with life skills, resources, and relationships that bring hope and healing to their lives and the community. The agency works to educate the public about the causes of homelessness and the needs of homeless youth. They work to meet basic needs (food, clothing, hygiene items, showers, laundry, medical and first aid items), life skills development (activities and classes to promote and assist youth in developing social and behavioral skills), relational ministries (case management, mentoring, discussion groups and outreach), information and resources, transportation (youth can earn Metro, Greyhound, and Amtrak tickets for appropriate travel), and advocacy (determining needs, making referrals, helping youth access necessary services). Volunteers do most of SYM's work. The agency serves more than 650 youth each year.

As an active participant in UDSPA, Shelly says that the paramount needs in the U District for improved services to street and at-risk youth – besides more funding, of course – are widely agreed to be these three:

- More chemical/alcohol dependency counseling for youth
- More mental health counseling for youth
- More case management services for youth

UDSPA has discussed a hypothetical model of occupying a single location to house all member organizations. Everyone agrees on the advantages: Reduced costs through obtaining supplies in common, using common equipment, combined volunteer training, a District-wide newsletter that would be cheaper as well as better than separate agency publications, better coordination of services, etc. The single greatest drawback ("fear") among agency directors is their concern that each organization would lose its individuality and distinctive identity.



Tallmadge Hamilton House

Interview with Barbara Clarke, Executive Director, and Marilyn Michael, Program Director

Tallmadge Hamilton House was the first senior center in the Pacific Northwest, possibly the first west of the Mississippi. It operated continuously in Seattle's University District until the program was terminated in 2008. THH operated during the hours of 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM, Mondays through Fridays. The annual operating budget was about \$150,000. Significant funding support came from United Way of King County, which began supporting THH in the 1960s. The program was housed rent-free in a facility at 5225 – 15th Avenue NE, that was owned by the University Kiwanis Club. The Kiwanis Club sold the building in 2008.

Activities were diverse and included the following:

- Lunches
- Financial counseling, legal counseling, tax assistance
- Counseling with a social worker
- Foot care
- Affordable haircuts
- Book clubs, writing classes
- Classes on aging
- A hearing loss group
- Exercise classes
- Acupressure
- Dancing and singing
- Yoga and Tai-Chi programs
- Games, including pinochle & poker
- Horserace handicapping (in a program that included high school students)

The mean age of members was 80.5 years. Although THH had earlier averaged about 150 visitors per day, attendance averaged about 20 as it was winding down. The maximum was as high as 300-350 per day. Typically, more women than men were served, and more singles than couples.

THH ended because of funding challenges brought about by a tumultuous history involving Senior Services of King County. In the 1990s, Senior Services and THH went through an on-again, off-again partnership that ultimately led to THH losing its United Way funding support, which shifted to Senior Services. THH was unsuccessful in replacing those funds with other sources.

Senior centers empower seniors in our community. They offer support to maintain their health and wellbeing, foster peer interaction, prevent isolation, reinforce independence, and enrich their daily lives. Tallmadge Hamilton House had offered programs ranging from how-to and self-improvement classes to discussion and support groups, arts and crafts, computer technology, social services and counseling as well as weekday lunches throughout the year. Other Seattle senior center programs include fitness classes, dancing, driving lessons, senior rights assistance, tax assistance, pet food distribution, and transportation services. Such programs are essential to the goal of building a healthy community in a time of increasing personal isolation.



UTUMC Thrift Store

Interview with Betty Blakney, Marian Karpoff, Jean Poole and Dorothy Trondsen

The Thrift Store was started in May of 2000, and continues to operate as a program of University Temple United Methodist Church (UTUMC). It operates in a portion of U. Temple's Crowther Hall in space occupied by the ROOTS young adult shelter (ROOTS makes the space available to the store for free). The store is open for business on Friday afternoons from 2-5 PM. It is staffed and operated entirely by volunteers. Approximately 120-150 people come to shop each time the Thrift Store is open. Merchandise includes clothing, books, small furnishings and house wares. After a typical Friday afternoon, all of the merchandise and displays are crowded into a corner of Crowther Hall to make more room for the ROOTS shelter. The next Friday, everything has to be moved back out by volunteers and set up for another afternoon of business. The store presently has a roster of 46 volunteers, 26 of whom are members of UTUMC, 2 from other churches, and the rest from the community. Several of the volunteers are homeless persons. The store takes in \$13-14,000 each year, about \$10,000 from sales, the rest from charitable donations. Net revenue is used by UTUMC to support other outreach programs.

