



YOUTH SERVICES

For Immediate Release

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Larkin Street Youth Services Hosts 9th *Paving the Way* Gala Raises \$600,000 for Homeless and Runaway Youth

Special Guests Mayor Willie Brown and Nancy Bechtle Help Raise Funds to Support Internationally Recognized Organization

San Francisco—March 15, 2011—*Paving the Way For Our Youth*, Larkin Street Youth Services' ninth annual fund-raising benefit, kicked off the organization's 27th year at the Four Seasons Hotel San Francisco on March 10, 2011. Hosted by special guests, Mayor Willie Brown and Nancy Bechtle, the event was attended by over 350 community leaders and Larkin Street supporters and raised a record \$600,000 to support Larkin Street's 25 different programs serving runaway and at-risk youth in San Francisco.

"This wonderful event came at an extremely important time for the young people that Larkin Street serves," said Phil Estes, Larkin Street Board Chair. "Few, if any, demographic groups have felt the devastating blunt impact of the recent challenging financial times more than homeless and runaway youth who were likely only marginally housed even in better economic times. The event raised a record level of unrestricted funding which will allow our agency to reach further to find more young people and get them off of the streets."

Levi, a client in Larkin Street's Castro Youth Housing Program, was presented with the 2011 "*Going the Distance*" Larkin Street Youth Achievement Awards. This award honors those Larkin Street youth who have made the greatest strides from where they began to where they are today, overcoming significant barriers on the path to realizing their goals.

"I thank Larkin Street and all the staff I have worked with for this award and for inspiring me to take bold steps," said Levi, youth award honoree. "The staff at Larkin Street helped me to get into Castro Youth Housing. Having this housing allowed me the space to further work on my GED and helped me immensely in everything I do. Through Castro Youth Housing, I am building the resilient network I had always been looking for. I will be keeping this community with me now and for the rest of my life."

Larkin Street has served over 70,000 youth since first opening in 1984. *Paving the Way* has raised over \$3 million dollars for Larkin Street's youth. Seventy-six percent of the youth who complete the full continuum of services at Larkin Street successfully exit street life. Eighty-six percent of all funds raised by Larkin Street go directly to supporting the organization's programs for homeless and runaway youth.

About Larkin Street Youth Services

Founded in 1984, San Francisco's Larkin Street Youth Services is an internationally recognized leader providing innovative, effective housing, medical, social and educational services to at-risk, homeless and runaway youth ages 12-24 across 25 programs and 13 sites. Seventy six percent of youth who complete Larkin Street's comprehensive programs exit street life. For more information, please visit

www.larkinstreetyouth.org.

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