Success in Motion

Youth Villages Program Report **2005**

Our Success is in Motion

Youth Villages never stands still. In the last 10 years, the nonprofit organization that began with the merger of two small residential treatment campuses has grown to become a comprehensive children's mental health organization, offering some of the country's most effective programs for helping troubled children and their families find long-term success.

A continuum of programs and services – ranging from Residential Treatment to Intensive In-home Counseling – allows Youth Villages to help every child in the most appropriate setting. At our core is an emphasis on strengthening troubled families and providing help to children in the home.

No child at Youth Villages is mired in any system, languishing without help or hope. Each is propelled toward success by dedicated counselors, teachers, foster parents, volunteers and staff who use the most effective evidence-based treatment models to give each child and each family their best chance at success.

In this report, you will meet a handful of the 9,380 children whom Youth Villages helped this year in Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Texas and the District of Columbia. Their stories tell of individual triumphs, but they represent the ways that Youth Villages helped children and families move toward success in fiscal year 2004-2005.

"This is definitely one of those cases that make me realize the importance of my job and the real ways that I can make a difference."

Christopher was born with two strikes against him

His mother, Aisling, was 15 years old – and a foster child.

Like all parents, the young mother wanted to do her best for her child, but it was hard. Studies show that young people who age out of foster care have a very difficult time as adults. Aisling hadn't finished high school, so she couldn't find a job with good pay and benefits. By age 20, she was the single mother of not only Christopher but a baby girl as well. Conflicts with her boyfriend also complicated daily life for everyone.

Christopher was not an easy child. At least once a day, his sweet smile would disappear and he would go into a frightening rage. He would hit and kick and throw things, putting himself and his little sister in danger. Aisling yelled loud reprimands and spanked him, but that only seemed to make things worse. One December day, as Aisling was driving, Christopher hit her in the face. She headed to an emergency room and asked that her son be hospitalized.

"If I don't get help, I'm afraid that I'll hurt him," Aisling told the doctors.

Specialized Crisis Services

The hospital called Youth Villages' **Specialized Crisis Services Program**, which since 2003 has been responsible for evaluating every Tennessee child who is suffering a psychiatric emergency and might need hospitalization. The program's guiding principle is that all children, even those with the most severe problems, are best helped at home and in the community whenever possible.

Christopher is a much happier child now that his family is stronger.

In the 2004-2005 fiscal year, SCS counselors answered 9,648 crisis calls. Of the children our counselors saw face-to-face, 77 percent were safely diverted from psychiatric hospitalization to more effective help in their own homes and communities.

Youth Villages firmly believes that parents – even parents facing many challenges – do a much better job of raising children than institutions when they receive the right help and adequate resources to overcome their problems.

Youth Villages Senior Crisis Counselor Megan Flynn rushed to the hospital to evaluate Christopher. She decided that the young family needed intensive help quickly – but not in a hospital. She made a referral to our **Intensive In-Home Counseling Program.**

Intensive In-home Counseling

Transitional Living

Family Counselor Latoya Nance met with Aisling and Christopher three times each week for counseling sessions at home. Latoya helped Aisling set simple rules for Christopher with consistent consequences for misbehavior and lots of rewards for being good. Christopher's behavior changed almost immediately, and Aisling was better able to manage her household. Counselors also enrolled Aisling in our **Transitional Living Program**, which helps young people who age out of state custody make a successful move toward adulthood. Counselors helped Aisling obtain her GED and worked with her on financial planning and job-related skills.

"We provided the help this young parent needed to make a better life for herself and her family over the long term," Latoya said.

Christopher with Family Counselor Latoya Nance.

Chris finds his way home

Chris at age 10 at his support home.

The first time our counselors met Chris, he was only 10 years old and living in a long-term psychiatric facility a state away from his family.

At the urging of parents, Youth Villages was developing a program to help children like Chris – children with developmental disabilities compounded by serious emotional and behavioral problems. Because meeting these children's needs is so demanding and little family-based support existed, parents often were forced to put their children into state custody or institutions so that they could get appropriate care. The parents who came to us were desperate for better choices. One of our guiding principles is that "Children are raised best by families." Now, we were challenged to prove that was true also for children like Chris.

Chris was one of the first children who came home from institutional care through the Youth Villages **CHOICES** program, started in 2002. First, he went to a professional support home where trained support parents helped him learn how to control his behavior and live in a family setting. The family was given support from therapists as needed. Aides helped Chris go to a public school. Before long, the behaviors that had made life so difficult for Chris and the people who loved him began to diminish.

Chris' birth parents had never been able to care for him. His closest relatives were Phillip and Eva Grant, his aunt and uncle. They hadn't seen Chris for nearly five years when they were contacted by Youth Villages. Would they be willing to help him now? They were. "We had always loved Chris and thought of him as part of our family, even though he had been gone such a long time," Mrs. Grant said. In March, Chris finally moved to the Grants' home with continuing help from Youth Villages Family Counselor John Moler and our **Intensive In-Home Counseling Program**.

CHOICES *Intensive In-home counseling*

Chris back home with his family.

"The Grants are good people, and they are great with Chris," Moler said. "They are very consistent and take care of his needs. They treat him just like their other children, and he calls them 'mom' and 'dad.' They stepped up to the plate and hit a home run."

