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Spring 2002

# Bill Wilson Center News

COUNSELING • HOUSING • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY

## Are We There Yet?

**H**ow many of us have heard those words from our children — or uttered them ourselves? For an organization like Bill Wilson Center, one of the best ways we have of answering that question is to develop a plan so we know where we're going.

This past year Bill Wilson Center staff, board, volunteers and clients responded to our need to revisit our mission, our programs, and the unmet needs in the community. From this months-long process, we developed a strategic plan that incorporates both specific program and board goals for the next five years, and general areas to explore.

Areas identified for further research and development include:

- 1. Youth Development.** While every Bill Wilson Center program currently involves components of youth development, we need to formalize the way we apply the youth development model at Bill Wilson Center, including the processes that help youth move from the client level to leadership levels.
- 2. Bill Wilson School.** Most of the youth in our shelter and Quetzal House have had little or no success in school prior to attending Bill Wilson School. Their success at Bill Wilson School has come from the individualized curriculum, the high staff/volunteer to student ratio, and the commitment of the staff and volunteers. We have recently been notified that the Santa Clara County Office of Education plans to close the Bill Wilson School. We are currently exploring the development of a charter school.
- 3. School Based Youth Programs.** Bill Wilson Center conducts several programs in cooperation with local school districts. School based programs are an opportunity to increase our prevention work with youth through counseling, information, and

skills training (e.g. decision making skills, refusal skills). These programs give youth the tools to avoid substance abuse, violence, truancy, HIV/AIDS/STIs, and teen pregnancy. We will continue to research school needs and develop collaborations to expand services.

**4. Collaborations.** Bill Wilson Center will continue to explore opportunities to work collaboratively with other agencies, as well as governmental and private sector entities. These efforts will include joint projects, cooperative grant submissions, and partnerships. The agency will remain open to exploring all collaborative opportunities from mergers to the placement of staff from other agencies that serve our population in our facilities.

**T**hese four areas will be the focus of much of our work over the next five years. We will, of course, continue to adapt the strategic plan to maintain relevancy. Concurrently, we will be working to improve our current services and the infrastructure that provides the resources needed.

## Juvenile Justice Detention Reform

**A** recent study showed that the juvenile hall in Santa Clara County detains a disproportionate number of Latino and African American youth. This is not news to most who follow juvenile justice issues. However, the announcement that the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council is interested in implementing detention reform is newsworthy.

Santa Clara County continues to detain more youth than is necessary to protect the public. The purpose of juvenile hall is to lock up children who are a risk to society. Instead, youth are often detained to teach them a lesson or because they are needy and have no place to go. Detention reform should result in less reliance on jailing youth and more focus on community alternatives. Bill Wilson Center expects to play a major role in shaping the detention reform plan and offering its services to youth who will benefit from our proven interventions.

### Volunteer Opportunities

*There are a number of ways you can donate your time and energy to our agency. See page 3 for more information.*

**B**ill Wilson Center provides innovative and effective programs by continually evaluating and modifying our services to better meet community needs. Recently, the Independent Living Skills (ILP) staff conducted an internal audit of their services. They determined that by changing some of

nutrition. In the nutrition group a dietitian from Women, Infants and Children spoke about a healthy diet and then made a salad to demonstrate the lesson.

According to program coordinator, Pam Egerton, "By teaching youth in a group environment they not only build social skills and learn to work as a team, but they are exposed to youth

## Independent Living Skills Program

who are just like them — struggling to make it through the system."

As the group sessions continue, Pam plans to have youth who have graduated from the ILP program be responsible for organizing the groups, which includes scheduling speakers, setting up meetings, and leading meetings. "Individuals who have already completed the ILP program will bring their personal experience and success to the sessions, while continuing to gain support from the program" states Pam.

the traditional methods used by the program, they could increase the number of youth served and increase the overall effectiveness of the program.

Traditionally, ILP staff and volunteers work one-on-one with youth in foster care to teach them skills they'll need once they leave the foster care system, including job skills, household management, interpersonal skills, and housing resources. The program continues to assist youth once they become independent.

The one-on-one method limits the number of foster youth served and it failed to teach youth how to work together as a group. In addition, the program required ILP volunteers be experts on the entire ILP Curriculum. By creating ILP groups, foster youth could come together to learn the ILP Curriculum as a team.

Under the new plan, each group session covers a different topic in the ILP curriculum. ILP staff and volunteers transport youth to the meetings enabling them to serve twice the number of youth as before. A specialist is brought in to cover each aspect of the ILP curriculum, thus taking the pressure off of ILP staff and volunteers to be the experts. Recent ILP groups included banking and

By adapting the ILP program, Bill Wilson Center will be able to serve more foster care youth and increase the effectiveness of the program, thus ensuring that the youth learn the skills they'll need to become self-sufficient once they leave the foster care system. ILP is just one example of Bill Wilson Center's commitment to providing the best services for the community.

### Walk for AIDS warm up walk

Paramount's GREAT AMERICA will be hosting a warm up walk for the Silicon Valley Walk for AIDS 2002 on Sunday, April 14th at 8:30am. Walkers who raise \$40 or more will receive free admission for the day in the Park. Parking will also be free for the day for those who arrive before 8:30 am. This 1/3 of mile walk will raise funds for the nine benefiting agencies, including Bill Wilson Center, and will be great publicity for the Walk for AIDS Silicon Valley. Come join us for a day of fun!

WALK for AIDS



Silicon Valley

Educate. Support. Join the Fight.

For more details call Michelle Jurjavcic 408.850.6138.

