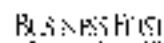




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The stories told in this document are based on actual events that have occurred in the lives of clients of Directions For Youth & Families. The identities have been altered to protect the children and their families.



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DIRECTIONS
for youth & families

2004 STATE OF THE CHILD™

In Central Ohio

Maybe you know that 33% of girls and 17% of boys will be sexually victimized by age 18.¹

And maybe you're well aware of the fact that over 80% of juvenile sexual assaults occur in the victim's home.²

You might even know the Ohio teen birth rate is 45.6 per 1,000 females ages 15-19.³

And you may also know that an Ohio child is born into poverty every 21 minutes.³

It's even possible that you are aware of the recent research that indicates a 113% increase of suicide in youth under the age of 15,² or that over half of juvenile victims of violent crime go on to commit a violent crime within the next year.⁴

To help children and families such as the ones featured in this year's The State of the Child, Directions For Youth & Families provides outreach, prevention and treatment programs.

These programs help children with behavioral issues, alcohol and drug addictions, and school problems.

They help children learn decision making skills regarding teen sex and pregnancy, conflict, and criminal activity.

They have programs for children who have been the victims of physical and sexual abuse, who have witnessed acts of violence, who have lost a loved one to homicide, and who have given birth to children while still being children themselves.

But that's not all. Directions For Youth & Families also helps children understand the importance of tolerance, acceptance, abstinence, respect, self-esteem, responsibility, and hard work.

As a result of the efforts of the staff and volunteers at Directions For Youth & Families, Franklin County has saved millions of dollars in reduced costs of prosecution, incarceration, property loss, and child welfare.

More importantly, however, thousands of area youth have received the direction their lives so badly needed.



State of the Child 2004 Report

Clients Served in Fiscal Year 2003:

July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003		
	Prevention Programs	3,528
	Treatment Programs	3,340
	Parenting/Early Childhood Programs	1,107
	Total Served	7,975

Statement of Revenue and Expenses for Fiscal Year 2003:

July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003			
Revenues:			
	Government	\$	4,539,864
	United Way		1,486,485
	Contributions		350,498
	Fees for Services		147,469
	Investment Income		20,888
	Miscellaneous		29,363
	Management Fees		271,843
	TOTAL:	\$	6,846,410
Expenses:			
	Program	\$	6,180,793
	Support Services		
	Management & General		440,909
	Fundraising		180,601
	TOTAL:	\$	6,802,303
Surplus:		\$	44,107

You've just read eight stories.

Eight stories that give you a little glimpse into some of the challenges that face our children.

Eight stories that represent the more than 5,000 children served each year by Directions For Youth & Families.

Eight stories that show the need for your help.

Thank you.

Thank you for reading these stories.

**Thank you for supporting
Directions For Youth & Families.**

**And thank you for caring
about central Ohio's children.**

To learn how you, your family, your
organization, or your business can help
Directions For Youth & Families,

please call 614-294-2661
or visit www.dfyf.org.

But these statistics are only that, statistics. They don't tell us what it's really like to be a child today. To truly understand, we need to look at the lives and challenges of today's youths.

On the following pages, you'll read eight different stories about ten different local youth and their families. Some of these stories will be disturbing, some will be uplifting, some will be encouraging, and some will be downright shocking. But each of them is true, and each will give you a little glimpse into how difficult being a child can be.

THIS IS THE 2004 STATE OF THE CHILD IN CENTRAL OHIO.

When you have finished reading the 2004 State of the Child, please pass it on to a friend. Thank you.

1. The Future of Children "Current Information of the Scope of Sexual Abuse" by Davis Finkelhor
2. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention:
Juvenile Offenders and Victims
3. Children's Defense Fund
4. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention:
Violent Victimization as a Risk Factor for Violent
Offending Among Juveniles

Q: How old are you?
Cameron: 9.
Hannah: I'm 10.

Q: Where do you live?
Cameron: We just moved in with Aunt Patti.
Hannah: She doesn't like us.
Cameron: She does too.
Hannah: Well, I don't like her.

Q: Why did you move in with your aunt?
Hannah: Children's Services makes us live there.
Cameron: We can't live with Mommy any more because her new husband Frank was mean to us.

Q: What did he do to you?
Cameron: He touched us in places where no one is allowed to touch us.
Hannah: Why are you lying? He never touched us anywhere.
Cameron: Yes he did. He used to touch me all the time, and I heard you crying when he went into your room at night.

Q: So, Children's Services moved you from your mother's house to your aunt's house because your step-dad was sexually abusive to the two of you. Do I have that correct?
Cameron: Well, first they moved us to a foster home, and then another one, and another one. We lived in 4 foster homes before we went to live with Aunt Patti.

Q: Why did you keep moving from foster home to foster home?
Hannah: The people kept touching us. They were abusive.