Chris likes to ride his bicycle in the neighborhood and play basketball. He goes to school on the bus and enjoys activities with the Grants, like going to sporting events or fishing. As Chris' behaviors improved, the Grants became more confident that they could meet his needs, and the level of support that Chris and his family need from Youth Villages has decreased.

"What we have given Chris," Moler said, "is a chance to grow up with his own family and have a life that is similar to that of other children."

"We started out with a child who had few social skills and significant behavioral problems. Now we have a child who can do a lot of things for himself in the home with supervision."

"I wasn't gaining ground on my own. For a long time, I didn't even know where Robbie was. He kept moving to different foster homes. After I was referred to Youth Villages, I had someone on my side."

Robbie was 5 years old when his world changed forever

Just two weeks before Christmas, his father was killed in a car accident. A year later, his mother remarried, but Robbie wouldn't accept his stepfather. Their angry confrontations ended with the boy in foster care for his own protection. A few months later, Robbie's mother, Helen, watched her new husband die in her arms.

"I felt like I had lost everything," she said.

The families that Youth Villages helps are almost always like Robbie's – people overcome by traumatic events or the consequences of bad decisions. Without help, these families might never recover.

In 1994, Youth Villages pioneered an **Intensive In-Home Counseling Program** built on the Multisystemic Therapy (MST) treatment model. Youth Villages became the first agency to use the therapy in real-life practice and today is the largest provider of MST in the world. The program offers individualized help to troubled children and their families in the home, school and community and produces success rates of nearly 90 percent. Its positive results have been proven in more than 15 years of clinical trials. It also is cited as effective by the U.S. Surgeon General and the National Institutes of Health.

Robbie happy to be home with his mother where he belongs.

By the time Robbie was referred to Youth Villages Family Counselor Rob Layzod, his journey through foster care had become a study in motion gone wrong. The 10-year-old was angry and disruptive and had bounced through four homes in little over a year, picking up some bad behaviors at each stop. Worse, state counselors had gotten the impression that his mother didn't want her son back and wasn't capable of caring for him.

"From my first meeting with her it was obvious that she really wanted her son home. I knew that we could help her accomplish that," Layzod said.

Layzod was able to help set up home visits for Robbie – including one for Mother's Day. He also helped his mother prove that she was ready for Robbie's return. She got counseling and medication for her depression and a physical illness. By the time Robbie came home, his mother was back at work and able to care for him. As important, she had worked with Layzod to set up rules that guided her son's behavior at home.

Counselor Rob Layzod gets an update on how school is going for Robbie.

"It's good to see this family back together again," Layzod said, "This is exactly what Youth Villages does."

Foster care — Intensive In-home counseling — home

His mother keeps watch over Robbie.

"Leon wanted to be with a family more than anything. Helping him overcome his problems and preparing him to live successfully in a family were our top priorities."

More than anything, Leon wanted a family

When Leon first came to the Youth Villages Dogwood **Residential Treatment** campus, he was a little boy who had just lost hold of a big dream.

Born into a neglectful, abusive family and taken into foster care, Leon went to an adoptive family quickly. But sometimes, for a very particular reason, an adoption story does not end happily. Because of the past abuse, Leon developed serious emotional and behavioral problems, and his new parents gave the little boy back to the state.

10-year-old Leon was heartbroken and more alone then ever when he came to live in cottage 3, home to the smallest, youngest boys on our Dogwood campus.

Youth Villages was founded in 1986 in the merger of two residential treatment campuses, and while our emphasis today is on providing in-home counseling, we know that some children need a period of residential treatment before they can move toward success at home. For those children, our goal is to provide effective **Residential Treatment** in as short a time as possible followed by ongoing family-based help so that children have their best chance for success at home or in foster or adoptive homes.

Our residential counselors use the principles of the Re-ED – Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children – model, developed by Nicholas Hobbs at Vanderbilt University in the 1960s. A research-based treatment model, Re-ED emphasizes the importance of working with children in an environment where behavior expectations are set, competency is stressed and efforts are made to build on a child's strengths.

The Harris family on the steps of the courthouse the day Leon's adoption was finalized.

Residential counselors rekindled Leon's hope for a family and helped him overcome his behavioral problems. "Despite everything that had happened to him, Leon was a sweet child who always had a smile on his face," said Alana Griffin, then his counselor. "Leon wanted to be with a family more than anything. Helping him overcome his problems and preparing him to live successfully in a family were our top priorities."

As he completed his residential program, Youth Villages Foster Counselor Carrie Petty began looking for the best Youth Villages **Treatment Foster Care** home for Leon so that he could continue his movement toward a permanent family. She thought Willie and Joycelyn Harris, a Dyersburg, Tenn., couple, would provide the right home atmosphere for Leon. Mr. and Mrs. Harris went to the campus to visit Leon as part of the foster parent matching process.

"He was too shy to look us in the eyes and very quiet," Mrs. Harris remembered. The more they learned about Leon, the more they wanted him. And Leon felt the same way about them.

"He went on pre-placement visits and would come back excited with a big smile on his face," Griffin said.

Leon went home with the Harrises, and in just a few months it was clear that he had found more than a foster family. Our **Adoption Program** guided the family through the adoption process, and Leon's adoption was finalized this year. Mrs. Harris had children from a previous marriage, but Leon made Mr. Harris a proud new father.

"It has been so rewarding," he said. "Bringing Leon into our lives has given me the opportunity to be a parent. It's wonderful to be able to contribute to someone else's life – to be a father."