The store's broad range of customers includes homeless persons of all ages, UW students, the working poor and others. In addition to providing very low-cost clothing and goods for those in need, the Thrift Store has expanded its Friday offerings to include a free lunch from 11:30-1:00 PM, showers from Noon-3:00 PM, free haircuts and foot care. New underwear and socks are purchased and given out to anyone using the showers. Food for the lunch program comes from Northwest Harvest, as well as donations from Top Pot Donuts and others. In addition to merchandise donated by individuals, the University Bookstore donates books, Eckstein School donates clothing and items from their lost and found, and overages come from other businesses and nonprofits.

Dignity and compassion are in evidence in everything the folks at the thrift store do. One volunteer cleans and sanitizes each shower after each use. Another provides expert haircuts. Incoming merchandise is carefully sorted and inspected. One volunteer from Plymouth Congregational Church spends many hours ironing donated clothing.

The women who founded and continue to operate the Thrift Store all have nursing backgrounds, and are eager to see services continue to expand to include much-needed health care services to the poor, homeless, and elderly. A parish nurse, a foot clinic, health referrals and follow-up are important components of that vision. They are eager to see the Thrift Store continue as part of a broader range of services in a single convenient location, but they are all in their late 70s and need to begin "passing the baton." The Thrift Store coordinates with and makes referrals to other service agencies in the neighborhood, particularly the University Churches Emergency Fund.

One of the store's greatest challenges is the need to constantly move everything in and out of display mode. A dedicated space where the store could remain set up and operate more frequently would be a huge improvement. It would also be great if there were fitting rooms, so customers didn't have to tie-up rest rooms for trying on the merchandise. People and trucks for deliveries are needed as well.

As our "disposable" culture comes to realize that we need to be less wasteful and more sustainable, services like the Thrift Store are a critical resource in enabling those with more than they need to pass useful things to those who have little.



University Churches Emergency Fund

Interview with Jo Gustafson, Director



UCEF was created in 1986 to provide information, referral and financial assistance to people in need residing in NE Seattle, and to the homeless. According to Executive Director Jo Gustafson, “We’re busier than we’ve ever been.” In response to the rising costs of rent, move-ins, and utilities the scope of UCEF giving has recently narrowed to focus on protecting people with housing from being evicted, and helping to cover move-in expenses for those en route to new housing. Tighter restrictions have improved stewardship of available funds and permitted stopgap gifts to increase from \$50-\$75 to \$100 per year per individual or family. But even with donations from individuals, foundations, and 21 churches, levels of giving have diminished, and income isn’t keeping pace with outgo.

UCEF assistance with paying rent or utility costs is based on individual need and verified by current bills or copies of lease agreements. Funds are paid directly to the landlord or service provider. Also provided on an as-needed basis are emergency food, bus tickets, and some toiletries. Funds are never given directly to clients.

Staff and volunteers talk individually with clients to determine their needs, help solve their problems, and refer them to other services if necessary. At UCEF assistance is personal and deeply respectful.

UCEF is open from 10:30AM – 12:30PM Tuesday through Friday. It is located at University Congregational United Church of Christ, with its own entrance directly off of 45th Street.



University District Food Bank

Interview with Joe Gruber, Executive Director



The University District Food Bank is located in a small tenant space at University Christian Church. It has 3.5 fulltime employees. Service activities are staffed almost exclusively by volunteers. The food bank currently occupies about 1600 square feet of space that does not efficiently serve their operation.

The food bank “would move tomorrow” if the right facility became available. The food bank has worked to define its specific needs for space and facilities. Key needs include:

- Ability to handle pallet loads instead of case loads
- A loading dock for direct unloading, with storage and distribution space on the same level
- Refrigerated storage space
- Accessibility for disabled persons
- A sheltered waiting area (customers currently line up outdoors, along 50th Street)

Ideally, there could also be space for service add-ons such as contact with job counselor, nutritionist, and community college representatives. Adjacent offices would also be necessary. Meeting space could be shared if conveniently available. The Food Bank also holds an annual auction, which it wants to keep in the U District. This should be in a nice space that can seat about 250 people for dinner.

