

Who is there for youth feeling unsafe or threatened? ACH is.

The Youth Emergency Shelter

24/7 Safe, Temporary Shelter for Ages 10-17.

The Center for Transforming Lives reports that in 2019, there were 14,981 homeless children living in Tarrant County—enough to fill 27 FWISD elementary schools. For many, the Pat O'Neal Youth Emergency Shelter represents the first safe and stable sanctuary with protective adult support in their young lives.

The Shelter is a residential-based program that offers homeless, runaway, throwaway and trafficked youth, ages 10-17, emergency housing and care while ACH works to connect them with appropriate social services, reunite them with their families, or find alternative safe and supportive long-term living arrangements.



The only shelter in Tarrant County providing 24-hour supervised emergency care for youth.

Youth often arrive at the Shelter from a designated Safe Place location by their own volition, with assistance from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, law enforcement, or with the help of a family member. The Shelter houses as many as 20 kids, typically for periods of up to 90 days. All youth immediately receive food, clothing, and hygiene products, along with a medical screening by a healthcare provider and follow-up care for any identified needs. Youth also receive an educational/vocational assessment and may continue their education on-site during the school year through public school opportunities, receiving life skills training as well.

Care includes:

- **Education** – on-site credit recovery program through Fort Worth ISD, who assigns a teacher to our classroom (*virtual when needed*)
- **Therapy** – Trauma-informed individual therapy
- **Family Mediation**—For the main purpose of family reunification OR to find positive alternatives for the family
- **Development Activities**—Through skills groups, life skills education, and youth enrichment activities
- **Community Engagement**—Through community service projects

Ultimately, youth are discharged to a safe and stable setting with an aftercare plan that articulates recommended services including ACH programs as well as referrals to external programs. Each plan also ensures a 30-day post-discharge contact, made to ascertain status and assess further needs.

The harsh realities of life on the streets.

Children sleeping in cars or staying in homes not owned or rented by their own family are in uncertain and often dangerous situations. Sleeping on porches, in garages, or on bathroom floors, their living arrangements are often overcrowded or substandard. With adult supervision often inappropriate or nonexistent, the risk of neglect and abuse soars. Most homeless, runaway, and trafficked youth are victims of physical abuse, extreme emotional abuse, or human trafficking and feel that they have no alternative but to leave their homes. Homeless youth are exposed to greater risks because of their situations. They are more likely to have lower health ratings, exercise poor nutritional habits, rely on public assistance, and have a lower education level. Homeless youth are at high risk for involvement in the criminal justice system and those who have been physically abused are almost twice as likely to be incarcerated compared to those who have not.¹

These tendencies place the young person in a highly stressful environment and, lacking adult guidance, jeopardize their ability to exercise sound judgment.

Without programs like Safe Place and the Youth Emergency Shelter, most of these youth would be left with no other option than a life on the streets, perpetuating the cycle of physical and emotional abuse that stems from human trafficking and chronic homelessness.

- **80%** of runaway and homeless girls reported having been sexually or physically abused.²
- **34%** of runaway youth (girls and boys) reported sexual abuse before leaving home.²
- **43%** of runaway youth (girls and boys) reported physical abuse before leaving home.²

¹Yoder et al, 2013

²Molnar et al, 1998



2021 Operating Expenses:

1,343,289

Projected Program Funding Gap:

\$605,009

Daily Cost Per Child:

\$256 per night

(Average)

“ACH has been an invaluable partner in the fight against human trafficking. ACH faithfully provides a place where the victim’s safety, well-being, and immediate needs can be met and further assists in the transition to safe and stable housing.” - *United States Department of Homeland Security*

Program Snapshot

In 2020, the Youth Emergency Shelter served **154 youths**. Of those, 90 were female and 64 were male. One hundred youths were from Tarrant County, 11 from Dallas County, and 43 from other counties.

AGE GROUPS

10-12 YEARS OLD	13
13-18 YEARS OLD	141

TOTAL — **154**

RACE / ETHNICITY

AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE	2
ASIAN (NON-PACIFIC ISLANDER)	1
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	55
BLACK/HISPANIC	2
MULTI-RACIAL, MULTI-ETHNIC	11
OTHER RACE	3
UNKNOWN	2
WHITE	48
WHITE/HISPANIC	30

TOTAL — **154**