Residential Treatment — Foster Care — Adoption

Once seriously troubled, Anthony wins everyone's hearts

"Anthony has made huge strides since he came to us. We just love him so much. He's always got a smile on his face and is so friendly. Anthony will be a wonderful addition to the right family."

Everyone loves Anthony.

Ask about him, and the teachers and counselors at the Paul W. Barret Jr. School and the Youth Villages Center for Intensive Residential Treatment break into big smiles and then begin to tell the story of how a child who came to us with so many difficult problems has won over everyone's hearts.

Before 10-year-old Anthony came to the Center this year, his life was one horror after another.

His mother used drugs, even during her pregnancy. Anthony was born with traces of cocaine in his system. As a baby, he ate, slept and lived in a bouncy seat strapped to a door. To keep him quiet, his mother added doses of adult liquid cold medicine to his bottles. Anthony spent weekends with his father. One weekend, when Anthony was about 17 months old, his mother dropped him off with his father and never came back.

He lived with his father for more than a year. Anthony was even more impulsive and active than other toddlers. His father "tried to keep Anthony from hurting himself by whipping him." Finally, fearing that he might be unintentionally abusing the child, his father turned Anthony over to the state. The little boy had marks on his legs from the beatings.

He went to a psychiatric hospital where he was given so much psychotropic medication that he ended up with liver damage, then to a foster home where he was restrained with duct tape and locked in a closet. By the time Anthony came to the Youth Villages **Center for Intensive Residential Treatment**, he was uncontrollable.

Until recently, the only place for Anthony would have been a psychiatric hospital, and because of the lack of children's facilities, he might have had to go to an adult institution. To meet the needs of children like Anthony, Youth Villages made a major addition to our continuum of services in 2003 with the construction of the Center for Intensive Residential Treatment. Light and open, flanked by playgrounds and adjacent to the campus school, the Center gives children like Anthony the extraordinary help they need in a child-friendly environment. Because it is part of the Youth Villages continuum of programs, the Center also offers very disturbed children a path to move easily to less restrictive care as they step down toward home.

When Anthony came to the Center, he was a long way from any step down.

"He was a wild child," Emily Thompson, his counselor, said. "He has a speech impediment, probably from early hearing loss, and we couldn't understand anything he tried to say." He couldn't follow even simple directions, and he was very aggressive, lashing out at those who were trying to help him.

A staff member was assigned to be with him at all times; one-on-one care is the most intensive help the center provides. It was a month before Anthony could even begin to interact with the other children at the Center.

"The key was helping him gain control over himself," Thompson said. "We started with a clear, consistent schedule, a predictable routine. He did the same thing every day."

Then his counselors began implementing a behavioral plan, using the simple "1,2,3 – Magic" counting method to help Anthony learn to control his anger outbursts. At the count of 3, Anthony went to a safe time-out room.

Anthony's first big steps forward came in the walk from the Center to the **Paul W. Barret Jr. School**, part of our Bartlett residential campus. Designed specifically to teach children with serious emotional and behavioral problems, the school and its staff were ready for Anthony.

Anne Coggin, director of education at Youth Villages, is a firm believer in using rewards to motivate children to try their hardest. For Anthony, the most effective reward proved to be the turtles in Teacher Hans Parker's classroom.

"Anthony loves the turtles," Parker said. "We told him that if he walked from the center to the classroom without disturbance, he could have extra time to play with the turtles."

At first, sitting at a desk for more than a few minutes at a time was impossible. "He didn't have boundaries," Parker said. "He would bounce out of his seat and personally greet anyone who came in the classroom." The teacher used tape to mark a box around Anthony's desk that showed exactly where the boy should be.

The school has a very low student:teacher ratio. In Parker's classroom, there are only two students: Anthony and a boy with autism.

"Anthony has challenges that aren't going to go away," Parker said. "He has moderate retardation, some autistic-like behaviors, a lot of language impairment. But there are a lot of things he *can* do."

"Before he came to us, I think people thought of him as just wild. No one thought he could learn, but he can," Parker said. "He's learning to count, working on his fine motor skills, learning to write," Parker said. "He likes to draw."

All of the things Anthony has learned at the campus school are designed to prepare him to attend public school. "He has to be able to walk down the halls, sit in his seat in class, interact with other children in appropriate ways, get his food from a cafeteria," Coggin said. "That's an important part of what Anthony is learning from us."

"As much as everyone at Youth Villages loves Anthony, we don't want him to stay with us any longer than he has to," Coggin said. "We want him to go home to an adoptive family, to live in the community, to go to a neighborhood school. And he's getting there. He's come a long, long way – and he makes progress every day."

Hans Parker loves teaching the children other teachers find too challenging, too difficult to help.

"A lot of people just write them off," Parker said. "They think that these kids can't learn. I've found that they have so much to offer, that they can learn. They just look at life differently. They teach me new things every day."

Parker is one of more than 1,200 Youth Villages counselors, teachers and staff who daily help challenging children move toward success.

"It's a joy to watch Hans with the children," Anne Coggin, director of education at Youth Villages, said of Parker. "He has got the patience of Job, and he finds ways to help children learn important lessons."

Parker is back in school himself. Youth Villages' **Tuition Reimbursement Program** is helping him pursue a master's degree in special education.