# Volunteer Page

Your gift of time is one of the most precious contributions you can make. Bill Wilson Center volunteers provide tremendous support to our programs, and without their help we would not be as successful.

## Volunteer Spotlight

An example of one of our exceptional volunteers is Joyce Connelley who volunteers for the Bill Wilson Drop-In Center for homeless youth in San José. Thank you Joyce for the positive impact you have on the lives of the homeless youth who visit the Drop-In Center.

## Volunteering is a Learning Experience

“What could make you feel better than to have a youth’s face light up when you walk into the room? That’s what happens for me each day that I volunteer at the Second Street Drop-In Center.

When I arrive on Tuesday evenings, the Drop-In Center is usually a mad house. About a dozen youth are chatting with one another and sitting together to share a meal. The staff is scurrying around to help clients sign up for programs and directing them to appropriate counselors. Someone is on the phone about a job, and in one corner a movie is playing on the TV screen, while in another rap music is filling the room from a CD player. All the activity contributes to the sense of excitement and hope in the room.

My job ranges from dishing up food and scrubbing floors, to downloading Internet files and helping the staff facilitate discussions on domestic violence or sexually transmitted diseases. In the process I get to exchange a lot of hugs and talk one-on-one with the street youth. Many of these 12–24 year-olds have no homes, no families, limited education, no jobs and no money.

Most of these youth have been shunned by their families. Some have left parents who were drug-addicted or otherwise unfit to be caregivers. Most of them are lonely, scared, insecure and hungry. They come to the Drop-In Center for food, counseling and companionship. I’m excited to be a part of their lives and to help in whatever way I can to make their daily routines just a little more pleasant.

The other day I was focused on scrubbing a crusty ring off a cooking pot when a young boy about 14 stuck his head in the kitchen just to say “Hi.” Another day a young woman walked in and on seeing me, hurried over to give me a hug. One of my favorite youth is a young man who speaks only a little English. Each time I see him, he gleefully corrects my pitiful Spanish while polishing his own English skills. And so we are learning from each other.

In fact, the youth at the Drop-In Center have taught me a lot. They remind me of how fortunate I am, and they teach me how a person can be happy even when they are down on their luck. When I see different social groups joking with each other, they demonstrate how easy it is to accept our own diversity, and how wrong it is to judge people by their appearance. When a young woman with her baby talks about having to ride the buses all night because she can’t get a shelter bed, she teaches me about how tough it really is to cope out there on the street.

I’ve been a Bill Wilson volunteer for a full year now. I have to say, I absolutely hate cleaning my own kitchen, but when it comes to the Drop-In Center, I’ve enjoyed every pot and pan I’ve ever met.

— Joyce Connelley



“What could make you feel better than to have a youth’s face light up when you walk into the room?”

## Volunteer

1. Call Volunteer Coordinator, Michelle Jurjavcic at 408.850.6138.
2. Attend volunteer orientation.
3. Complete volunteer application including finger print check.
4. Participate in volunteer training.
5. Select a volunteer assignment and join us!

We would like to invite you to join our Peer Education Training 2002! The training series will start on Saturday, April 27th for our 11th year. Our Peer Education Training provides you with the skills to be a Peer Educator in your school and/or be a volunteer for the Bill Wilson Center. Our Peer Education series includes training in various areas such as counseling, facilitation, advocacy, outreach, and organizing skills. All students over the age of 14 are welcome to participate. Don’t miss out on this incredible opportunity!

Mark your calendar now and request an application by calling 408.850.6138 or send an email to [mj4bwc@yahoo.com](mailto:mj4bwc@yahoo.com).

# Wish List

**T**he individuals that Bill Wilson Center serve come to us with very little. We depend on the generosity of the community to help these people who are having difficulties in their lives.

**Clothing:** Shoes, T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters, jeans, waterproof jackets, warm jackets, umbrellas, gloves, baseball caps, wool beanies, thermal underwear, tights, stockings, shoelaces, and ponchos. We also need new underwear and new socks.

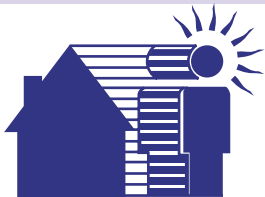
**Miscellaneous:** Toiletries (deodorant, soap, shampoo, conditioner, hand cream, hair gel, toothbrushes, toothpaste, mouthwash, shaving cream, razors, nail clippers) laundry detergent and bleach, sewing kits, water bottles, backpacks, blankets, sleeping bags, tarps, items to cook with, tools (especially bike repair kits), portable alarm clocks, watches, batteries, nonperishable food, supermarket gift certificates, fast food gift certificates.

**For the Infants and Toddlers of Teen Parents:** disposable diapers, baby equipment (high chairs, playpens, car seats), crib sheets, blankets, towels.

**For Youth Who Are Moving into Housing:** Tables, chairs, kitchen equipment (dishes, pots and pans, glasses, utensils), linens, lamps, beds.

**For All Bill Wilson Center Programs:** Matching sheets and comforters, individual lockers with combination locks, art supplies, books, event or movie tickets, computers (Pentium III or higher), laser printers, videos, Playstation and Nintendo games, tickets to museums and amusement parks, gift certificates to music stores, playing cards, games, bus/light rail passes, certificates for haircuts—just about any gift certificate can be used in some way.

If you'd like to donate any item on this list, please give Jeanne-Ann Pine a call at 408-850-6155. Items should be new or nearly new. Please bear with us if you call with furniture to donate. As we don't have storage space, we can only use furniture when we have someone moving out of transitional housing.



## Bill Wilson Center

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