



YOUTH SERVICES

For Immediate Release

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Larkin Street Youth Services' Programs Face Funding Threats Following City Budget Cuts, Declining Economy

Essential Homeless Youth Services in Jeopardy

SAN FRANCISCO—Dec. 18, 2008—Larkin Street Youth Services, San Francisco's leading provider of housing and support services for homeless and at-risk youth ages 12 to 24, is experiencing an enormous reduction in public and private sector funding and expects to see more as a result of the declining economy and pending San Francisco budget cuts. Critical services and programs for homeless and runaway youth are in jeopardy while reduced individual and corporate giving will contribute further to the loss of services.

Larkin Street Youth Services strives to maintain multiple levels of funding sources, but city budget cuts will only be the beginning of a long-term decline in all financial support options. The Larkin Street programs that stand to be impacted the hardest are the vital services that help get youth off the streets and into stable lives, including the street outreach program and services, HIV prevention, substance abuse prevention and employment services.

"The reduction in funding affects our ability to get kids off the street and into a safe and warm place with consistent meals," said Sherilyn Adams, executive director, Larkin Street. "We are concerned about meeting the immediate needs of providing food and losing funding for our vital support services such as our employment programs and helping our young adults find jobs in the threatened job market."

Larkin Street's Haight Street Referral Center and Drop-In Center are the two programs expected to suffer the greatest budget loses. Both are critical touch points that reach homeless and disconnected youth who congregate near Golden Gate Park, the Haight Ashbury neighborhood, Polk Street and the Tenderloin as well as other youth meccas within the city. In 2007 alone Larkin Street's outreach programs made more than 5,150 contacts with at-risk youth across seven neighborhoods including Tenderloin/Polk Gulch, Mission, Castro, Bayview, Civic Center/Market St., the Haight and Potrero Hill.

Additionally, demand for point-of-entry services at Larkin Street and other youth-oriented programs continues to rise and is projected to grow significantly in 2009 due to increased economic strains placed on families from foreclosure, higher unemployment and other economic factors. All of these contributors tend to increase family disruption and cause youth to live on the streets.

"Our Homeless Youth Substance Abuse Project will be virtually wiped out by the city funding cuts which will lead to more at-risk youth on the streets of the Haight and other San Francisco neighborhoods," Adams said. "Without this crucial program youth will be cut off from services and could become even more vulnerable to violence, sexual, drug and other abuses associated with being homeless or disconnected. We know that we have a strong chance for changing the course of their lives when we can successfully reach youth through our outreach programs. Sadly, that may not happen in this current economic climate."

Larkin Street's multidisciplinary youth services model integrates housing, food, medical care and other fundamental necessities with a supportive accompaniment of educational, job training and case management, as well as social, mental health and substance abuse services. All of these programs help provide youth with a path toward increased independence. Consequently, 74 percent of the youth who participate in Larkin Street's full complement of services successfully exit street life.

About Larkin Street Youth Services

Founded in 1984, Larkin Street Youth Services is a globally recognized nonprofit leader providing innovative and effective housing, medical, social and educational services for at-risk homeless and runaway youth ages 12-24 across 25 programs and 13 sites in San Francisco. Seventy-four percent of youth who participate in the full continuum of services at Larkin Street exit street life. For more information, please visit www.larkinstreetyouth.org.

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