August 2004
Office Depot donates hundreds of backpacks filled with school supplies to Youth Villages foster children as part of its National Back-to-School Program.

September 2004
24 of our young people receive career training from FedEx employees through the semiannual FedEx Career Prep Program. The program, in its third year, provides career mentors to Youth Villages children who are approaching high school graduation.

October 2004
Nightmarez… Stagefright!, haunted attraction, benefits Youth Villages. More than 6,000 visitors got their Halloween thrills, raising more than $17,000 for Youth Villages.

October 2004
First Tennessee Bank's new financial center in Nashville selects Youth Villages as its community partner, making a donation and a 100-hour volunteer commitment.

September 2004
Early fall means Tiger football games to the children receiving help through our programs in Memphis thanks to the 9th annual Tiger Tickets campaign organized by the Highland Hundred, a University of Memphis football booster group.

October 2004
Youth Villages is the recipient of the first charitable gift made by The Memphis Grizzlies Foundation. The foundation gave $500,000 to support our Center for Intensive Residential Treatment.

December 2004
Children in our residential programs get to enjoy festive holiday celebrations thanks to the many Youth Villages supporters who became Holiday Heroes. Individuals, church groups, businesses and families sponsor gifts, food and Santa visits, ensuring that our children get to take part in the spirit of the season.

January 2005
Ford Motor Company's United Auto Workers Union Local 3036 presents Youth Villages with a $10,132 check for our Family Link emergency shelter.

January 2005
Youth Villages supporters enjoy 800 gallons of soup, a variety of specialty items, bread and dessert from 60 Memphis-area restaurants at the 23rd Annual Soup Sunday. Sponsored by Hilton Hotels, the event raised $70,000 for Youth Villages.

January 2005
The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, which supports nonprofits dedicated to helping disadvantaged youth, commits to helping Youth Villages become a stronger organization through strategic planning by the Bridgespan Group.

January 2005
The Memorial Foundation awards the Youth Villages Transitional Living program in Middle Tennessee a $25,000 grant, the third grant awarded to Youth Villages by the foundation.

April 2005
Harold Crye and Dick Leike, co-owners of Crye-Leike REALTORS®, and their staff are honored by Volunteer Memphis as an outstanding volunteer group. Crye-Leike staff have helped organize the Youth Villages 5K for 23 years. They also have for many years held holiday card sales, donated backpacks to our children and sponsored the Chris Crye Mentoring Program, which provides dedicated mentors to Youth Villages children.

June 2005
The Clear Mountain Natural Spring Water Ultimate 10K raises $17,000 for Youth Villages.

"My foster mother was a really, really good person. She treated me like her child, not a foster child. A lot of my life lessons came from her."

A little girl is lost... and found

Terri was just 4 years old when she was taken away from her neglectful mother the first time. She was back home with her mom in a few days, but the removal was the beginning of a pattern all too familiar to children who have grown up in state foster care systems.

Terri grew up bouncing from foster homes to residential treatment facilities to respite homes, even psychiatric hospitals. Sometimes, she even went back home to her mother for brief periods.

"It was like people were playing a game with me," she said. She dreamed of a day when she would stop moving, a day when she would have a stable home and a real family.

How does it feel to grow up in the system?

"It feels like you're in a storm – like you're living in a tornado," Terri said looking back. When caregivers are constantly changing, children have trouble developing a trusting relationship with any adult. "I made sure that I didn't get close to anyone," Terri said.

The abuse she suffered at home and the instability and insecurity of foster care left Terri feeling hopeless. Being separated from her sisters also meant she could no longer protect them from hurt. Terri's overall frustration turned into behavioral problems at school and in her foster homes. Often, she acted inappropriately just to get attention. Once, she even walked up to the front of a classroom and stood on her head.

"I wanted someone to pay attention to me. I was saying 'See me!'" she said.

Terri began to get a sense that things could be different when she came to the Youth Villages Bartlett campus for **Residential Treatment**. She lived in a cottage with nine or 10 other girls and went to the campus school where she soon caught the eye of Anne Coggin, director of education.

Residential Treatment

Terri had no visitors on campus, no home to go to on passes. Youth Villages pairs children like Terri who have little or no family contact with a caring adult through our **Chris Crye Mentoring Program**. Coggin filled the mentor's role in Terri's life.

"She wanted a family so much," Coggin said. "I started taking her on passes. She spent Thanksgiving and Christmas with my family."

But that year, Terri had to endure another blow: Her mother severed parental rights. Although her mother had been neglectful, sometimes disinterested in her oldest daughter, it was still hard for Terri to lose her completely, to lose her hope of ever returning home.

Terri has few happy memories from her childhood.

Youth Villages performs a study of children in Tennessee state custody

Like Terri, most children in Tennessee enter state custody due to problems within their families, but a study conducted by Youth Villages in 2005 found that few families ever receive any specialized counseling to help them overcome their problems and regain custody of their children.

Reviewing 108 children's cases, Youth Villages found that children can reap enormous benefits if resources are put into intensive family preservation and reunification services. For older children who are aging out of state custody, funding allocated to Transitional Living services increases these young people's chances to become successful independent adults.

Myrtis Morris, a high school teacher from Jackson, Tennessee, who was Terri's foster mother, is one of hundreds of foster parents who help children through the Youth Villages Treatment Foster Care Program. Terri still keeps in touch with Mrs. Morris who continues to offer her guidance and support.