Dear Zack,

I'm writing this letter in February of 2004, and I'm not sure when you're reading it. Hopefully, February 2004 was a long time ago, because I hope I got to spend a lot more time with you.

I know you're going to grow up to be a great man, and I'm sorry I won't be there with you. Please know that I'll be looking down on you, smiling when you're happy and crying when you're sad.

This cancer thing isn't fair to me, but it's worse for you and your little brother and sister. (I wrote each of them a letter too.)

You're going to live with your grandma now. She'll take good care of you, but she'll need your help.

It's not fair to ask you this, but I have to. Please watch after Sophie and Tanner. I'm not asking you to be their daddy or anything, just keep an eye out for them. Don't let them get messed up with alcohol, or drugs, or anything like that.

Every time any of you get a little extra money, make sure you put it in your college funds. I'm sorry I didn't start them earlier, but they are started now. All three of you should go to college.

I wish I had known my life was going to be this short. I would have spent more time with you, and less time complaining about my job, or doing stuff with my friends, or hollering at you three to give me my own space.

If I could go back in time, I'd make it to all your baseball games, I'd tuck you in every night, I'd ask you how your day went, and I'd be a better mom.

You were a good son, and I love you.

Mommy

One out of every 3 girls and one out of every 6 boys will be sexually victimized by the age of 18.*

Over 86,000 Ohio children are being raised by a grandparent.*
In 2003, Directions For Youth & Families served 7,200 children and their families.

* The Future of Children "Current Information of the Scope of Sexual Abuse" by Davis Finkelhor

* Children's Defense Fund

CHRISTOPHER

Classmates start calling Christopher “Chrissy”

“What can I do about it? The teacher said something about sticks and stones. What the h--- does she know?”

Bullies steal money from Christopher.

“What’s Dad going to say? He’s going to think I’m a p----.”

Christopher is repeatedly beaten up by classmates.

“It’s the same thing, over and over again. And if I tell the teacher, these a--holes will beat me up even worse.”

Christopher is locked in his locker.

“F--- this. I can’t take it anymore.
I’m never going to school again.”

Christopher is suspended for skipping school.

“What the f--- do I care if I can’t go to school for a week. That’s a whole week without getting my a-- beat.”

Christopher begins classes at the Crittenton Community School

“Since I got here, all I worry about are tests and stuff instead of worrying about getting beat up or locked in my locker.”

Cameron: They were not. You just kept complaining until they'd move us again.
Hannah: Well...maybe they didn't touch us...but they didn't love us, not like Mommy. I wish we could live with Mommy again, but they won't let us, just because of the lies Cameron said about Frank.
Cameron: I told the truth, and you know it. Frank's a mean person. I hope he isn't hurting Mommy.

Q: How did Frank make you feel?
Hannah: He never made me feel like nothing.
Cameron: He stole my heart. I felt empty, just like he reached in and pulled out all the good stuff. I was sad. He stole me heart.
Hannah: He didn't steal nothing from you.

Q: Cameron, do you still feel like that?
Cameron: No. I got my heart back. Mandy helped me find it. And the doctors helped, too.

Q: And who is Mandy?
Hannah: She's the lady from Directions.

Q: How are things going now?
Cameron: Much better.
Hannah: No they're not. We still don't live with Mommy because Frank still lives there. And Aunt Patti is super strict. And why are you even talking to us about this? Nobody cares about us.
Cameron: Aunt Patti cares. And Mandy cares. And Mommy cares.
Hannah: Why would anyone care about us?

*Last year, Columbus City Schools had a graduation rate under 60%.**

Since it's inception in 2002, the Crittenton Community School, operated by Directions For Youth & Families, has helped 80 children who were struggling to succeed in traditional schools.

In 2003, Directions For Youth & Families helped 122 children who were victims of sexual abuse.

* Ohio Department of Education

- 1987
- Kendall is born to a 17-year-old single mother.
 - The father is one of Kendall's mother's "Johns."
- 1988
- Jada is born to a 16-year-old single mother.
 - The father is a neighborhood boy who makes it to the hospital just minutes after Jada is born.
- 1990
- Jada's mother and father get into a big fight.
 - Jada's father finds a new girlfriend, and he never speaks to Jada or her mother again.
- 1998
- Jada's mother is arrested for drug trafficking.
 - Jada goes to live with her grandmother.
- 2000
- Kendall and his mother's new boyfriend start fighting.
 - Kendall's mother kicks Kendall out of house.
 - Kendall moves from friend to friend, and eventually starts to live on the streets, selling drugs for money.
- 2001
- Kendall and Jada meet at a party and begin dating.
- 2003
- Jada gives birth to baby boy, Devin.
 - Kendall moves in with Jada, Devin, and Jada's grandmother.
- 2004
- Jada and Kendall get into fight over Kendall talking to some other girls.
 - Jada's grandmother's house is shot up.
 - Kendall claims it was rival drug dealer.
 - Jada's uncle thinks it was Kendall.
 - Kendall is found beaten in an alley.
 - Jada and Devin move into crime-ridden apartment with Kendall.