Joe’s vision is for the Food Bank to connect with other services for its client population, of which 15-20% are homeless and the rest have no or inadequate jobs and skills. He would like to see his population connect with job training programs, and ESL programs through either community college or public school outreach. He thinks nutrition education, cooking demonstrations (perhaps by SNAC) and low cost day care would be valuable adjuncts.

There would be advantages to consolidating Food Bank, Teen Feed and other meal programs so that common storage space could be used efficiently. He hopes that Saturday and Sunday noon feeding programs can be expanded to noon feeding programs 7 days per week.

Joe believes the U District does a pretty good job with homeless youth. His vision for ways to make the University District better for all of its various populations include more services such as a low income medical services, dental services or screening, and a hygiene center. He believes provision should be made for affordable (working class) housing as well as low-income housing. He suggests a need for additional cultural activities beyond what the UW offers. Access to good public transportation is also critical.



University District Service Providers Alliance (UDSPA)

Interview with Laura Pritchard, Executive Director



The University District Service Providers Alliance (UDSPA) is a coalition of nonprofit service agencies working together to create a comprehensive continuum of services for homeless and street-involved youth and young adults. The UDSPA helps member agencies share resources and work together efficiently while pursuing the shared mission of offering a full spectrum of compassionate, quality care and support. Ten service providers are members of the Alliance (see table, page 5).

(The following interview with Laura Pritchard was conducted in 2008, just prior to her departure from the UDSPA Executive Director position, which has since remained vacant. The UDSPA board continues to exist, but presently operates at a minimal level.)

The executive directors of UDSPA member organizations gather regularly for joint discussions (*although less frequently now than they did when UDSPA was staffed*). Provider program managers meet monthly to coordinate services and collaborate with each other when possible.

Laura says that UDSPA has many needs, including volunteers, office equipment, and more paid staff. There isn't enough peer support, which leads to a high burnout rate. The UDSPA board needs to be developed, and there need to be creative ways to engage the community around that effort, using it not just to enlarge the board but also to build connections with the community. Support from U District stakeholders would be especially appreciated when service providers are writing grant proposals. ("Dear X, Yes, there's value to supporting UDSPA in our neighborhood...").

Advocacy is a critical need. The Partnership for Youth was a reliable partner in advocacy, operating as an extension of the UW School of Social Work, and housed in a UW office. PFY was closed down for lack of funding, and UDSPA has been trying to partner with the Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness, Mockingbird, and others, with mixed results. The key to advocacy is setting priorities, to avoid duplication of effort with other coalitions.

Laura stated that the U District has several strengths, including its great faith communities and nonprofits, its diverse (but often transient) population, and the high level of vitality and activity throughout the neighborhood.

The U District also has many needs. For many service providers, a shared location would make sense, but it's not right for everybody. The former need a central location, enough office space, meeting rooms, and a training room. Any collocation effort must involve clients in the process; treat them as stakeholders, and as neighbors. Establish and set expectations together about how the space is going to be used. Build a sense of a community among stakeholders. Hygiene facilities are badly needed, as is a central place for food program(s), with storage for supplies and leftovers. A deeper pool of volunteers is also needed. (When U District shelters merged into ROOTS at UTUMC, most church volunteers were lost because congregations lost a concrete sense of connection once the shelter nights were no longer located in their buildings.)

Laura observed that there is strength in U District diversity, but no cohesiveness. No one is cultivating a sense of community. There are pockets (UDSPA, the Ecumenical Parish, the Chamber of Commerce, etc.), the U District has lots of engaged people passionate about lots of different things, but they don't share a sense of community except when they have a shared sense of crisis. We need to come together in celebration of what's going on, and who we are together.



University District Youth Center (UDYC)

Interview with Cameron Alford, Volunteer Coordinator



UDYC is located in the “Gold House,” owned by University Congregation United Church of Christ. UDYC programs are operated by Catholic Community Services, and include case management and employment counseling offered to youth-in-

transition and homeless youth. Laundry facilities, food, housing referrals, and a shower are all available to UDYC clients. UDYC has a computer lab and Internet connectivity, allowing some on-line courses so students can work at home, the library or at school.