The program is based on the evidence-based Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care model developed at the Oregon Social Learning Center in the 1980s. The model has been endorsed by the National Institutes of Health, the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, the U.S. Surgeon General and the American Youth Policy Forum.

Youth Villages recruits foster parents and gives them extensive and continuing training so that they can help children with emotional and behavioral problems in their homes. Child counselors and behavior specialists provide 24-hour support for families.

"It was like she had taken my whole world away," Terri said. "Everything just stopped. I felt like an ant in the desert."

"Terri really worked on her problems here," Coggin remembered. After completing our residential treatment program, she entered the **Youth Villages Treatment Foster Care Program**.

Terri really did not want to be in foster care again. But Youth Villages found just the right parent to nurture her in the next crucial years as she began moving toward adulthood. That foster parent was Myrtis Morris, a high school teacher in Jackson, Tennessee.

"She is one of our best foster parents," said Stephannie Williams who was Terri's counselor then. "She gives kids responsibilities and rewards and always does whatever she can to help a child."

"I'm just a caregiver," Mrs. Morris said. "My mother was a nurse, and I grew up watching the way she tenderly cared for others. Being a foster parent gives me a good feeling; it makes me feel whole."

She supported Terri in school and offered her the opportunity to go to church on Sundays. She was there to provide comfort when Terri's birth mother reneged on one more promise: to bring Terri back to her family through adoption.

"Terri's relationship with Mrs. Morris became a mother-daughter relationship in so many ways," Williams said. "She is one person who has always been there for Terri, who has stuck with her through the hard times."

But at almost 18, Terri desperately wanted to leave foster care and stand on her own as an adult. The **Youth Villages Transitional Living Program** provided Terri with the chance to make her own way and to receive guidance and help whenever she needed.

"When you're in state custody, in foster care, you don't make your own choices," Terri said. "Someone else is always telling you what to do. Now, I make my own choices. There's a lot of responsibility."

Terri renewed contact with Amanda Fielder who had helped Terri as a Department of Children's Services counselor years before. Fielder agreed to take her in.

"I encouraged her to get her GED and taught her how to drive," Fielder said.

Terri was ready to plan for her future. She became attracted to Lee University when a singing group from the Christian college came to their church. She didn't have the academic credentials to enter the university as a full-time student, but the university offered provisional admission. Terri eventually earned a scholarship from Youth Villages' **Fred B. Wilson Scholarship Program**. She rewarded everyone's faith in her with straight A's.

Foster Care *Transitional Living*

Terri, front left, went to Capitol Hill with members of the Tennessee Youth Advisory Council to lobby for more support for foster children.

Today, Terri enjoys living in her own dorm room at college. She is studying to be a nurse or maybe a midwife.

"I've made peace with a lot of things in the past. I've forgiven my mother, and I'm still trying to help my sisters," she said.

Terri also is trying to help some of the thousands of children in state custody who are still being whirled around in the storm that finally has passed her. As a member of the Tennessee Youth Advisory Council, a group of former foster children, she is trying to make changes for children in the system. She has lobbied for foster children on the state level and in Washington, D.C.

"Terri always looks beyond herself," Katy Valesky, activities director for the council, said. "She thinks of others in foster care who haven't had the support that she has. She's working for them."

The Transitional Living Program

Youth Villages believes that state child welfare systems have an obligation to help young people like Terri who have grown up in foster care become successful independent adults.

Very little government funding is available for these critically needed services. In 1999, Youth Villages began our Transitional Living Program through a grant from The Day Foundation. The Day Foundation has continued to provide primary funding for the program, including a grant this year that made possible the expansion of the program in Tennessee.

The program is still funded entirely from private donations. Supporters include: Memorial Foundation, Joe C. Davis Foundation, Gannett Foundation, Family Foundation, CBRL Foundation, Louie M. and Betty M. Phillips Foundation, EBS Foundation, Children's Foundation of Memphis, Autozone, International Paper, BancorpSouth and the employees of Youth Villages.

"The children are a blessing to us, and I hope we're a blessing to them."

A lifetime dedicated to raising other people's children

It was dark in the room, quiet in the house except for the muffled sobs from the little girl lying in the bed. She was crying for her mother. Mrs. Mildred Truesdale, awakened from sleep, came to sit on the corner of the bed and reached out to Nikki.

"Your mama's fine," she told the little girl. "Your mama knows that you are in a good home, and you are going to go back home to live with your mama when she's well. Until then, I'm going to take good care of you."

Mildred Truesdale has been drying the tears of other people's children for more than 30 years. She is a Youth Villages foster parent, one of more than 500 foster parents in Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama who are trained in the principles of the Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care model. The evidence-based model has been deemed effective by the U.S. Surgeon General and National Institutes of Health.

The Truesdales proudly look on as Pam Thompson embraces the children she was separated from for so long.

On the day that Nikki and her brother DeAndre entered our **Treatment Foster Care Program**, Youth Villages assigned a family counselor from our **Intensive In-home Counseling Program** to help their mother overcome her problems and get her children back as quickly as possible.

"I had some things that I had to take care of about myself so that I could be a better mom for them," Pam Thompson, Nikki and DeAndre's mother, said.

Delores Pace, a Youth Villages Family Counselor with our Intensive In-home Counseling Program, was there to help Thompson every step of the way. "She was the total package," Mrs. Thompson said. "She helped me with financial things – like budgeting – and with understanding my life better." Our counselors help birth parents find stable, affordable housing, get treatment for alcohol or drug problems or for depression or other mental illnesses, prepare resumes, find jobs and learn parenting and coping skills so that they are equipped to care for their children when they come home.

Foster Care

Intensive In-home Counseling

home

Our foster parents, like Mrs. Truesdale, help by providing loving, stable homes and by offering encouragement and support to parents as they attempt to regain custody of their children.

"Their mother had some problems, but I could tell she loved her children and wanted them home with her," Mrs. Truesdale said. "I told her that everyone makes mistakes. You have to keep going forward. You can raise your children. You *can* do it."

With everyone's help, Nikki and DeAndre were reunited with their mother this year. Mrs. Truesdale and her husband immediately opened their home to two teenage boys who are moving through foster care toward adoption. This cycle has been repeated at the Truesdale home since 1972 when Mrs. Truesdale became a foster parent, urged into the calling by her sister, a teacher, who is also a foster parent and works with Youth Villages.

In 30 years, Mrs. Truesdale has been a temporary mother to more than 20 children. Most still keep in touch, sending her Mother's Day cards or calling on special occasions. She remembers each one, their tears, troubles and triumphs.

Mildred Truesdale and her husband, Charles, proudly show off pictures of the many children they have fostered over the years.

"This was just another way to help the children of Youth Villages. I've been very fortunate in my life. This is a way to give back – a way to support an organization that is very much needed in our community."

An extraordinary commitment to helping children

As with many of our supporters, Ronnie Randall's first encounter with Youth Villages took him to a toy store.

It was in the 1980s, and the Bartlett, Tennessee, businessman had seen a story about the need for holiday presents for the children of Youth Villages. Randall, the president of Kele, Inc., then a young company, picked up a child's holiday wish list and did the shopping himself.

"He was so proud of his choices," Cindy Phillips, Kele's marketing director, remembered. "He is always very busy, but he took the time to go to the party and present the gifts himself. Ronnie came back beaming."

It was the first connection in a relationship that would link Randall, his growing company and Youth Villages for decades to come. Many supporters of Youth Villages touch the organization first through volunteering – whether it is to make the holidays brighter for our children or help out at Soup Sunday, the Youth Villages 5K or the Annual Family Fun Fest and Fishing Rodeo.

Kele's connection to Youth Villages grew over the years as Randall made community service a large part of the company's culture. "We're part of the community, part of a family," Randall said. "I've always felt that it's important for people – including our employees – to get involved in something greater than themselves."

Kele Kares committee adopts a cottage at the Dogwood Village residential campus.

As Kele and Youth Villages grew, it became apparent that the nonprofit and the for-profit had many things in common. Both are committed to family values, as well as offering personal-growth opportunities for employees and making positive changes in the community; both also saw the advantages to making Franklin Covey leadership training and time management courses available to all their employees.

In 2004, Randall moved into a leadership position at Youth Villages as a member of the Youth Villages Board of Directors. One of the most important matters before the Board was the need for a new Memphis-area office to bring all of the Youth Villages leadership staff together under one roof. "In several meetings, we discussed various places to put the building," Randall said. "And it occurred to me that I knew the perfect place: one of the remaining lots at our headquarters."

volunteer leader donor

He made the lot available to Youth Villages. "This building will fill an important need for Youth Villages, and it's a good fit for Kele," Randall said. "It's a prime location, centrally located for employees who will work there." Over the last few months, Randall has been able to watch construction of the Youth Villages Operations Center from the windows of his corner office at Kele. "They're making good progress over there, and they haven't stirred up too much dust."

Ronnie Randall oversees progress on the new Youth Villages Operations Center.

Youth Villages by the numbers

Gifts to Youth Villages this fiscal year include a grant from The Day Foundation that allowed our Transitional Living Program to expand in Tennessee and a challenge grant that will help finance the new Youth Villages Operations Center. Above, philanthropist Clarence Day meets a program participant at the Youth Villages Employee Conference.

Alice in Wonderland was the theme of the 2004-2005 ***Our Family Campaign****, which raised more than $440,000 for the organization. The campaign allows Youth Villages employees to give back a percentage of their salaries to support a specific program or cause, such as art, spiritual life or employee tuition reimbursement.*

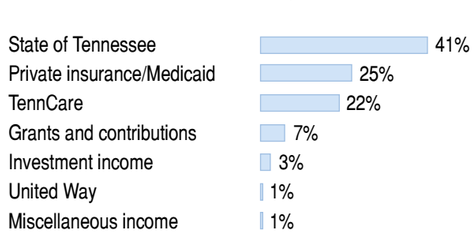
Youth Villages' **Planned Giving Program**, begun in 2005, is designed to promote charitable giving to the organization through wills and trusts. One such example is this year's gift from the Nelson Jones Trust. The Trust, set up under the will of Mr. Nelson Jones, named Youth Villages as a beneficiary. Youth Villages has received distributions totaling $216,570 through the trust. For more information on planned giving or to make a donation to Youth Villages, call (901) 252-7609 or (615) 250-7207 or send an e-mail to: iwanttohelp@youthvillages.org. Donations are also accepted online through our secure site at www.youthvillages.org.

Youth Villages was able to help more than 9,000 children and families this fiscal year with the generous help of our supporters.

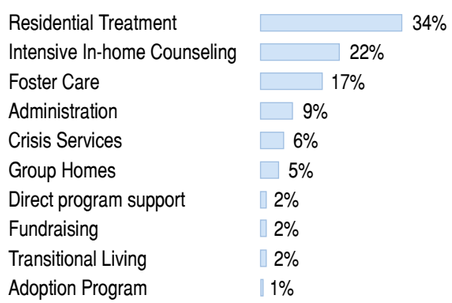
Private donations from 1,536 individuals totaled $3,305,825. Our own employees gave back $440,000 through paycheck donations to the Our Family Campaign to support our programs and provide extra funding for art, education, spiritual life, emergency relief and employee tuition reimbursement.

Annual revenue for Youth Villages during fiscal year 2004-2005 was $70,364,950.

Revenue – Fiscal Year 2004-2005



Allocation of Revenue – Fiscal Year 2004-2005



Volunteers & mentors

During the past fiscal year, 1,022 volunteers and mentors gave 10,515 hours of their time to help the children of Youth Villages.

Fifty-two volunteers came out to our campuses regularly to engage our children in fun and educational activities and celebrate their birthdays. Some 846 people volunteered at a Youth Villages event: Soup Sunday, the Youth Villages 5K Run/Walk or the Family Fun Fest and Fishing Rodeo.

Through the **Chris Crye Mentoring Program**, 90 mentors spent one-on-one time with Youth Villages children who don't have any family support. Twenty-four FedEx managers counseled our young people on careers through the FedEx Career Prep Program. Through this biannual program, FedEx career mentors teach our youth how to interview, about job etiquette and other important skills.

Our children also received 826 hours of religious support and education through our Spiritual Life Program. Last year, 23 regular and 50 one-time volunteers visited our campuses to hold worship services, teach Bible classes, hold prayer groups and present live Christian music to our children.

The Chris Crye Mentoring Program

Meribeth LaBarreare (second from left) is honored with the Lionheart Award for her commitment to the Youth Villages 5KRun/Walk.

Ambassadors

The Youth Villages Ambassador Program matches our employees with businesses and organizations in the community to spread awareness of our organization and the needs of the children and families we help. Part of a public-awareness initiative funded by The Day Foundation, the Ambassador Program's goal is to increase the number of volunteers, donors, foster and adoptive parents who support our organization. Participants include:

1st Trust Bank
Aardvark's Model Trains
Alcoa (Dixie Wire)
American Standard
Antioch Church of Christ
Armstrong Relocation
BancorpSouth
Bank of Bartlett
Barloworld
BellSouth
Cardinal Health Services
Cascades Restaurant at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel
Cassidy Fine Foods
Chile Burrito Company
Clarcor
Clark & Clark
Community Resource Center
Comtrak Logistics
Cornerstone Systems
Crye-Leike REALTORS® Memphis & Nashville
Cumulus Radio Network
Dave Ramsey – Financial Peace Univ.
Epley's Movers
Ermco
Ernst & Young
Exodus, Inc.
Faxon Gillis
FedEx Global Trade Hub Operations Marketing Technology Services
Fifth Third Bank
First Tennessee Bank
Gladeville Missionary Baptist Church
Gladeville United Methodist Church
HCA
Hemophilia Health Services
Hill Chapel Missionary Baptist Church
Hilton Hotels Corp.
Hunt Brothers Pizza
International Paper
Kele
Kilgore
Lipscomb & Pitts
Loeb Properties, Inc.
Mad Red Hatters
Matthews Brothers Homes
Maytag
Mid-America Apartment Communities
Milestone Financial
MLG&W
Morgan Keegan
Nashville Ballet
Nashville Predators
Nashville Sounds
nexAir
NFIB
Northwestern Mutual
Re:Trans
Regal Cinemas
Schaller Anderson
Seraphim Salon
Shoney's
Silas Hill Horse Farm
Southeastern Asset Management
Stanford Financial
SunTrust Bank
Toys for Tots
TPAC (Tennessee Performing Arts Center)
UAW Local 1853
UPS
Walker J Walker
Wood Personnel Services

Who does Youth Villages serve?

One way that we measure our success is by monitoring parent satisfaction. In fiscal year 2004-2005, we surveyed 1,543 parents.

- *93% were satisfied with the counseling services their children received at Youth Villages.*
- *92% were satisfied with the family therapy they received.*
- *92% would refer another person to Youth Villages.*
- *93% were satisfied with Youth Villages' programs, staff and processes as a whole.*

Age of our children

8 years old and younger	9 %
9 to 11 years old	11 %
12 to 14 years old	31 %
15 to 17 years old	45 %
18 years old and older	4 %

Gender

Male	56 %
Female	44 %

Presenting issues*

Emotional disorder (mood, adjustment, depression, anxiety)	59 %
Behavioral disorder (ADHD, impulse, conduct or learning disability)	84%
Suicide ideation/attempt	36%
Abuse and neglect	18 %
Substance abuse	19 %