Mom left four years ago.
It's just me and Dad now.
Most of the time, it's just me.

He's got lots of other stuff going on.
Work. Basketball. Friends. Poker night.
He shouldn't have to be tied down to me.
I'm 13. I can take care of myself.

It's best that he's busy anyway.
When he's home, he just yells at me.

The doctors said I've got ADHD.
Dad hired me a tutor.
I don't really need a tutor.
I can get good grades when I want to.
But why should I?
I don't need school.

I need a dad.

Franklin County recently ranked 87th out of Ohio's 88 counties for the number of births to teens 15-17.*

Last year, Directions For Youth & Families helped 117 girls deal with the challenges of teen pregnancy.

Almost 30% of Franklin County teenagers live in a single-parent home.*

In 2003, Directions For Youth & Families helped 1,168 families who were referred through Franklin County Children's Services.

* Annie E. Casey, Foundation KID

* U.S. Census Bureau

I sit here.
I wonder.
What good am I?
Would anyone care,
If I were to die?

Prom queen.
Honor roll.
What's it all mean to me?
The pressure's too much.
I long to be free.

We've got money.
And cars.
And everything I desire.
How long will it last?
Will we be poor tomorrow?

I get mad.
I get scared.
I don't know what to do.
I don't know who's lying.
Or who's being true.

My father.
My mother.
They're so old.
I should make them happy,
By doing as I'm told.

And I have.
I'm good.
But I can't earn their trust.
They have no faith in me.
Something separates us.

Be home on time.
Do your homework.
They scream and yell.
But I'm doing all those things.
What the hell?

School's easy.
All As.
The teachers are happy.
Everything's great.
But I still need therapy.

TV shows.
Movies.
And books.
They all say high school is fun.
Especially if you've got the looks.

It's not fun.
It's work.
And stress.
I'm not sure I can take it.
My life is a mess.

I should be happy.
I should have fun.
And live life with a smile.
I should hang out with my friends.
Just relax for a while.

But I can't.
And I won't.
I refuse to be small.
I wish I were like other girls,
And found happiness at the mall.

I sit here.
I wonder.
What good is it all?
Maybe it'll be better in college.
Maybe it'll be better next fall.

I'm 16 years old,
but I have to be an adult.

Mom says she loves me,
but she loves drugs more.

She's a nice person,
but she's not very mature.

Antonio is my little brother,
but he thinks of me as his mother.

My father left right after Antonio was born,
but I don't miss him.

I loved my job at the Short Stop
but I needed to make some real money.

I'm working 30 hours a week, flipping burgers,
but that's not my career goal.

I love to draw and paint,
but I seldom have the time.

Sometimes, I have to skip school to take care of my brother,
but I'm not skipping college.

Mom is in jail,
but she'll get her act together.

I can take care of myself,
but Antonio will need somebody when I move away.

*Nearly 20% of teenage deaths in Franklin County were due to suicide.**

Each year, Directions For Youth & Families helps over
1,175 teenagers with violent and self-destructive behavior.

*Almost 50,000 Franklin County children live in high poverty neighborhoods.**

During 2004, over 350 children will benefit from the programs
of the Directions For Youth & Families Short Stop Teen Center.

I can never tell anyone where I live. Not cause it's a secret or nothin.' But cause we're always movin'.

Sometimes we live with my sister Tiana. And sometimes with my other sister Jayla. But when we stay with Jayla, my big brother Jamal is there. And he ain't nice. He got a bunch of friends that always tryin' to get us to help 'em sell drugs and stuff.

We had our own house last year. But Dad split. Mom say she can't pay no rent without his good-for-nothin' butt. (She didn't say "butt", but I'm not allowed to say the word she used.) Then he moved back in with us when we was stayin' with Jayla. He even stayed with us at the apartment that the social services lady got us. But we got kicked out cause Dad spent all his money on beer.

My other brother Darius don't live with us no more. He used to live with some family on the west side. But now he lives with some friends of his so he can go to the same school.

I ain't been to school in a couple months. Mom said I should just wait for next year cause this year is half over already, and I already went to 2 different schools this year. I like school, but I don't get to go as much as I want.

My baby sister Andrea got it easy. Mom and Dad never yell at her. And when we stay with Jayla or Tiana, they pay all

the attention to her, and nothing to me. But I'm getting used to that. No one ever pays no attention to me. One time, I ran away for two days, and I don't think no one noticed. It's easy to be invisible in a family this big.

Children who move from school to school have an absenteeism rate 33% higher than average*

In 2003, Directions For Youth & Families helped 5,626 Franklin County children in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods.