

**YAB Meeting Report**

**Held in the Fox Valley**

You Advisory Board Meeting – Youth Pizza Party October 17, 2018

Facilitator: Eshalon Mayer

In Attendance: Tristen, Aaron and Baby Mackenzie, Tanner and Josh, Ian, Jonathon and Is, Mike, Makayla, Keith

Start time: 6:09pm

**Introductions:**

* Overview of BOS & Youth Advisory Board: Opportunity for individuals to offer feedback on experiences and how the community / state can better serve you.

**A Point in Time** – no one was familiar with it.

* + What it is
	+ Why the youth perspective is important
	+ How can a more accurate count of youth be captured.
		- Youth generally couch surf and feel unsafe at shelters
		- The Point in Time count should be done more often than 2 x a year.
		- Walmart parking lot
		- Churches
		- In the woods and parks

Would it help to have former homeless to help do the count?

* Yes, would be an eye opener
* See how they have to live – tent areas
* Not always on the street – hotels, friends’ houses

**Questions to Youth:**

Have you slept outside?

* Tanner - Tree fort from March till May
* Josh – over a month
* Moved from Texas to Berlin then to Appleton (3 brothers)
* Tristan & Aaron lived in their car on and off or multiple months

Where do others sleep?

* In Walmart Parking lots
	+ A travelling group – over 20 people
* Experienced negative attitudes from Walmart employees
* People Don’t understand many of us have jobs

**What would you tell people to educate them about homelessness and young people?**

* A friend lives in the park and be homeless who works with me – he works but chooses to live outside
* I do see why some people in the community view us this way – be open minded and open to others experiences.
* Restaurant in Chicago – give out plastic chips to homeless to trade in for food
* Post-its for pizza in New York
* Why don’t I ask my family for help?

How did you hear about Ascend?

* I was in rehab – Tanner
* Our program lets us into the YMCA with scholarships

**Balance of State** – grant funded initiative

* Notes will go back to HUD
* Funding towards young adults

How could others learn more about HUD?

* Train individuals to go to homeless shelters
* Small conveniently located centers
* YMCA

**What can help?**

* I got involved with drugs and it took me down a bad path
* When in high school parents provide care, after 18 you are on your own
* High school does not teach us independent living skills
* Those classes are not mandatory and when young it is not in the forefront of our minds
* People are afraid to ask for help
	+ Feeling safe seeking shelter
* Don’t believe us that we need help, tried separating us as a family, men’s vs women & kids
	+ Hard enough to be homeless much less being separated from your partner

Worries / Concerns as homeless youth:

* We are afraid we will lose our child – people have told us the county would take our kid
* We don’t interact because we are transient – if we leave we don’t want to leave friends behind, don’t want to create connections
* Looking for work
* Can’t do what other kids our age do

What can I do to get others here?

* Have options and resources available at the event
	+ GED/HS Diploma
	+ DVR
	+ Mental Health
	+ Sign up for health
	+ Child care help
	+ Bring supplies/diapers, etc…
* People are embarrassed to talk - knowing what to expect, not judged
* Welcome “homeless” not just the age bracket
* Flyer was okay – make announcements at community meals
* Bus stations – go where the homeless are
* Have someone tell their story – helps others know they are not alone

Language – how do I make people more comfortable?

* It’s very individual
* Tell me who you are first – what is your position
* Too much stigma attached to homelessness
* Don’t have it at a church – don’t like the religious connotation

Media Releases signed and gift cars distributed