* most children come to us with multiple issues

Program Participation

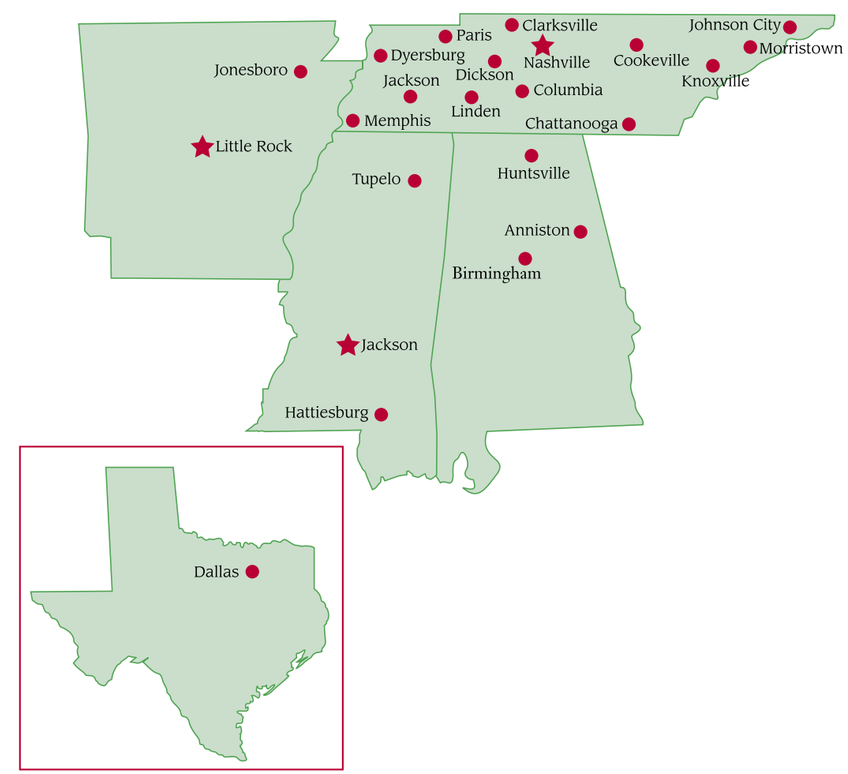
Family-based services	
Intensive In-home Counseling	2,149
Foster Care	1,141
Transitional Living	339
Adoption	45
CHOICES	108
Community-based services	
Group Homes	199
Family Link Shelter	218
Residential services	
Bartlett campus	238
Dogwood Village campus	200
Linden campus	135
Center for Intensive Res. Treatment	309
Specialized Crisis Services	
Total crisis calls	9,488
Face-to-face assessments	6,916

In fiscal year 2004–2005

The counselors, teachers and staff of Youth Villages touched the lives of more than 9,000 children with emotional and behavioral problems and their families. Some 87 percent of these children and families were discharged successfully from our programs during that period; they went home or to a less restrictive environment, a foster or group home. We also judge our programs by how well they help our children achieve long-term success. The latest data compiled confirm that 81 percent of the children we helped continue to live successfully in the community two years after leaving our programs.

During this fiscal year, Youth Villages opened a new office in Washington, D.C., to bring our intensive in-home counseling program to the District of Columbia. Youth Villages is part of a pilot project to help establish cost-effective, evidence-based family services for the area's most troubled children and their families. Halfway through the trial period, Youth Villages was able to present Congress with successful treatment outcomes. As a result, we are now serving additional children and families in the District.

These successes are possible only because of the extraordinary commitment of Youth Villages' staff to doing whatever it takes to help children and their families live successfully. Last year, 1,233 dedicated Youth Villages employees working from 35 locations in 23 cities in Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas and Washington, D.C., helped some of our nation's most vulnerable children and their families.



Moving toward the future

Dear Friends,

Youth Villages never stands still. In fiscal year 2004-2005, our counselors, teachers and staff helped more than 9,000 children and their families in five states and the District of Columbia. Eighty-seven percent of the children who completed their programs at Youth Villages were successfully discharged. They either were able to stay with their families, return home or move to a less restrictive family or community-based setting.

Their success is a result of Youth Villages' commitment to programs founded on evidence-based treatment models – models that have been proven to work in both clinical trials and real-life practice – and a commitment to helping children in the most effective setting: their own homes. We are proud of our work this year, but we know that there is so much more to be done.

For every one child we reach, there are about 500 others across the United States who need the same effective help but aren't receiving it. Hundreds of thousands of children will not get the help they need unless key reforms are adopted by state governments and child welfare systems fundamentally change the way they do business.

Youth Villages has been a pioneer in our field, adopting the most effective programs and documenting our results to add to the body of knowledge in children's mental health. Now, we must do more than just blaze a trail in our region. We want to become a catalyst for change throughout the country. Through the support of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, a leading national foundation in empowering nonprofits that help disadvantaged children, and the Bridgespan Group, Youth Villages now has a five-year blueprint that will allow us to help more children in the states we now serve while bringing change to other areas.

Doing more for children and families has been the driving force behind Youth Villages for nearly 20 years. With your continued support, we will bring hope to thousands more children and their families.

Sincerely

Patrick W. Lawler
Chief Executive Officer

Mike Bruns
Chairman of the Board of Directors

Youth Villages Board of Directors

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Kenneth May, Vice Chairman
Mark Prudhomme, Treasurer
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For more information about Youth Villages' programs and services, call toll-free 1-877-983-6767, e-mail info@youthvillages.org or go online to www.youthvillages.org.

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United Way of the Mid-South

Joint Commission National Quality Approval

CWLA Child Welfare League of America Member Agency

www.youthvillages.org

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