The Interagency Academy, a program of Seattle Public Schools, operates at UDYC. It offers high school completion and GED preparation classes. Students are encouraged to be involved in the community to earn credit and engage in service learning. These opportunities are developed based on student interest.

University District strengths:

- Socioeconomic and ethnic diversity
- Good, reasonably priced food – very important
- Nice neighborhood feel of “the Ave.” Bulldog News, etc.

UDYC needs

- More staff and long-term “regular” volunteers. Staff retention should be longer than a year. Big burnout factor. Job is taxing mentally, emotionally, and pay, benefits are low. Few breaks during the day.
- Overwhelming needs of youth. You have to bring a lot to the job, be self-starting and self-motivating. More structure.
- The UDSPA is great for coordinating. Build a volunteer “bank” to keep a consistent volunteer staff at each agency.
- Space – although smallness is cozy, it’s an old stressed house.
- Maintenance staff so staff isn’t always doing repairs
- UDSPA-driven training beyond Homelessness 101. Booklet compilation of past staff experiences would be valuable. Hard to get a feel for the job until you actually do it.

Program needs:

- A gym, outdoor basketball court, garden to work in
- Consolidation of services so kids don’t have to move about to access them. Their life is so spread out. Pack up and go here, wait... Pack up and go there, wait ...
- Should look at the Orion Center for example of comprehensive services



University Family YMCA

Interview with Christine Stoffels, Executive Director



Christine conducted a tour of the facility, and we talked about the future of the branch and the ways the YMCA serves disadvantaged populations in the University District.

The current facility occupies about 15,000 square feet on two levels. Facilities include:

- The Pocock Room, a multipurpose room with some athletic equipment
- The Kid's Corner, which provides drop-in service for parents using the facilities, and childcare
- A cardio room, with a full range of strength and weight-training equipment
- The Safeco Group Fitness Room, which provides room for exercise classes, and is also used for children's programming and Sunday youth programs
- The Gates Youth Development Center, which provides room for teen programming, and is also used as a meeting room for community groups
- Support facilities including locker rooms, a coed sauna, offices, etc.

Service Activities

The YMCA has served a Saturday evening meal for homeless youth for the past 8-9 years. This complements the TeenFeed program in the neighborhood churches, which operates Sundays – Thursdays, and the Friday Feast at ROOTS. For the Saturday evening meal, food is prepared off-site by volunteers (individuals and groups/organizations) and then brought to the Y to be served in the Pocock Room. The YMCA is closed on Saturday evenings, so the meal does not conflict with any other programming. Showers and other hygiene services are also made available on Saturday evenings, and donated clothing is distributed.

On Sunday afternoons, the YMCA operates a drop-in center, with a light meal. Homeless youth are provided a place to hang out, socialize, play games and access the Internet.

Replacement Facility

The University Family YMCA serves a large geographic area within Seattle extending from the Montlake Cut on the south to Shoreline on the north, from Ballard to Sandpoint. Hence, the current location is not necessarily central to the branch's served area, and it is not a forgone conclusion that the best location for the University Family YMCA is in the University District. The YMCA needs to examine this question in detail.

The YMCA has a goal of replacing its current facility with a +/- 50,000 square foot facility. The site of the existing branch is not large enough to accommodate such a facility. The wish list for the new facility would include large space demands, such as a swimming pool and a basketball court.



University Neighborhood Service Center (City of Seattle)

Interview with Karen Ko, Neighborhood District Coordinator



Seattle's Neighborhood Service Centers are an important resource for connecting citizens to City services. Information is available on neighborhood events and services, the community and neighborhood, City utilities, codes and ordinances, and various assistance programs. Applications are available for summer youth employment, business licenses, voter registration, and many other programs. The University Neighborhood Service Center is located at 4534 University Way NE.

Karen Ko is the University Neighborhood District Coordinator. She sees the eclectic, “non-sterile” character of the U District as a great strength. She appreciates the mix of people from students to homeless youth to kids in childcare – “all can call ‘the Ave’ home.”

Karen sees a tremendous need for youth employment programs. She is also interested in keeping the District clean and welcome, especially for pedestrians. Such goals could be combined!

She would like to see a “working zone” for youth – supporting employment. Before Partnership for Youth lost its funding, youth were hired for a monthly alley cleanup – 6 kids per month, paid \$25 for 2 hours, plus lunch. “For \$210 a month total, youth made a huge difference in the look and feel of the district.” This also gave her and other adults a great way to connect with kids, and the kids a good way to connect with businesses. “We went door to door each time to tell them ‘Kids care! The Ave is more to them than just a place to hang out.’” The City provided bags and pickers, Chamber of Commerce loaned us wagons, and Seattle Public Utilities picked up the bags and helped fund the cleanups. Additional funding sources were needed for ongoing employment.

Karen says that Randy Thomas of University Park Neighborhood Alliance used to go to landlords in the area bounded by 50th, Ravenna, 16th and 21st asking for compensation for youth to trim and clean up their yards under his supervision. Some kids got a whole day's work. This was partly funded by Small Sparks grants – a fund for small neighborhood projects paid for from the City's neighborhood outreach and development fund.

Youth employment projects would need a dedicated staff person or group of volunteers to coordinate and supervise, working maybe 20 hrs/week.

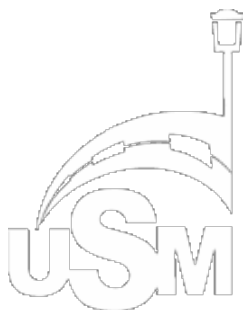
Karen would also like to see a storefront drop-in “living room on the Ave” for kids. They are anxious about having to leave the Ave, where they feel at home, for a drop-in place elsewhere. The director of the (now defunct) Partnership for Youth led regular conversations with kids who showed up at their office – “What do you need/want?” There was also counseling, and weekly indoor basketball games at University Presbyterian Church, which has an indoor gym. The games were popular, service providers came, and it was a great opportunity to interact with youth “on a level playing field.” Such a center could perhaps have gallery/workshop/studio/photography/frame shop space.

Businesses would appreciate a place that draws kids in off the street.



University Street Ministry (USM)

Interview with Eric Wirkman, TeenFeed Coordinator (new Coordinator is Jaime Jamison)



University Street Ministry is best known as the organization that operates the TeenFeed program. Now 20 years old, TeenFeed is an evening meal program for young people in need, 13 – 25 years old. Meals are served in University District church buildings Sunday – Thursday evenings. In 2008, Teen Feed served 11,766 meals (not including second and third helpings) over a total of 256 evenings. This was a 20% increase over meals served in 2007. Also in 2008, 617 youth and young adults self-reported being new to Teen Feed. Because TeenFeed is the primary feeding program for homeless youth in the U District, it is likely that most of these youth are recently homeless.

In 2008, Teen Feed hosted 701 youth under 18 years – 40% more than 2007.

USM also operates two other service programs. Service Links for Youth (SLY) provides support coordination, making connections between at-risk youth and services including shelter and housing opportunities, distribution of bus tokens, backpacks and clothing, and legal services through Street Youth Legal Advocates of Washington. A new program, Street Talk Outreach Program (STOP), was launched in 2008. STOP is an outreach initiative to reach the youngest and most isolated youth before the patterns and habits of a homeless lifestyle become entrenched.

Eric says that USM is a progressive organization with very cool clients. “I like the kids,” he says. He also made the comment that the neighborhood church congregations are great: Progressive, open, and tolerant. Coming from a more conservative sense of Christianity, he feels lucky to see and work with the U District churches. “16 of the 25 volunteers who help with Teen Feed are from your churches. USM can only work because of the support of the ecumenical religious community.”

Eric indicated that the U District has many strengths, including lots of services for homeless youth, in a neighborhood he thinks is safer than downtown. Inexpensive restaurants and a congenial college community help, too. He also lauded the strong sense of community among the service providers. The neighborhood’s weaknesses include the (mostly) transient population that doesn’t feel a strong connection with the street culture, meaning those in need have to rely on service agencies rather than community/resident-based assistance.

USM has many needs. More volunteers are a critical need, especially for TeenFeed. While USM has good relationships with the 4 host churches, there should be better connections with others in the community, especially business owners and residents. Storage is a chronic need, especially since TeenFeed’s storage is spread among 4 host churches. A single location for all evening meals would help tremendously. SLY and STOP need a bigger street outreach presence, including more staff and volunteers, and much better publicity, so people needing help and support know about the program.

The service providers have many other needs, including more money for bus tickets and more shelter space (ROOTS has 25 beds nightly, but TeenFeed sees at least 50 – 60 kids most nights). There are gaps in mental health counseling, especially with the many youth who age out of foster care.

Ultimately, improved coordination between service providers is crucial. UDSPA isn’t able to do the job, especially without staff support. “If collocating agencies is part of the solution, then we must be really intentional about choosing the programs to be colocated, and about how they are sited and orchestrated.”



The Working Zone

Interview with Karmen Kreul, Director of Homeless Youth & Young Parent Services

ywca The purpose of the Working Zone is guiding homeless youth toward economic self-sufficiency. The program is coordinated by the YWCA of Seattle | King County | Snohomish County.

working zone

The Working Zone program is funded through the City of Seattle with funds provided by HUD. Funding is sufficient to serve approximately 100 youth per year. 15-30 youth are routinely on the waiting list for internships. Programs are designed for youth 15-22 years old, but participants most typically fall into the 17-20 year old range. Participants come from many different disadvantaged housing situations. The program has been operating in the University District for 14 years, and is presently located in a house on Roosevelt Way NE, near 55th Street, rented on a year-to-year lease.

The Working Zone operates 4 internship programs, each of which has room for up to 5 interns. Most internships are 10-week programs, averaging 16 hours per week for a total of 160 work hours. Interns are paid minimum wage during their internships.

- The Zine Project is a creative writing internship, operating out of the Gold House in space shared with the University District Youth Center. Interns create, publish and distribute ‘zines, learn about writing, the publication process, and self-promotion. Participants tend to be LGBTQ youth, though not exclusively. Participants also sell the ‘zines on the street. There have been some joint efforts between the Zine Project and the Sanctuary Art Center.
- The Tile Project is an art internship, where participants produce mosaics, pottery and murals. The program operates out of space at the YouthCare Orion Center. Youth have the opportunity to work with raw materials, designing and creating large pieces by hand, and translating their artistic and mechanical skills into a business. YouthCare, the operator of the Orion Center, sells the completed works.
- The Tech Project is located at the Working Zone offices on Roosevelt Way. Participants learn basic computer skills and advance into areas of photo editing and web design. They learn work skills and habits while learning to work in Photoshop, video, robotics and games.
- The Job Center is a maximum 20 hour internship, with participants working directly with an employment specialist to improve their resumes, complete job applications and prepare for interviews. It is focused on youth who are ready for employment, but who need direction with regard to focusing their job search skills, understanding proper interview attire, etc.

Additionally, the Working Zone refers youth to the Barista Training Program operated by FareStart in downtown Seattle. It, too, operates out of the Orion Center.

The Working Zone has two employment case managers, three instructors, and one youth employment specialist. Each youth has a main case manager. The staff works to eliminate barriers to employment, including helping get documentation for youth who are ready for employment.

Working Zone programs are intended to lay the groundwork for increased career and educational opportunities, stabilization through referrals and collaboration with other service providers, and safe and adequate housing.

Karmen indicated that the Working Zone would love to be able to share facilities with other agencies providing services to at-risk youth in the U District, if such an opportunity would arise.



YouthCare (Orion Center)

Interview with Melinda Giovengo, Executive Director



YouthCare operates emergency shelter and transitional housing facilities for homeless youth and young adults. Additionally, YouthCare operates the Orion Center at its downtown Seattle location; an emergency service center

that provides outreach and feeding programs and a range of other services. YouthCare's programs are designed to achieve stabilization, education, and employment, in that order.

The Orion Center is located at the intersection of Stewart Street and Denny Way in downtown Seattle. In operation for 35 years, Orion is a multi-service facility open to youth ages 13-22.

Street Outreach. YouthCare has an active street outreach program, with staff on the streets of Seattle five or more nights each week. Afternoons and evenings, Street Teams on foot and in vans maintain a presence in the downtown Seattle, Broadway, and U District neighborhoods.

Drop-in Services. Drop-in services are often the first link to connecting with YouthCare's other services. Three meals are offered daily at the Orion Center, along with showers and laundry facilities, and clothing, food and hygiene banks.

Case Management. YouthCare Case Managers provides assessments, referrals and life skills counseling. Medical counseling and clinic referrals are offered, and transportation is provided to 2 primary care clinics specifically serving homeless youth. Counseling and referrals are also offered for mental health and substance abuse issues.

Education. The Orion Center is one location for the Seattle School District's Interagency Academy, providing an alternative school for homeless youth. (The Interagency School also operates in the University District, at the University District Youth Center.) YouthCare provides the space, and the Interagency Academy supplies the teachers. An average of 20 students are enrolled at the Orion Interagency School daily. Youth attending the Interagency School get their high school diploma, obtain their GED, or earn credits toward graduation.

Employment and Work-Training. Orion is the location for YouthTech, a 16-week work-training program. YouthTech is an information technology skills training initiative for homeless youth in Seattle/King County. Participants learn to build, configure, upgrade, and maintain a personal computer system, and install and maintain Windows and Linux operating systems. They receive 12 community college credits for completing the program, and are awarded a Cisco IT Essentials credential.

Orion is also the location for the Working Zone's Tile Project pre-employment program (see page 27), as well as FareStart's Barista Training and Education Program, an 8-week work-training program for 16-23 year olds who are homeless or in unstable housing situations. YouthCare provides a year of follow-up support services to participants.

Participants in all work-training programs at Orion are paid the Washington State minimum wage.



YouthCare (Shelter and Housing Programs)

Interview with Melinda Giovengo, Executive Director



YouthCare's shelter and housing programs address a broad range of needs. Their adolescent living facilities are unique, serving a population that is not served by shelter and housing programs serving older youth. Other programs fill gaps in service by providing housing for particular populations, including minors who have been detained as illegal immigrants, young people transitioning out of prostitution, and LGBTQ youth who struggle for acceptance among the heterosexual homeless population.

YouthCare's adolescent living facilities include:

- **The Shelter**, an emergency short-term shelter facility for brief stays (up to 30 days) for youth ages 12-17, where they can stabilize, set goals, and move on to long-term housing situations or re-unify with family. The Shelter has a capacity of 8 beds, although it can be expanded to a 12 bed program.
- **Casa de los Amigos**, an 8 bed (can expand to 20) facility for undocumented 12-17 year old minors who have been detained by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement as illegal immigrants. Residents are assisted in their efforts to assimilate into the local culture, and with legal matters. They are provided with clothing, food, education, ESL classes and counseling.
- **Pathways**, a transitional housing facility for youth ages 15-17 where they can stay for up to 2 years, or until they turn 18. Youth may be homeless or have run away, but may not part of the foster care system. Guidance is provided in developing life skills and goal setting, and chemical dependency counseling is available. The 10-bed facility is located at Sandpoint.

YouthCare's over 18 living facilities include:

- **Straley House**, a pre-transitional housing program providing emergency housing to homeless young adults 18-24. Residents at the 12-bed facility can stay for up to 6 months. Residents must be referred through ROOTS or the Orion Center.
- **Isis**, a 10-bed transitional housing facility (up to 2 years) for young adults 18-21, with an emphasis on serving LGBTQ young adults. Residents must find work and pay 30% of their income toward program fees, and must spend 40 hours per week in school or work.
- **Passages**, an 8-bed long-term housing facility (up to 2 years) for young adults 18-21. Residents must find work and pay 30% of their income toward program fees, and must spend 40 hours per week in school or work.
- **Home of Hope Apartments**, an independent living facility for young adults over 18, where 20 residents share 10 apartment units (living 2 per unit) for up to 2 years.

Several of YouthCare's housing facilities are located in or near the University District. YouthCare's administrative offices are located on-site at the Home of Hope, at 2500 NE 54th Street.

Employment and education opportunities for homeless and at-risk youth are severely underfunded, and agencies like YouthCare struggle to maintain service programs. Melinda feels strongly that the service providers in the University District are doing great work and need to seek new strategies to deliver services more efficiently. As an alternative to separate service providers in separate locations, she suggested that multiple providers collocating in a single location, with a "convening agency" facilitating cooperation and coordination of services, might be one model to consider.